



First Light

Volume 27, Issue 3

March 2017



Barb Page Honored

At our lunch prior to the winter congregational meeting on February 12, Barb Page was honored with a personalized plaque, a gift certificate, and a cake for 24 Years of faithful service as our Clerk, or record keeper at meetings of the session and congregation.

thank you!
thank you!
thank you!

Game Night! March 17, 5:30-10:30pm in the Fellowship Hall

The youth will be hosting another Game Night on Friday, March 17. Just to be clear, the youth group is **hosting**, but all are invited and encouraged to come! This is a low-key, fun way to invite outside friends to get to know us and our church a little better, especially if a friend is comfortable playing cards or Mario Kart, but maybe not comfortable with a Sunday Worship service just yet.

So invite neighbors, bring your favorite game, and challenge your family to a friendly board game challenge! We will be ordering pizza, so please join us by 6pm if you want to eat with us as well!



News from the Elders

The elders met once in February and conducted the following business:

- * The coat racks along the main entrance to the church will be going away in a few weeks. Due to recent thefts of jackets, Session determined to do away with the racks along the main entrance and encourages people to use the coat racks in the back of the sanctuary. Thank you for your understanding.
- * New carpet for the narthex and sanctuary is coming in March. Once we know when it will arrive, a work party will be called to move pews and rip up the old carpet. Stay tuned! You'll be hearing more about this.
- * Barb Page was elected ruling elder commissioner from FPC to the 2017 General Assembly Sacramento this June.
- * Dave Dreydoppel was ruling elder elected commissioner from FPC to Presbytery in Fresno this May.
- * The baptism of Ridge Demers was approved for March 19, 2017.

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A Spiritual Spring is on the Horizon!

A glance to the clear blue skies tells me that Spring is in the air, in spite of temperatures recently hitting the -40's. The season of Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday this year on March 1, has long been referred to as the Church's "springtime." "Why is that?" you might wonder. It's because Lent leads us over 40 days to the season of Easter. During Lent we examine our lives and in the Spirit's power, turn our lives over to the transforming goodness of God. In other words, out of the darkness of sin's winter emerges a people—the Church—reborn in their Lord's resurrection.



Easter is the oldest Christian season. The observance of Lent first appeared between the years 200-300 AD. Lent was a *time of preparation* for persons being instructed in the Christian faith in preparation for their baptism. Following the model of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), new adult converts practiced self-examination, repentance, and prayer for 40 days, waiting to receive their baptism, confirmation and the first Lord's Supper at the Easter vigil.

Today Lent calls us to look back on the impact of our own baptism upon our lives. At baptism we are asked:

- Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?
- Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?
- Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?
- Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior?
- Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?
- Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Take some time to reflect on these important questions. How are you doing, you who have died to sin and come alive to new life in Christ? Are these vows being taken seriously in your life? If not, what is getting in the way and what steps might you begin taking to walk in the freedom of Christ?

Maybe it's time to turn from your erroneous ways and walk in the new life of God's Spirit. I invite you to intentionally experience a "spiritual Spring."

The season of Lent is 40 days long (excluding Sundays) and leads us to Holy Week's bitter/sweet story of God's sacrifice and Easter's joyous victory over the powers of death.

I invite you into this season of spiritual focus. Focus on our loving God whose sacrifice for us calls us to live sacrificially and passionately for him. Give focus on where you are today, spiritually. Invite God to show you where you need to turn to him and trust him more. Spend time in his Word daily. Consider reading a chapter of Gospel of Luke each day or following our daily readings in the newsletter or available on the table in the narthex. I have downloaded an App for my phone called Book of Common Prayer – Daily Office Readings. Each day provides the reading and the phone will even

read them out loud for you so you can listen to the Word on the way to work. Enter into a season of prayer. Ask God to speak to you and to move in your life and in the life of his Church.

Spring is in the air and the opportunity for a spiritual Spring in your life is available if you're open to the Spirit's movements. New life is possible, because God is for you and makes his life available to all. All we have to do is open our lives to God in a spirit of humble surrender.

Yours in the expectation of the Spring-time of God's Spirit,

Pastor Andy



1 Derald Johnson	14 Evelyn Sites
1 Jeanne Maddux	14 Stacey Lynn Garbet
1 Jamiee Fee	16 Bill McKee
1 Sean Allred	16 Ethan Allred
2 Travis Brown	16 Jen Schuler
3 Debby Foster	17 Jay Quakenbush
3 Michael Thies	17 Collin Cogley
4 Victoria Feist	20 Terry Reichardt
5 Linda Stephenson	21 Barbara Page
6 Jonas Huffaker	25 Ian Moody
7 Holden Jones	25 Ted Riggs, Sr
8 Gwendolyn Bunch	26 Dave Moody
9 Marjorie Howard	27 Julie Benson
9 Sig Ericklook	28 Debra Brady
10 Stephen Fink	28 Ainsley Benson
10 Sandy McKee	29 David Gardner
11 William Schuler	29 Adalie Mackey
12 Katie Allred	31 Seth Wietgreffe
13 Robert Kent	31 Anders Brown

First Light

A Monthly Newsletter Publication
of First Presbyterian Church

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Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 20th
day of each month. Submissions may be dropped
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to: Claire.Cherniawski@fpcfairbanks.com

Please let the Deacons know if we have overlooked a birthday, or have the wrong date. Contact the church office or leave a note in their box in the church office.

Lententide, 2017

Dear FPC saints,

Before we came to Alaska in 2010, we spent eight years in Illinois. In our town, during the six weeks which comprised Lent- everyone, and I mean everyone- every Friday would head over to Our Lady of Lourdes gym around 5pm for the fish fry. Where for \$7/head you'd visit with your neighbors, while the Knights of Columbus would shovel Fish, Fry's, Cole slaw and wonder bread at you- in copious and unhealthy amounts. It was great. I loved Lent in Sparta, IL.

At some point one of the kids, and I can't remember which one, asked- why this only happened just before Easter. We explained it was Lent, and traditionally a time of abstaining from meat. Prior to coming to Sparta, we spent three years in Canada in an Anglican church, where a modified Lent was practiced by the whole community. Giving things up, never meat— but really trying to narrow down our lives, going sparse for six weeks- not to please God, or earn His favor- but rather to hone our appetites and desires- to deny ourselves certain pleasures- which are good and blessed by God, but which in our ongoing idolatry slake a thirst only ultimately satisfied by the person of God himself. As St. Augustine says in his *Confessions*, "Our hearts are ever restless, until they find their rest in thee."

In his essay, *The Weight of Glory*, CS Lewis writes these words, "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

Now, I'll be the first one to admit, I'm far too easily pleased. I identify with Oscar Wilde who said, "I can resist anything... except temptation." Ask me how well I do around cake and pie and all the good stuff Barb makes!

All this to say though, I think there is something very wise about the church year practices that many Christian traditions follow, Lent being one of them.

This year we're once again having an Ash Wednesday service on March 1, at 7pm. Every Tuesday at 12:15 we have a time of prayer. Beginning March 5th, every Sunday through June at 10am, we'll be "reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting," the book of Hebrews. Read a book- something by CS Lewis, read a classic- Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. Take a social media fast. Avail yourself of this time of year.

God's grace to you and yours this Lenten season,

Pastor Dave.



Bad Neighbor

Jesus tells us to “love your neighbor as yourself.” What do you do when your neighbor’s kids continually make bad choices and have a negative influence on your children? Banning them from your yard doesn’t seem to like a very Christ-like response. Ask God, “How can our family become a positive influence in the life of our neighbors?”

Every situation is different and the answers are not always easy. That’s why you should seek wisdom from God through prayer. After all, God put you next door to that family in the first place. Invite the neighbor’s kids over to your house where you can control the type of play, the environment, and the rules.

You will also be setting the example for your children on how we are to treat people that don’t act and believe the same way we do. Even if we don’t agree with their choices, we can make a stand and still treat them with kindness and love.

Jesus didn’t say that we are to “love our neighbors as ourselves” only when they do what we approve of. Nope He said “love our neighbor as ourselves” period. We have to ask ourselves and teach our children to ask the question “Do we want to be treated or spoken to that way”.

Yes, boundaries and rules have to be set in place. If the child breaks those rules? Then there must be consequences. But, they must be consequences steeped in love and forgiveness, because weren’t we in that same place when we first met Jesus? Facing the consequences of our actions? Hard as it maybe, we must remind ourselves that this difficult “neighbor” is someone Jesus died for just like you and me.

You never know what doors your kindness will open. Perhaps that’s why Jesus chose to hang out with Zacheaus. He saw the opportunity, not just the problem. You’ve heard it before, “Touch a child and you touch the world”. – Miss Connie

Upcoming in KidZworld

Spring Break Shuffle—March 13 -17 - Activities each day. Don’t miss it!

“Crazy Hair Day” April 2, 2017 - create your own crazy hair and enter our contest.

EGGSTRAVAGANZA - April 8, 2017, 10:00 am – 12:00pm

Mother Daughter Tea - May 13, 2017, Time TBA

VBS “MAKER FUN FACTORY” VOLUNTEER KICK-OFF—MAY 7

Ready, Set, Mark Your Calendar - Vacation Bible School “MAKER FUN FACTORY” June 5 - 9th

Spicy Mustard Youth News!

As we await the warmer temperatures we also enter the season of Lent and await the triumph of Jesus over sin and death!

Maybe you've never really thought much about Lent. Maybe your family has a tradition of fasting every year. No matter where you find yourself this season, Lent is a wonderful opportunity to slow down and focus on what is truly important. Will you join me and our Youth Ministry as we refocus on listening to God, serving others with Love, and sharing the Good News that Jesus Christ has come to meet us in our brokenness and save us for a future with Hope?

One great way to step into some Lenten practices can be found in this little graphic. Jesus is all about flipping the way of the world on their head, so let's be different and love in radical Christian ways!

Some other great ways for your young students to walk with Jesus in good and habitual ways is to join us every week for...

- ⇒ Join us every Sunday at 10am for Sunday School.
- ⇒ Every Sunday at 1pm for Youth Group.
- ⇒ Every Wednesday at 4pm for Eat. Pray. Serve.

In the month of March we will also have more special Friday nights including the following...

Spiritual Retreat at Bingle Camp - We will be traveling to beautiful, frozen Harding Lake for a Spiritual Retreat March 3-4. While we will have time for our usual crazy-fun challenges and games, we will also have some great chances to slow down and listen to God's Good News for us! To register for the retreat, please contact me ASAP!

Game Night! - The youth will be hosting another Game Night on Friday, March 17, from 5:30 - 10:30pm. Just to be clear, the youth group is **hosting**, but all are invited and encouraged to come! This is a low-key, fun way to invite outside friends to get to know us and our church a little better, especially if a friend is comfortable playing cards or Mario Kart, but maybe not comfortable with a Sunday Worship service just yet. So invite neighbors, bring your favorite game, and challenge your family to a friendly board game challenge!



FLOWER DONATIONS

There are plenty of spots available throughout 2017 if you would like to donate flowers in memory of someone or in honor of one of your loved ones, a birthday, anniversary or any special occasion! Please see the bulletin board in the atrium to sign up. Flowers cost \$35 per week.



DEEP ROOTS REMINDER:

As we are enjoying our revitalized basement, keep in mind that our campaign is still going on through April 2017! We still need to fulfill our pledges to pay off the renovation and renewed areas of the church!

Daily Lectionary Readings for March 2017

*The lectionary readings can be found at www.pcusa.org/devotions/lectionary/lectionarylist.htm. They can also be emailed to you daily.



***We will no longer be publishing these in the newsletter. Please call Claire at the church office if you would like them printed for your personal use.**

Study on the Book of Hebrews: Join us March 5 from 10am-11am!

On the day his resurrection, Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24.13ff) (Cleopas and another disciple), they're disheartened and confused. All their hopes had been dashed at Jesus' death, and now- his body was missing. Still unrecognized, Jesus says this, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Don't you kinda wish Luke would have given us more of the content of that conversation? Well, we don't have it- but we do have the book of Hebrews. No other book in the New Testament lays out in such vivid terms how Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and the significance of this incredible news for us, 21st century Christians.

Beginning March 5, from 10-11am in the upstairs conference room we will open up the book of Hebrews. We hope you will join us!

First Pres. Worship!

Did you know that worship is the work of the people? Not only do we sing, pray, and adore our Creator together, we also work to bring our combined act and art of worship before God in a holy and beautiful way.



If you are interested in contributing your time and talent to our worship teams, but were never sure how best to do that, **please join us for a special training lunch on Sunday, March 26 at 12:45 pm.** We will enjoy lunch together, and then dive into training folks to be Readers, Ushers, Greeters, and more! No previous experience or musical talent necessary! (We will also have a Musicians' worship training lunch soon!)

If you have questions about volunteering with our worship ministries, please let me know!

David McConnell Booher

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