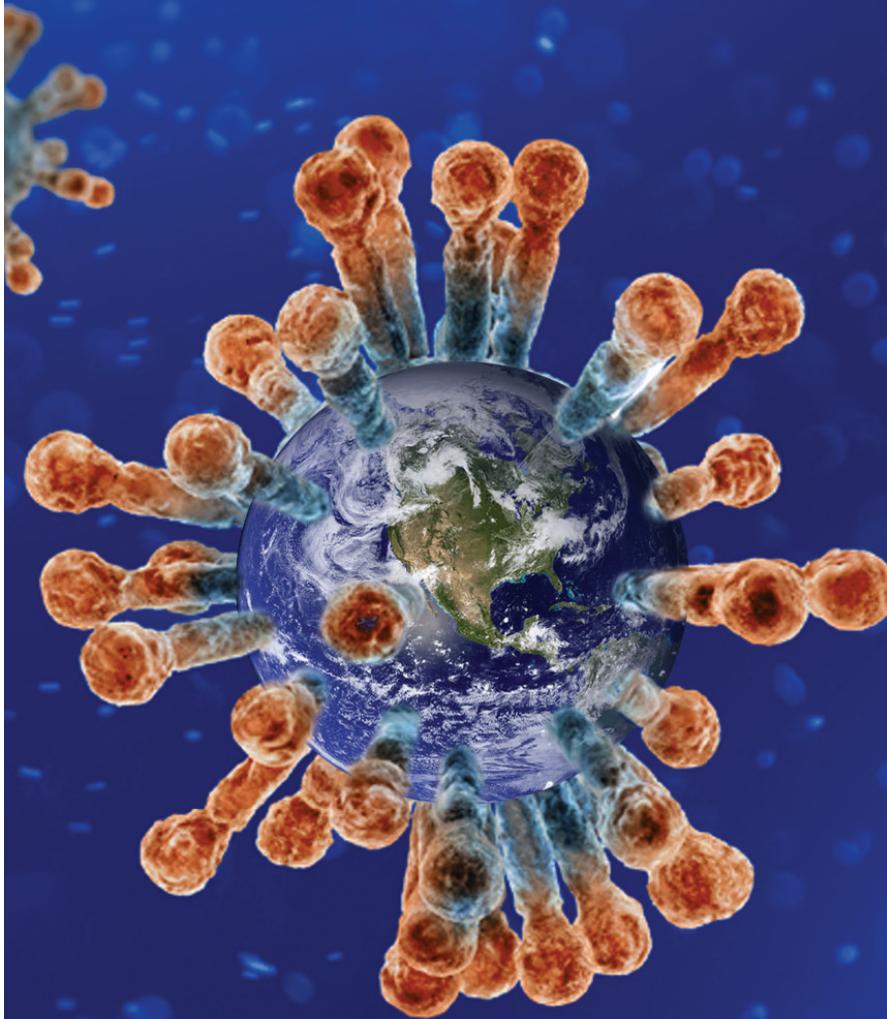


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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

WEEK OF MARCH 15, 2020

TEMPLE TIDINGS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OAKLAND

M a k i n g G o d ' s W e l c o m e K n o w n

Sunday, March 15

- 10:00 Worship (staff & Worship & Music elders only)
- 11:00 Session Meeting
- 11:15 Food Ministry lunch preparation in the kitchen, led by Bill & Subashini Coburn. Sunday lunch preparation consists of sack lunches given out on Sundays and preparation for the Monday meal, also served to-go.

A New Directory is Available!

Wondering how to stay in touch with your church family while the church is closed? A new directory is out just in time to help. The effort to update the directory, led by Julia Marquez, is mostly complete. If you spot any errors in your new copy, please contact Julia:

jmarquez@fbcl-visa.com



Did You Join Us in Worship at Home?

Send Us a Selfie!

Where were you when you listened to this Sunday's worship service? We'd love to stay connected. Send us a photo of you, your family, or even your cats and dogs if they listened in. We'd love to see what worship at home looks like for you. Photos will be assembled into a collage for *Temple Tidings* later in the month. Text or email your photo to Chris Weber:

cdweber78@gmail.com

805.234.5631

First Church Adapts to Pandemic, Offers Audio Worship Service

Following decisions reached at an emergency Session Meeting On March 12, services at First Church will not be held in person until the Alameda County Public Health Department lifts its recommendation against public gatherings. The scheduled Congregational Meeting will be postponed until then as well.

“Our plan is to record audio files of an abbreviated service each week. We will post the audio on our website and email it to all of you, along with a worship bulletin and newsletter. You can expect to receive an audio file of this week's service by Sunday evening, said Clerk of Session Anne Margaret Manay, in a statement sent to the congregation by email.

Pastor Jeff, Music Director Aaron Nee and Worship & Music Elder Chris Weber met on Friday morning to adjust this week's service for the new format. A small team will be assembled on Sunday morning to read through the service and record it, including liturgist David Alexander, Linda Carter and Erick Bevington.

“We'll certainly look forward to feedback from the folks who listen at home and attempt to adapt to this new format,” said Chris. “It isn't something anyone will be used to, but we are hopeful that by listening in, people can feel connected and spiritually fed.”

Social Distancing is a New Physical and Spiritual Need

On any given Sunday, handshakes, hugs, and even kisses are a frequent part of gathering together in worship and in fellowship. Proximity seems to be the best way to learn from one another and to enjoy each other's presence. "There is something both sad and ironic about intentionally creating 'social distance' between the members of our community," said Dr. Shane Berg, of Princeton Theological Seminary. "The goal of covenant community is to nurture bonds of fellowship and trust among us. We want to draw closer together, not push ourselves apart." But in time of global pandemic, a different need arises.

"When a new virus enters the population — before we have had a chance to build up immunity or develop a vaccine — it poses the greatest threat to those who are most vulnerable: the very young, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems. For these folks, a new virus represents a serious danger." Said Dr. Berg.

"One of the best ways to protect the most vulnerable from the danger of a new virus is to take steps to slow its spread. Viruses tend to spread exponentially in human populations. Initially just a few people are infected, but then through human-to-human contact they can infect a significant portion of a population with brutal efficiency and speed," he added. "Social distancing does not entail cutting yourself off from human interaction. But it does mean finding ways to limit your participation in large gatherings."

Food Ministry Volunteers Commit to Serve During Pandemic

"Our volunteers are aware of the risks and are being cautious. People still want to help," said Food Ministry leader, Bill Coburn. The Food Ministry will continue its work on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays, mindful that access to food is an important part of keeping Oakland's food insecure population healthy, even during a pandemic. "Our volunteers have offered lots of suggestions for keeping everyone safe," said Bill, who leads the weekly effort. "There will be some changes to how we serve, but service will remain open." The Food Ministry Visioning Team and the Session have also weighed in on health and safety at the Food Ministry.

The Monday lunch meal, which is usually served at tables inside Fellowship Hall, will be turned into a to-go meal, given away on the Fellowship Hall balcony. Sunday's to-go meal will also proceed, though discussions are still being had about how and whether to enter local encampments to give meals away. "Some of our volunteers have expressed concern about the lack of sanitation in those environments. We don't have a solution yet."

Clothing distribution will also be halted, though bagged groceries will still be available for take-away on Mondays. "The clothing distribution involves too much handling of clothes and an opportunity for contamination," said Bill. "We'll have to resume that work another time."

New Facility Transformation Plan Will Expand Campus Usage And Make Up To \$82K Available For Church Use.

Inspired by Pastor Jeff's challenge at the 2020 Elder's Retreat to think about taking bold risks, Buildings & Grounds Chair, Erick Bevington developed a plan outlining a series of operational changes for our facilities to make some big improvements. These changes are designed to increase building-generated revenue to support upcoming major maintenance projects, free up church funds to help support a full-time pastor position, improve upkeep of the facilities, and improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. All of this will be done in accordance with the mission of the facilities: to support and house our Church's mission and to expand our impact to the community through mission-compatible partnerships. If successful, the plan will net an \$82,000 financial improvement for the church.

In addition to supporting the new 2020 Facility Transformation Plan, the Session also agreed to hire consulting architect, Chris Weber to execute the plan as Interim Facility Manager, a position that may last for 12 months or more. Elise Chan will be leaving her temporary assignment to this role on March 16.

New Plan Prioritizes Improved Operations

One of the main objectives of the Facility Transformation Plan is reduce staff costs through development of formalized procedures and automation of time-consuming tasks. "Currently our procedures are loosely documented in various meeting minutes, or not written down at all. Also, a significant portion

of processing for our event rental business can be done online, yet we still do it all manually in person over the counter. We can save a lot of time by moving our procedures and day-to-day processing to our new ChurchNet SharePoint system" said Erick.

"By building an online event rental portal, we can help streamline our rental expenses and improve access to event rentals. This will not only save us money in personnel expenses but improve our revenue from facility usage fees," said Chris.

Security is another large expense that may be reduced under this plan. Currently, the church contracts with Mr. G's Security and Janitorial Service. "Our security risks are very real, and Mr. G's has really been a partner in ministry with us. They learn the names of all the regular people who frequent the Food Ministry program, sleep on our grounds, or show up from time to time. They treat them all, including the problematic ones, with Christian kindness and respect." said Erick.

"Our current campus security process is completely dependent on having janitors physically present and watching entry points whenever the campus is occupied, which isn't always an efficient use of their time. This often means that the church is paying an hourly rate for a janitor to wait around for late night meetings to end," said Erick. "But, if we invest in self-closing security gates with keycard access

and putting keycard access on select access doors, we can significantly reduce our security expenses and direct the janitorial staff to more productive work. This will be one of our first projects.”

Event Rentals Remain Key to Revenue

After growing for the last 10 years, revenue from event rentals has declined in recent months. The Facility Transformation Plan will be looking at investments in Fellowship Hall and other spaces on campus that can use improvements to make them more appealing for potential events.

“We got used to seeing Fellowship Hall rented almost every Friday and Saturday night. That income made a significant impact in the ability of the church facilities to fund their own maintenance. We will be developing ways to restore and exceed that revenue going forward,” said Erick.

Fellowship Hall is not the only space on campus with potential to see increased revenue production. The Facility Transformation Plan will also be looking at ways to increase use of both the Sanctuary and Reception Room. “Both spaces have potential for increased usage during the hours that the congregation does not occupy those spaces,” said Chris.

Deferred Maintenance Deferred No More

“We’ve been patching the now 107-year-old slate roof over the sanctuary for more than

two decades. Now it is leaking in various places in the middle of the Sanctuary, which is evident by hymnals and bibles with wavy page tops from getting wet. It is long overdue for replacement,” said Erick. “We have to replace this roof before the next rainy season.” Another big project requiring attention is replacement of the campus’s heating system. “We are using a boiler which was installed in 1960. It will take 3-6 months to replace it including engineering, permitting, and construction work. If it dies in the winter, I would like to say we can bundle up on Sundays while it gets replaced. However, several of our tenants, like Early Head Start, cannot operate in the winter without heat. So, we need to replace the heating system proactively, before it dies.”

“Part of the Facility Transformation Plan will be to start the complex process of designing a replacement mechanical system and a new roof,” said Chris. “This will likely involve requesting a large loan from the Synod,” he added, referring to the church’s regional governing body. Erick added, “the church now has several years of balanced budgets and steady building revenue, so we have the ability now to take on a loan for these kinds of expenses and to pay it back. But, that will take up all of our available maintenance money, so we need to increase building revenues to fund that going forward while paying this debt service.”

Congregational Prayer Support

The prayer needs of the First Church community remain an important part of our life as a church. If you have joys to share, or concerns that you wish your church community to support in prayer, please email:

Pastor Jeff Kunkel: jkkunkel@gmail.com

Julia Marquez, Moderator of Deacons:

jmarquez@fbcl-visa.com

Please indicate if you would like your prayer needs published in Temple Tidings for community support.

The deacons request your continued prayer and support for:

Family of Rev. John Turpin, for the recent death of Bonnie Turpin

Lucy Kinchen, who is in the care of her daughter Lori and home care-givers.

Marrian Kerr, who is in the care of her daughter in Tracy.

Gwendolyn Buchholz, who lives with a caregiver in Danville.

Dr. Jim & Paulette Eggert, who remain home in Lafayette.

Karen Eliadis, for pain, ongoing medical exploration

Rose Mary Richmond, for recovery from a recent foot injury

Please keep the following efforts supported with your prayer, encouragement and involvement:

Pastor Nominating Committee, for discernment, perseverance and faithfulness.

Food Ministry, for resources, perseverance, compassion, enthusiasm - and for health and safety as they serve during the pandemic.

Elders

Erick Bevington, Facilities, Finance

Linda Carter, Finance, Worship & Music

Gay Plair Cobb, Mission & Social Justice

Dorrie Dodge, Building the Beloved Community, More Light, Godly Play

Dorothy Dugger, Food Ministry Visioning

Karen Eliadis, Outreach, website

Anna Lisa Fear, Personnel

Chris Weber, Worship & Music, Facilities

Session Officers

Rev. Lauren Gully, Moderator

Anne Margaret Manay, Clerk

Rose Mary Richmond, Treasurer

Deacons

Pauline Ahanotu, Martha Bauman, Jan Busch,

Diane Hill, Victor Njii, Lorraine Provost,

Rose Mary Richmond, Ann Tisher, Marilyn Williams

Julia Marquez, Moderator

Church Staff

Rev. Jeff Kunkel, Interim Pastor

pastor@firstchurchoakland.org

510.488.3812

Office Hours:

Mon & Tues, 10:30 am - 4 pm

Weds & Thurs, by appoint.

Dr. Aaron Nee, Director of Music & Organist

aaron@firstchurchoakland.org

510.488.3804

Office Hours:

Tues & Weds, 9 am - 12 pm

Chris Weber, Interim Director of Facilities

chris@firstchurchoakland.org

510.488.3810

Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs, 9 am - 4 pm

Gus Lopez, Head Custodian

510.290.9677

Mon - Friday, 8 am - 6 pm

Rose Mary Richmond, Treasurer, office volunteer

rosemary@firstchurchoakland.org

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