

**A Pastor's Story:
Being an LGBTQ Ally
Involves Taking Risks**

**Congregation Invited
to June Ceasefire Night
Walk for Peace**



**Bible Study & Prayer
Circle Offer Time for
Developing Spiritual
Devotions**

**We/Us/Ours: Why
Identity Pronouns
Matter**

June 12, 2022

Weekly Newsletter

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland
Making God's Welcome Known

Celebrate LGBTQ Allies:

Transformed by Compassion, Pastor Loses His Job Over AIDS Funeral



Rev. Jack Shriver, pictured here baptizing Arav Manay at First Church in 2009.

By Chris Weber, Elder for Buildings & Grounds

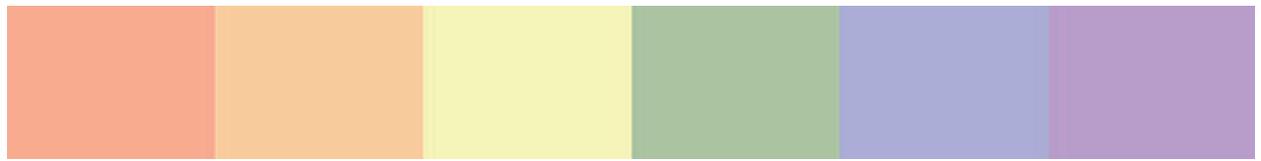
“Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals.” This was a small headline buried in The New York Times on July 3, 1981. The rare cancer spread rapidly in the early 1980s, mainly within the gay communities in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. These gay urban enclaves were largely responsible for the burgeoning LGBTQ civil rights movement that had coalesced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which focused primarily on employment protection and overturning laws which criminalized LGBTQ relationships and permitted harassment of that community by law enforcement. As the gay cancer spread, the movement pivoted to saving lives.

In 1991, Rev. Jack Shriver was pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Concord, California. “I was focusing my ministry on ‘Jesus, the Prince of Peace’ in those days,” said Jack of his time in the pulpit there. “The first Persian Gulf War was just

gearing up, and people seemed too excited about the prospects of war and victory.” By 1991, the gay cancer had been identified as AIDS, the final, lethal stage of an HIV infection. Becoming infected with HIV was a death sentence, and in the ten years between the New York Times’s first reporting of the new disease to 1991, the AIDS pandemic had taken 102,551 lives, according to the CDC. Actual deaths were significantly higher, as many victims of the disease refused to allow the diagnosis to stigmatize them, or “out” them as homosexuals. For many of those who died, funeral services often had the feel of a protest rally.

The Concord City Council had passed an employment protection measure in 1988. The measure specifically offered job protection to those infected with HIV AIDS. But voters overturned the protection measure in 1989, and by 1991, the measure was back on the ballot. “I received a phone call from a woman – I don’t remember her name,” said Jack. “Her son had just died of AIDS, and she was looking for a facility large enough to accommodate the memorial.” Knowing that the memorial would in part be a civil rights meeting, Jack demurred. “We spoke for about ten minutes, and I tried to persuade her all of the reasons that we wouldn’t be a good facility for her. When our conversation had reached an impasse, she told me ‘My son was discriminated against his whole life, now he’s being discriminated against in death.’ It was like a sword to my heart.”

“I took council from a member of the congregation whom I respected, and she persuaded me to reach back out and extend an invitation,” said Jack. “By this time our roles had changed, and



it was I who was pleading with her to hold the memorial at First Pres. The memorial was held, and officiated by the pastor of First Christian Church, who did a fabulous job honoring this young man's life. I was invited to participate in the service. At the conclusion of the service, we

“I felt like I was answering God’s call and doing the right thing,” said Jack. “What, did God talk directly to you?” rebuked one of his colleagues.

all walked to the square, just a block away, for more remarks. Balloons were released. It was a very moving event.”

“As I walked back to my office, I was approached by a woman,” said Jack. “She asked if I would write a letter offering my public support of the employment protection ballot measure, which

I agreed to do. I wrote my letter on church letterhead, and then the trouble started.” The letter resurfaced at the annual congregational meeting. Members of the congregation, upset at having the church associated with a gay-AIDS memorial, and upset that their pastor took a public stance without their backing attempted to have Jack fired. “The attempt failed, a slim majority of the congregation wished me to stay on,” said Jack. But the Presbytery did not offer similar support, and the Committee on Ministry (which oversees pastors’ relationships with their congregation) did not support Jack’s actions. “I felt like I was answering God’s call and doing the right thing,” said Jack. “What, did God talk directly to you?” rebuked one of his colleagues. It was clear to Jack that the congregation did not wish to be defined by its stance, or lack thereof,

on this civil rights issue, or on his actions, so Jack resigned.

“It was demoralizing. I was really depressed for months afterward. It took a long time to heal,” said Jack. “I didn’t consider myself a liberal at the time. I didn’t have any personal exposure to the LGBTQ community, but I knew that I had done the right thing for them. That letter really felt like the nail in the coffin of my career at First Pres.”

Jack went on to interim pastor ministry and served at First Church twice, from 2000 – 2003 and again 2009 – 2013. He is currently retired from ministry, though remains active within the Presbytery. He preached as pulpit supply for several weeks following the resignation of Pastor Debra Avery in 2017. On one such Sunday a protestor stood outside the church with a sign which read “WHO WILL JESUS DAMN?” (pictured front cover). The sign condemned the LGBTQ community and those who support it. Jack confronted the man, who soon left.

Taking risk is at the core of following Christ. Peter, a fisherman, was asked by Jesus to “put down your net and follow me,” giving up his security, comfort, and livelihood for the hardship and eventual sorrow of following Christ. He is regarded as the rock upon which the church stands. Jack Shriver answered that call as well, ironically putting down the net of his own career as a pastor and answering the call to be a minister of Christ’s compassion and justice to a community that was being ravaged by death and discrimination.



Ceasefire Night Walks for Peace

Friday, June 17, 6 pm - St. Columba
Catholic Church

Let's continue to participate in the Community Ceasefire Night Walks sponsored by Faith In Action East Bay. Faith leaders, residents, schools, neighborhood organizations, social services, public agencies and law enforcement across the community are uniting to build a culture of peace and healing. We are walking our neighborhoods to carry this message: "We love you and we want you to be alive and free!"

Join others from various faith backgrounds who come together to support the community around us. Help us stop the killings so we can work together to create opportunities for a way out. Bring a friend! **Contact Suzie Inadomi or Pastor Matt for more information.**

"What is the Church For?"

Bible Study Resumes in July

A fundamental question, "what is the church for?" is a new topic for mid-week bible study, led by Pastor Matt. The summer bible study topic is intended to create new vision for what First Church can be by examining scripture's many accounts of Beloved Community. Mid-week bible study is a great way to get to know folks at First Church and exchange views on scripture, theology, and community. Contact Pastor Matt if you do not already receive the weekly email invitation to join on Zoom. **Wednesdays, 7pm, Zoom**

Prayer Circle Invites Connection

Every month the Prayer Circle meets, taking time to check in with one another by mutual invitation and then practicing the art of *lectio divina* (a monastic practice of listening to scripture with the eyes of the heart - how does this reading connect with where I find myself in life right now?). We also share prayers and close in prayer or with poetry. Formerly called "Women's Circle, The Prayer Circle is always open both to newcomers and one time visitors of any gender. Call Di Pagel at 925.324.5271 or email dianapagel@gmail.com for the Zoom link. **Our next gathering is Tuesday, June 28 at 7 pm.**

Donations to Deacons Enable Care

by Judy Rowan, Moderator of Deacons

The Deacons are a group whose ministry is to care for people. At First Church, the deacons connect with members and frequent visitors monthly and on special occasions. We pray for people with special concerns and we visit people who are ill. On the first Sunday of the month, a special offering is collected to provide for parishioners' special needs. Those funds also support the Food Ministry and the Presbyterian Deacon Foundation. Please join the Deacons in supporting the special needs in the congregation by donating to the Deacons' Fund on First Sundays.



Volunteers Needed for Sunday Food Ministry Effort

The Food Ministry is a vital ministry of First Church and is entirely supported by volunteer efforts. Each week, volunteers prepare 300 meals for the community. This effort has critical short term volunteer gaps to fill while leaders are recovering from illness and injury or preparing to move. Food Ministry leadership is requesting the kind assistance of new volunteers interested in a short-term assignment, Sundays in May, June and July.

What does this volunteer work look like? Sunday mornings before the worship service, 8 am – 10 am, volunteers are needed to make sandwiches and package them in to-go boxes with other sides. The menu will already have been planned and all provisions made – help is just needed with assembly. Typically 150 meals are prepared on Sunday morning.

New volunteers are also needed Sundays, after the worship service to either assist with distributing meals at the gate (about 50 meals are given away at the gate, the remainder are loaded into vehicles and driven to encampments) or with helping to prepare components of the Monday meal, which is typically more elaborate. Do you feel called to assist? Please contact Steve Cabrera, Dorothy Dugger, Louise Hill, Gay Cobb or Bryan Breitung, or just walk into the kitchen and introduce yourself.



First Church Honors Identity with Pronoun Buttons

The Building the Beloved Community team continues to make available pronouns buttons for anyone in the congregation who wishes to use them.

There are many reasons for making our preferred pronouns evident, among them helping everyone to feel included and respected and reminding us all that our assumptions about pronouns may not be correct. But perhaps most importantly, the buttons are a visible sign that we are a congregation which welcomes LBGTQIA+ people. Our multi-racial makeup is visibly evident to visitors. Buttons and banners are ways to make our welcome for everyone more visible.

Buttons are available on the tables at the cloister and 27th street entrances to the sanctuary for you to wear during the worship service and at fellowship time. You are welcome to take buttons home with you. If you have accumulated a few, we would appreciate your returning the extras, but we will order more as the need arises. Thank you for helping with Making God's Welcome Known.

Oh My Darling Clementine!



Clementine Celia Eloyse Ruff was born June 2 to Aaron Ruff and Sarah Postma. From Aaron: "Sarah is amazing, bringing us this 8 lb, 8 oz, 21" little love. Baby is healthy and hungry, and Sarah is ready for a nap. I humbly bow to the strength all mamas have making miracles come to life."

Temple Tidings Contributors This Week

Writing by Chris Weber, Dorrie Dodge & Judy Rowan.

Photos by Chris Weber, Aaron Ruff, Suzie Inadomi, Linda Carter.

Temple Tidings is a weekly publication. All are welcome to contribute news, events and opinion.



Elders

Linda Carter, Dorothy Dugger, Henry Gardner, Suzie Inadomi, Elizabeth Cureton, Chris Weber, Alessandra Mohar

Session Officers

Rev. Matt Prinz, Moderator
Anne Margaret Manay, Clerk
Rose Mary Richmond, Treasurer

Deacons

Judy Rowan, Louise Hill, Chris Kovach, Marjorie Witt, Barbara Goodroe, Martha Bauman, Diane Hill, Lorraine Provost

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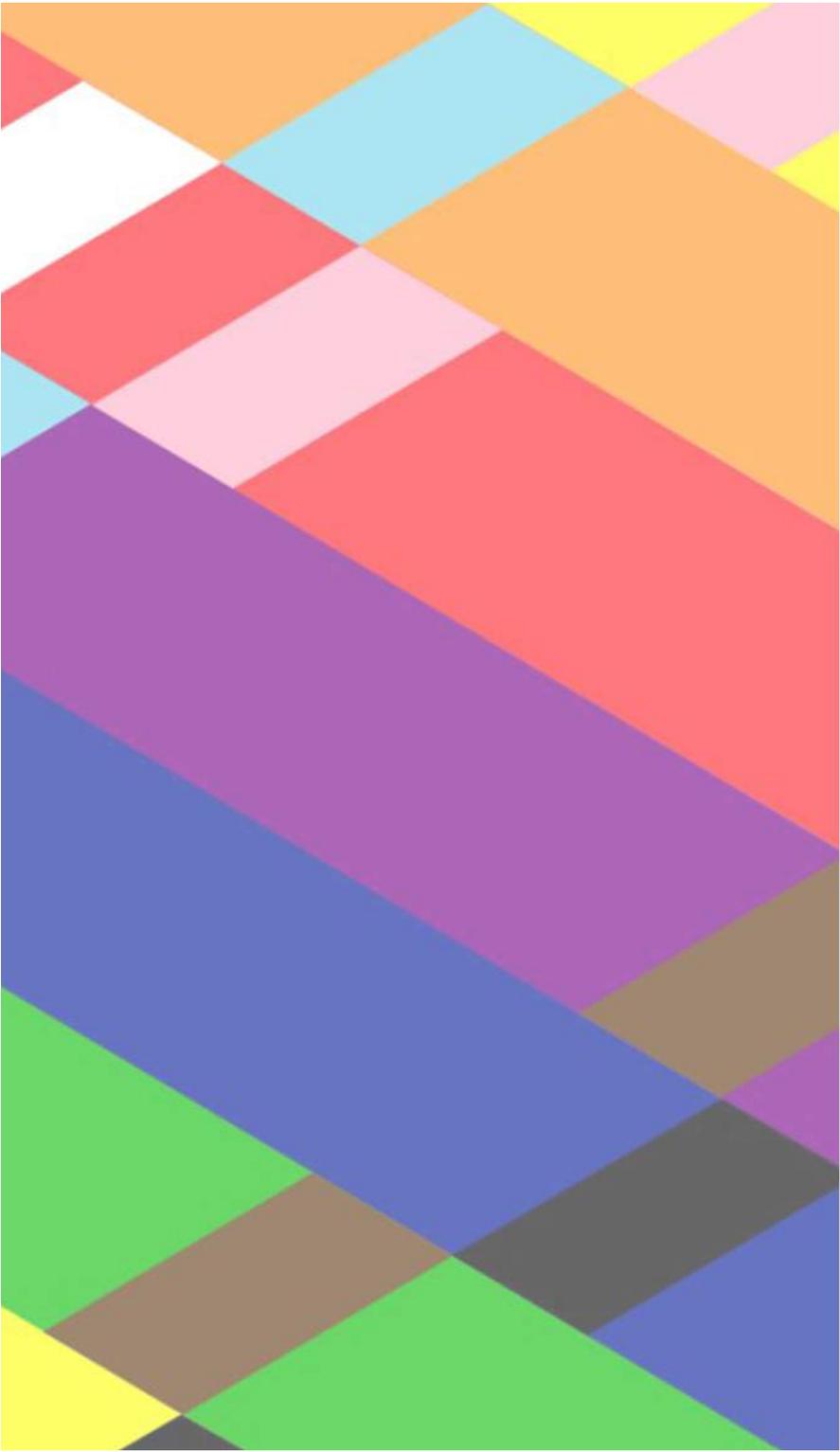
Gus Lopez, Head Custodian
510.290.9677

Rose Mary Richmond, Treasurer, office volunteer
rosemary@firstchurchoakland.org

Joan Clerk, Bookkeeper
joan@firstchurchoakland.org

First Church is proud to support its COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Afterglow Chorus
- Cantare Choirs
- College Awareness
- Community Women's Orchestra
- Faith in Action East Bay
- Food Not Bombs
- Habitat For Humanity, East Bay-Silicon Valley
- Oakland Civic Orchestra
- Oakland Early Head Start Preschool
- Oakland Gay Men's Chorus
- Oakland Kids First
- Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs
- Quinteto Latino
- ReCares
- The Lucy Kinchen Chorale
- Vituity Care Foundation
- Western Service Workers Assoc.



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OAKLAND
AD 1853

Sunday, June 12, 2022

**P
R
I
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E**

*Making God's
welcome known*

Welcome to this time of intergenerational praise and worship

Visitors:

- Please fill out a **Prayer Card** if you would like prayer from our pastor and deacons.
- Please also fill out a **Welcome Card** so we can become acquainted with you and remember your name and your visit with us. If you would like to be added to our email and mailing lists the welcome card will do that too (you can also sign up on the home page of our website - at the very bottom)
- Need help hearing? Ushers can provide **hearing devices** to assist you.

Visiting Parents:

- Ushers can guide you to the **nursery** for certified childcare for children age three years and younger.
- You may also make use of the **Parent Corners** at the rear sanctuary entrance or up front by the font.
- Children's **worship bags** are available in the narthex or from the ushers with worship play items.
- On the first Sunday of the month we celebrate **Family Worship & Communion** and children remain in worship.
- **Godly Play** is offered for children all other Sundays. Children are escorted to Classroom 2 during *Passing of the Peace* and can rejoin their families during Fellowship Time.

ORDER of SERVICE

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland is a **More Light** faith family,
on a journey toward becoming the **Beloved Community**.

We welcome and affirm persons of every age,
national origin, racial and ethnic heritage, gender identity, sexual orientation,
socio-economic status, physical ability and spiritual leaning.

INVITATION to WORSHIP

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: When God throws a party, the doors are flung wide.

All: There are no boundaries, no barriers, no walls.

One: When God throws a party, everyone is invited.

All: Not just invited, but enticed, encouraged, welcomed, just as we are.

One: When God throws a party, there are gifts for every guest.

All: There is total acceptance, understanding that surpasses human differences. There is amazing grace, and unconditional love.

One: We are the blessed ones. This is God's party. Let us rejoice in it.

Gathering Prayer

One: Joyful God, you celebrate the people we are, the people you created. As often as we have heard your invitation, there is still some corner of our hearts and minds that holds back, if just a little. We have been taught that if something seems too good to be true, it probably isn't true. That is our way, not yours. Help us to celebrate your love, to open and use thankfully the gifts you lay out for us. Help us to share your joy with others

All: Amen

Refrain:

As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good ol' way
And who shall wear the starry crown?
Good Lord show me the way

O fathers, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O fathers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
(back to refrain)

O sisters, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sisters, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
(back to refrain)

O mothers, let's go down
Come on down, don't you wanna go down?
Come on mothers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
(back to refrain)

O brothers, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on brothers, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
(back to refrain)

O sinners, let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
O sinners, let's go down
Down in the river to pray
(back to refrain)

CONFESSIO N o f S I N & A S S U R A N C E o f G R A C E

Confession

One: O Creator God, forgive us for the ways that we have perpetuated exclusion, pushing others away from their rightful place at the table of grace. Believing that unless others conform to our image of what is right and good, they are not worthy of our welcome and embrace. Let us remind one another:

All: We need you, for in our diversity we reflect the divinity of our Creator.

One: O Creator God, forgive us for refusing to see you in the faces of our enemies, for choosing to turn our faces away from those whom we do not understand, for believing that until we are all the same, we do not deserve one another's compassion. In the midst of our waywardness, reveal to us the path of grace. Let us remind one another:

All: We need you, for in our diversity we reflect the divinity of our Creator.

Silent Reflection

You are invited into a time of silent, personal prayer

One: In the name of the one who loves us unconditionally, we pray.

All: Amen

Please stand as you are able

Assurance of Pardon

One: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God fills our souls with grace and wisdom. It is from this grace that we have hope. It is from this wisdom that we know God's love. It is from the living God that we find life and forgiveness.

All: Amen

Passing the Peace of Christ

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us offer each other a sign of Christ's peace

Greet those around you with a sign of Christ's peace.

Children are invited to Godly Play. Today's story: Parable of the Good Shepherd.

P R A Y E R S of t h e P E O P L E

Sharing of joys and concerns

You may share requests for prayer with the congregation aloud, or fill out a prayer card and place it in the offering plate to privately share your prayer need with the pastor.

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

One: O Creator God, help us not to believe the lies that are so often spoken over us, That we are flawed or broken because of who we are or whom we love. Your love has shaped and fashioned us just as we are, and your love casts away all fear and shame. In the midst of fear and falsehood, let us remind one another:

All: We need you, for in our diversity we reflect the divinity of our Creator.

One: O Creator God, when we have been rejected and cast aside by those who bear your name, Call to our mind the truth that absolutely nothing can separate us from your love. Not churches nor pastors nor parents nor legislation. Nothing will change your love for us and no one can change our position before you. Let us remind one another:

All: We need you, for in our diversity we reflect the divinity of our Creator.

One: O Creator God, when we find ourselves recoiling in fear or pushing away in ignorance, Remind us to lean in, to reach out, and to seek your presence in the face of our other. For in the most unlikely people and the most disregarded places, your Spirit works most powerfully. Let us remember that no one is a stranger, and everyone can be a channel of your light. Let us remind one another:

All: We need you, for in our diversity we reflect the divinity of our Creator.

T H E W O R D

Please stand as you are able

Hymn

#840 : It Is Well With My Soul

One: When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months and there was a severe famine over all the land, yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many with a skin disease in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

One: For the Word in scripture, the Word made flesh, and the Word in our hearts

All: Thanks be to God

Sermon

R E S P O N S E t o t h e W O R D

Sermon Continued

Pastor Matt will lead the congregation in reflection on the reading and sermon.

Please stand as you are able

Hymn

#649 : Amazing Grace

Invitation to the Offering

Musical Offering

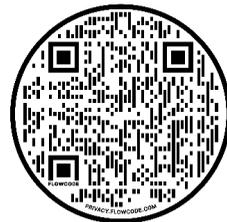
Were You There When They Crucified My Lord

Ushers will collect the weekly offering

Donations, Welcome Cards & Prayer Cards can be placed in the offering plate.

You may also make a donation by using this QR code on your smart phone:

Note: donations made online are subject to a 4% service charge, paid by us.



Prayer of Dedication

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Invitation to Community Life

Please stand as you are able

Sending Song

I'll Fly Away

1: Some glad morning when this life is over

I'll fly away

To a home on God's celestial shore

I'll fly away

(skip to chorus)

3: Just a few more weary days and then

I'll fly away

To a land where joy shall never end

I'll fly away

(skip to chorus)

2: When the shadows of this life had flown

I'll fly away

Like a bird from prison bars has flown

I'll fly Away

(skip to chorus)

Chorus:

I'll fly away, oh glory

Yes, I'll fly away

When I die, hallelujah by and by

I'll fly away

Benediction

Postlude

What is a postlude? It's a musical setting for leaving a service of worship. It's the music we march out of the service together with. It isn't a musical recital, it's music for movement. See you in the Reception Room for coffee and snacks!

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz (aloha)

Liturgy: Lawrence Reh

Liturgist: Dorrie Dodge

Guest Musician: Joe Warner

Song Leader: Susannah Prinz (more aloha)

Godly Play: Di Pagel & Elizabeth Goodwin

Head Usher: Louise Hill

Audio Setup: Diane Hill

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Bill Beatty