

Weekly Newsletter

December 8, 2024

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



Zechariah and Elizabeth
Art by Mike Moyers

W E L C O M E

Visitors:

- If you would like to be added to our email list, please go to firstchurchoakland.org and fill out the form at the bottom
- Need help hearing? Ushers can provide **hearing devices** to assist you.
- Please feel free to take the Sanctuary flowers home to enjoy after the service.

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 rejoin their families during Fellowship Time.

O R D E R o f S E R V I C E

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.

I N V I T A T I O N t o W O R S H I P

Prelude

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
by Winfred Douglas

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: How shall we prepare for the coming of the Lord?

All: with hearts filled with love and peace.

One: How shall we prepare for the coming of Christ?

All: with prayers filled with adoration and devotion.

One: How shall we prepare for the coming of our savior?

All: with songs filled with joy and hope.

One: How shall we prepare for the coming of God's Son?

All: with worship filled with passion and spirit.

Gathering Prayer

One: God of our deliverance, you meet us in our need. You fill the valleys of our insecurities with hope and bring low the mountains of our pride and conceit. As we await your Son and the glory of your salvation, guide our feet in the ways of peace.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Hymn

Glory to God #88: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verses 3-4

CONFESSION of SIN & ASSURANCE of GRACE

One: We need the tender mercy of your grace, Holy One, as we seek to comprehend the light of your love. Disperse the shadows of our lives and release those who sit in darkness, that they may find peace and hope in the places where fear holds sway. Come to us like a refiner's fire and cleansing soap, for we long to be purified in body and soul and made to see the light of your salvation.

All: **Amen.**

Silent Reflection

You are invited into a time of silent, personal reflection

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

All: **Amen**

Please rise in body or spirit

Sung Assurance

Christ be our Light



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath-ered to - day.

Passing of 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.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Sharing of Joys & Concerns

You may share requests for prayer with the congregation aloud. If you would like, there are two tables set up with candles for prayer and salt water for lament.

Children may go with leaders to Godly Play.

Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Song

Glory to God #83: Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1. 5 - 23 NRSV

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah said to the angel, "How can

I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he returned home.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

RESPONSE to the WORD

Sermon Continued

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

Song

*African American Heritage Hymnal #418: We'll
Understand it Better By and By*

Invitation to the Offering

During this Advent season of hoping and waiting, let us open our hearts to share gifts of love and mercy—gifts that are pleasing to God.

Ushers will collect the weekly offering. Donations can be placed in the offering plate. You may also make a donation by using this QR code on your smart phone:



Offertory

Light of the World

Prayer for the Offering

One: As you rescued your people before, rescue us over and over again, Mighty One. As you purified the saints like a refiner's fire, purify our lives this day and bless the gifts we bring before you now. Through our offering, may those who sit in darkness find their way into the light of your loving arms.

All: **Amen**

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Please rise in body or spirit
Song

Glory to God #106: Prepare the Way, O Zion

Invitation to Community Life

Music for Reflection

*Fantasia on “Veni Emmanuel”
by Alec Rowley*

Benediction

One: May your love overflow in mercy and compassion, as you walk in the ways of Christ.
May you produce a harvest of righteousness, as you live as Christ’s disciples to the
glory of God.

All: Amen.

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Liturgist: Susannah Prinz

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Song Leader: Linda Carter

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Godly Play: Raenelle Tauro and Ruby Prinz

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Sarah & Paul Roberts

Advent Wreath Making, Today! Bring Wire Frame from Last Year!



Back by popular demand, ALL are invited to create an advent wreath today in the reception room during coffee hour. We provide the greens, ribbons and paraphernalia. Bring your creativity and sense of fun. If you made a wreath last year and still have the wire frame, please bring it on Sunday.



Advent Dinners Return Every Wednesday Before Christmas

Each Wednesday in December we will gather in a members' home to share a meal, reflect upon Advent, and enjoying being together.

Please let Julia Marquez or the host know if you are planning on attending. We hope you can join us for this special meal.

Dec. 11, 6 - 8pm

Julia Marquez

5433 Shafter Ave, Oakland, 94618

Dec. 18, 6 - 8pm

Nina and Eric Lapachet

6000 Fairlane Drive, Oakland 94611



Holiday Concerts Bring Music and Joy to First Church



First Church is leading the way to a joyous holiday season with multiple musical performances that are sure to delight you and your family. Here are the details you need to enjoy some or all of the fabulous performances by talented community partners and local musicians:

TODAY at 4 p.m.

Cantare Adult and Youth Choirs

Cantare's Chorale, Chamber Ensemble and Nova, accompanied by full orchestra, present Cantare's annual December Holiday Concert. Always a holiday favorite, the program will include Poulenc's Gloria and several seasonal favorites that reflect the sentiments from assorted sacred and secular traditions.

Tickets: cantareconvivo.org

Sunday, December 15, 4 p.m

Oakland Gay Men's Chorus

This 90-minute, 2-act concert is packed with heartwarming classics and exciting new arrangements that will have you tapping your toes and singing along. Enjoy timeless hits like "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," "Silver Bells," and "Sleigh Ride," plus our playful twist on "I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus."



We'll also be bringing the spirit of inclusivity with "The Chanukah Song (We Are Lights)" and the reflective beauty of "Winter Song" by Sara Bareilles and Ingrid Michaelson.

Tickets: oaklandgmc.org

Saturday, December 14, 2 p.m.

The Lucy Kinchen Chorale

The Chorale's mission is to preserve and perform the Negro Spiritual in the Bay Area and beyond. In addition to the Negro Spiritual, the Chorale's repertoire includes madrigals, classical, sacred, jazz, and pop.

Tickets: Available at the door.

Thursday, December 19

Sunday, December 22

Candlelight Concerts

Candlelight concerts bring the magic of a live, multi-sensory musical experience to our awe-inspiring location!

Two concerts are offered:

Holiday Special featuring the Nutcracker and other holiday favorites.

Christmas Carols on Strings featuring your favorite holiday songs.

Tickets: feverup.com/en/oakland/candlelight

Update on Antiracism Work from the Presbytery of San Francisco

In 2022, the Presbytery of San Francisco established a commission to conduct an internal Race Equity Audit. The goal of this work is to identify how systemic racism is embedded in presbytery structures and culture. The commission is named the Truth Commission for Race Equity or T-CARE for short. Linda Spencer from MPC has been serving as staff and as a volunteer with T-CARE. T-CARE is excited to report that they have completed a Draft Report with their findings. The report is relatively short (16 pages) and they hope you will find it readable. Their documentation and detailed analyses are in appendices. T-CARE is inviting folks to read their Draft Report and then attend a Conversation Circle to share your reactions. They want to bring the voices, experiences, and thoughts of people within our presbytery into their Final Report. Upcoming Conversation Circles:

Tuesday, 12/17/24, 7 to 8:30 pm, via Zoom, in English with translations available, hosted by Erina Kim-Eubanks, and co-facilitated by Rev Kamal Hassan and Noah Kruis (Crossroads).

Tuesday, 1/7/25, 7 to 8:30 pm, via Zoom, in English with translations available, hosted by Rochelle

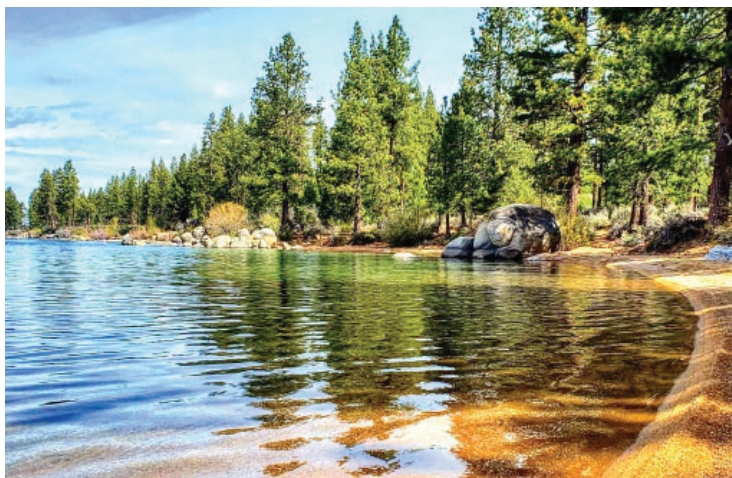


Shaw, and co-facilitated by Rev Kamal Hassan and Noah Kruis (Crossroads)

Saturday, 1/11/25, 2 to 4 pm, in-person, Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, San Francisco. This session is part of the West Region Antiracist Group's meeting.

To register, please go to;
presbyteryofsf.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2579500

Save the Date for our Fall Retreat: September 27-28, 2025



Join us at the beautiful Zephyr Point Presbyterian Center for a weekend of peace and joy.

Please see Pastor Matt if you are interested in helping to plan the retreat.

Next Steps in Building our Church Community

by Ben Baab

For over 100 years, First Presbyterian Church has worshipped God and served Oakland from the corner of Broadway and 27th St. In 1960, the campus expanded to include a multipurpose Fellowship Hall and classrooms. What is God guiding us to do with what we have inherited?

Trends and Challenges

Our society has changed in many ways during the last 60 years. Regular church attendance has declined for a wide range of reasons. Facilities have fallen into disrepair due to spiraling maintenance costs and dwindling financial resources. Yet, while the resources to respond to these challenges are decreasing, the needs of our neighbors continue to expand. For examples of these challenges and some strategies to meet them, consider reading the essays compiled by Mark Elsdon in *Gone for Good?: Negotiating the Coming Wave of Church Property Transition*. Be prepared to have some of your feelings about church spaces challenged.

Opportunities and Strategies

Even though the challenges may seem daunting, God calls us to love God and each other and gives us encouragement and tools to do God's will. The most obvious tool that we have is our location - close to housing, food, services, transportation, healthcare, and schools. Recent zoning changes may allow us to develop our property to a greater extent than was possible before. For guidance in considering options, review the advice available at the website of RootedGood.org.

Our facilities already serve a vibrant community. Our Sunday worship service, Godly Play, and fellowship hour provide essential spiritual practices and community time for our faith journeys. On Mondays, you will find hot meals being prepared and served. On Tuesdays,



More food is prepared and delivered to the neighborhood. On Wednesdays, lunches are made for the MACRO teams to provide to those in distress on our streets. Food Not Bombs cooks more food on Thursdays. On Fridays and Saturdays, donated ingredients are gathered from local grocery stores/bakeries and organized and meals are planned for Sunday and Monday. Also on Fridays, over 100 people visit the ReCares volunteers who collect and distribute medical equipment. Throughout the week, children, parents, and teachers enliven the Early Head Start classrooms, playground, courtyard, and Fellowship Hall. Many musicians rehearse in our spaces throughout the week, during the day and in the evenings. Habitat for Humanity, Cantare, and our own office personnel work to keep their organizations thriving. Oakland Gay Men's chorus, Cantare Con Vivo, Community Women's Orchestra, and others hold rehearsals weekday evenings.

Opportunities exist to collaborate more fully with our current mission partners and keep

supporting their important work. On a broader scale, we might consider partnering with Alameda County in supporting their Continuum of Care initiative, called EveryOne Home. Visit everyonehome.org to learn more about the initiative and think about ways we might help. A book published in October 2024 written by John Cleghorn, entitled *Building Belonging: The Church's Call to Create Community and House Our Neighbors*, merges themes related to Ben McBride's work, *Troubling the Waters*, on Belonging and Othering with the significant challenges of providing affordable housing.

Decisions

First Presbyterian has had several dedicated stewards of the building and grounds over the years - Judy Rowan, Di Pagel, Suzie Inadomi, Chris Weber, and Erick Bevington, to name a few. Chris and Erick, in particular, have drafted conceptual and technical plans to maintain, improve, and develop our campus. We are now at a point where plans need to be finalized, decisions made, goals set, resources gathered, and work scheduled. In the next couple months, we hope to reach a consensus about our specific goals and priorities as they relate to worship, music, food, education, shelter, services/offices, and gathering spaces.

What can you do?

- Pray with us for guidance.
- Inform yourself about the issues - using suggestions listed here or others that you can find online.
- Observe the current weekly activities at First Presbyterian if you are not familiar with them.
- Participate in conversations with other community members and service providers.
- Share your thoughts, dreams, and opinions with Maggie, Pastor Matt, or Ben.
- Support the work to reach a consensus about the future God is calling us to help create.

Join us on Christmas Eve!



Please join us at 6 pm on December 24 for our Christmas Eve service. The service will include special music, a pop-up nativity and a candlelight procession to the song Silent Night.

Seeking a Chair for the Fellowship Hall Women's Restroom



If you have a gently used chair or loveseat that would be appropriate for the Ladies room which you would like to donate, please contact Martha Baab. The chair would be placed in the foyer of the restroom for use by nursing moms or by anyone who needs to rest.

DI Pagel Tells a Story at Worship



First Church proudly supports our COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Afterglow Chorus
- Cantare Choirs
- Catalyst Youth Network
- College Awareness
- Community Women's Orchestra
- Downtown Streets Team
- Faith in Action East Bay
- Food Not Bombs
- Habitat For Humanity, East Bay-Silicon Valley
- Mandela Partners
- Oakland Civic Orchestra
- Oakland Early Head Start Preschool
- Oakland Gay Men's Chorus
- Oakland Kids First
- Quinteto Latino
- ReCares
- The Lucy Kinchen Chorale
- Vituity Care Foundation



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and past editions of
Temple Tidings

Elders

Elizabeth Cureton: Youth and Children
Chris Weber: Building and Grounds
Di Pagel: Worship and Music/Personnel
Gay Plair Cobb: Personnel/Food Ministry
Erick Bevington: Treasurer
Maggie Harmon: Finance
Julia Marquez: Community Life

Session Officers

Rev. Matt Prinz, Moderator
Anne Margaret Manay, Clerk
Erick Bevington, Treasurer

Deacons

Marjorie Witt, Barbara Goodroe, Derrick Polk,
Su Coburn, Pauline Ahanotu, Monrovia Prinz,
Martha Bauman, Charmaine Irmiter

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Temple Tidings Contributors This Week

Writing by Matt Prinz, Ben Baab and Micheline La Mont. *Temple Tidings* is a weekly publication. All are welcome to contribute news, events and opinion.

Sign up to be on our email list: firstchurchoakland.org/temple-tidings