

Weekly Newsletter

December 15, 2024

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



The Annunciation
By Karen Schwan

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

Savior of the Nations, Come
By J.S. Bach

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: Rejoice, for God is here!

All: God is our strength and our light.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: We will sing praises for all the earth to hear!

Gathering Prayer

One: God of love and joy, thank you for your presence in our lives. During this time of worship, draw us closer to you and to one another. May we grow in our love for you and for our neighbor. May we lay aside our worries, trusting that you hear what lies in our hearts. May we dwell in your peace and be guided by the one who is to come, your Son, Jesus Christ, In your holy name, we pray.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verses 5-6
Glory to God #88

CONFESSION of SIN & ASSURANCE of GRACE

One: Merciful God, it can be hard to follow your ways. We want to hold on to what we have. We want to mind our own business and ignore the needs of others. We want to follow the ways of the world and not your ways. Remind us that you offer us forgiveness and bring healing and redemption into our lives. Help us turn to you once again, that we may receive the good news of your endless love and grace.

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 gathered 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.

Prayers

Christmas

This is the season of the year when so many things stand out in stark outline against the background of our days. We think of little children all over the world; children in refugee camps who have known aught else throughout the length of their days; children in orphanages in our own land and in other lands; rootless children; children in families where there is so little love that they are unaware that their own lives are touched by its gentleness and strength; sick children, those who have walked and will never walk again, those who have looked out on the beauty of the world and will never see it again. Our hearts are touched and melt in the quietness as we remember the children of the world. We remember the old people. Those whose fires have been banked, and who sit in their solitariness, some with minds broken by the hardness of their days, who cannot be comforted by the memories of other times; some who at this season of the year hunger and thirst for the love of their children, and find it not; some who live in homes for the aged, surrounded by those of their kind, who huddle together, hoping that in the warmth of each other's personality and spirit they might find strength sufficient for another day. God of our hearts and our lives, accept the tenderness which we pour out in our thoughts and in our memories and desires, and grant that it will inform our deeds, so that during these days that are upon us, to the limit of our strength and beyond, we may be messengers of Thy tidings, and sharers of Thy peace.

“May the sounds of Advent stir a longing in your people, O God. Come again to set us free from the dullness of routine and the poverty of our imaginations. Break the patterns which bind us to small commitments and to the stale answers we have given to questions of no importance. Let the Advent trumpet blow, let the walls of our defenses crumble, and make a place in our lives for the freshness of your love, well-lived in the Spirit, and still given to all who know their need and dare receive it. Amen”

— Howard Thurman — The Mood of Christmas

Song

Keep Your Lamps
arr. Andre Thomas
Sung by the choir

Children may go with leaders to Godly Play.

THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1. 26 – 38 NRSV

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Please rise in body or spirit

Song *African American Heritage Hymnal #449: Have Thine Own Way, Lord*
African American Heritage Hymnal #449

Invitation to the LORD's Supper

Song *Glory to God #507: Come to the Table of Grace*
Glory to God #507

Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The bread of heaven is here, leading us into life.

All: We draw strength from the bread of life.

One: The cup of blessing is at hand, bringing us salvation.

All: We find life in the cup of salvation

One: Eat and drink, for Christ is here, offering us eternal life

All: Thanks be to God.

Words of Institution

Communion Music

Breath of Heaven

Sharing of the Holy Meal & Offering

Please come forward when invited by ushers. Communion is non alcoholic and gluten free. Donations can be placed in the offering plate. Donations may also be made using this QR Code:



Prayer

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Please rise in body or spirit
Song

No Wind at the Window
Glory to God #101

Invitation to Community Life
Music for Reflection

Lord Christ, the only Son of God
By J.S. Bach

Benediction

One: Siblings in Christ, God is truly with us.
Go forth, rejoicing that Christ shows us the way.
Go in peace.
Go in hope.
All: Amen.

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Liturgist: Gay Clair Cobb

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Song Leader: Anne Margaret Manay

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Godly Play: Dorrie Dodge and Aaron Ruff

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Martha Bauman & Jan Busch

Meditation Workshop Begins January 12 - Join Us!

Interested in deepening your faith by engaging in the spiritual discipline of mindful meditation? Meditation is well-known to us as a practice connected with yoga, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religions from various parts of the world. Did you know that meditation is also an ancient practice of the early church, practiced throughout history by many monastic traditions, and perhaps less obvious currently practiced by many Christians.

Practitioners of mindful meditation report greater awareness of self and a deeper connection to others. In this four part series,

we will seek to explore how meditation can also bring us to a deeper awareness and connection with the Divine that resides within us. Our four week journey will include a consideration of the various ways meditation has been understood in various cultures and the history and meaning of meditation within Christian communities. We will also practice meditation during various parts of each session.

We will meet on January 12 at noon. We will decide together the best dates for the 2nd and 3rd classes. Contact Joel Mackey for further details and/or to sign up. Join us.

Final Advent Dinner on December 18 at the Lapachet's

Please join us as we will gather 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. 18, 6 - 8pm

Nina and Eric Lapachet

6000 Fairlane Drive, Oakland 94611



Final Holiday Concerts This Year!

TODAY! 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



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

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.

Edwell Baby Shower Dec. 22



Please join us during coffee hour on Sunday, December 22 to celebrate the newest member of the Edwell family!

<https://my.babylist.com/jennifer-edwell>

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

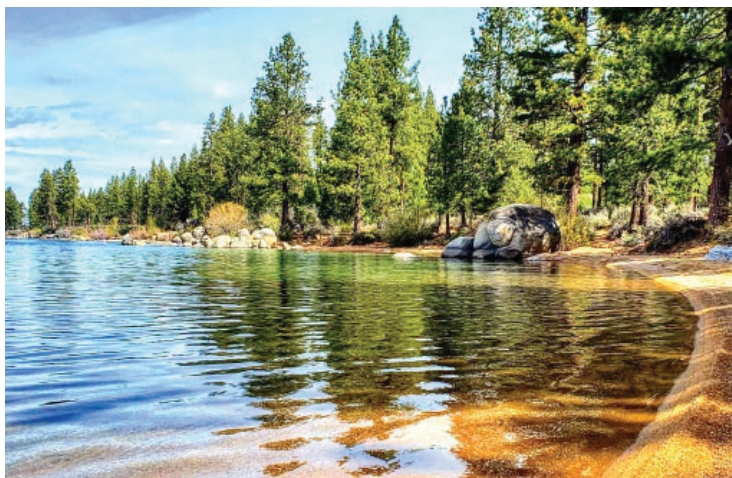


Shaw, and co-facilitated by Rev Kamal Hassan and Noah Kruis (Crossroads)

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.

Make a Big Impact for the Church with your Year-End Gift

By Maggie Harmon

If you are taking your Required Minimum Distribution (or if you are 70 ½) you can direct a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from your IRA to First Presbyterian Church in any amount from \$100 to \$100,000. The gift is not taxable to you as income and can potentially reduce your overall tax rate.*

Gifts of stock or other publicly traded securities can be received by the church. When you make a gift of securities you can deduct the full value of the sale price without having to realize any of the capital gain.*

Cash gifts are also deductible of course, and gifts in any amount are deeply appreciated and enormously valuable to the ongoing life of the community.

To make a gift of securities contact elder for finance and stewardship Maggie Harmon, maggieafh@gmail.com.



*talk to your financial advisor for details specific to your circumstances.

Wreath Making a Joyous Time



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, Maggie Harmon
and Micheline La Mont. Photos by Suzie Inadomi.
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