

Weekly Newsletter

December 24, 2024

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



Nativity by Anna Kolisnyk

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

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Welcome

by Johannes Brahms and Michael Praetorius

Gennaro Porcaro, Harp

Call to Worship

One: All people are welcome here tonight

All: We have gathered to hear the story of Jesus' birth

One: All who walk in darkness,

All: come see a great light.

One: All who hope to see God,

All: come see the glory of our savior, Jesus Christ.

One: All who are simply waiting to see what's next,

All: come see the good news God brings.

One: Rejoice before God in the light and glory of this night.

All: We rejoice that God's grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

Gathering Prayer

One: Holy God, help us pause in the midst of our busyness. Quiet our minds on this Christmas Eve, that we may hear the good news of your gift of Jesus Christ --your gift to a world so in need of peace, justice, and joy. If we wait in hope for the coming of Christ, help us offer hope to those around us. Help us see your glory breaking into our lives, as Mary and shepherds before us saw. In the quiet of this night, may we welcome your peace through Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful
Glory to God #133

**O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant:
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

**True God from True God, Light from light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Very God, begotten not created!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

S C R I P T U R E

Luke 1:26-33
Carol

What Child is This?
Glory to God #145

Please remain seated

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

SCRIPTURE

Scripture: Luke 1:34-38

Carol

Please remain seated

*Away in a Manger
Glory to God #115*

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.**

SCRIPTURE

Scripture: Luke 1:39-45

Carol

Please remain seated

*O Little Town of Bethlehem
Glory to God #121*

**O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.**

SCRIPTURE

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55

Carol

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Glory to God #119

Please rise in body or spirit

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”
Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’incarnate Deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

A d v e n t P r a y e r & L i g h t i n g o f t h e A d v e n t C a n d l e

Advent Prayer

By Howard Thurman

I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Musical Offering

O, Holy Night

P o p - U p N a t i v i t y

All are invited to participate in an interactive reenactment of the Nativity story from Luke 2:1-20.

The Angels are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Shepherds and Animals are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Holy Family and King Herod are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Nativity Story

After the story, all are invited to return to their seats, while the people sing this carol:

Carol

*Go Tell It on the Mountain
African American Heritage Hymnal #202*

**Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. Refrain**

**The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain**

**Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. Refrain**

Reflection

Carol

Please rise in body or spirit

Joy to the World

Glory to God #134, verses 1, 2, & 4

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing! [x3]**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy! [x3]**

**He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love! [x3]**

Candle Lighting & Recessional

The congregation is invited to assemble on the front steps. Ushers will assist with lighting candles.

Carol

Silent Night

**Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia:
Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born!"**

**Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

Practices of our Church Community – Ways to Join Us

Worship Service Each Sunday we gather at 10am to sing, pray, confess, and worship God together. We invite our community to participate in our worship services through singing, reading, praying, ushering, or sharing testimony. Do you like to write prayers or help connect music to themes in scripture? Talk with Di Pagel (Elder of Worship), Jake Fontana (Music Director) or Pastor Matt if you would like to help lead/design our worship services. You can also help us create space for conversation and building community through providing food during our coffee hour (11-12). Talk with Julia Marquez if you would like to contribute.



Food Ministry Each week, more than 40 volunteers share over 300 meals with our neighbors through our food ministry. Volunteers gather donated food on Fridays and Saturdays from local supermarkets and bakeries. Meals are prepared on Sundays and Mondays and are shared with neighbors and delivered to local encampments. We have opportunities to serve during the week, each Saturday, and Sunday. Talk with Gay Cobb or Dorothy Dugger or Nina Lapachet to get involved.



Bible Study Wednesday nights at 7pm via Zoom we gather around the sacred texts of scripture to study and reflect upon our lives and take new steps of faithfulness together. No need to study beforehand, just sign up for our weekly emails, click on the Zoom link and join the conversation. Come with a desire to build community and listen for God's Spirit in the midst of scripture. Talk with Henry Gardner or Maggie Harmon or Pastor Matt for more details.



Building the Beloved Community Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. constantly spoke about God's work of building the beloved community - a community bridging across the differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Building the Beloved Community is one lens we use to look at all of our ministry at First Church. We also host conversations, book groups, attend concerts and art shows, to learn, reflect, and to help us build God's beloved community within our church community, in our neighborhoods, and city. Talk with Suzie Inadomi, Pastor Matt or Pastor Joel to learn about ways to join BBC work at First Presbyterian Church of Oakland.



Community Life - God is community Three in one and we are made for community. Creating spaces for community around meals, discussion groups, backyard firepits, and outings together (A's game, beach etc.) are an important ministry within our church community. Do you like to host events, love connecting with others, enjoy building community? Talk with Julia Marquez or Pastor Matt and join them in planning our next community life events.



Faith in Action "Justice is what love looks like in the public." Cornel West. How do we put our faith into action to love our neighbors? One way we live out our faith is joining the ministries of Faith in Action East Bay, who for over 40 years have advocated and worked in areas of gun violence, immigration, education, housing, and equity in Oakland and the larger Bay Area. Members of First Pres. regularly join FIA Ceasefire night walks, advocate for affordable housing, and seek to support new structural changes for equity and justice. Talk with Pastor Matt to get involved and our new community organizer Chris Logan.



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.

Pastor Joel Leads Meditation Workshop Beginning January 12

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.

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.

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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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

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

Deacons

Marjorie Witt, Barbara Goodroe, Derrick Polk,
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