

Weekly Newsletter

January 12, 2025

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



Scorched Earth
by Mark Bradford

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

*Fugue in D Major
by Felix Mendelssohn*

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: We hear God's voice.

All: It thunders through creation.

One: God's voice is strong.

All: It shatters the cedars of Lebanon.

One: God is still speaking.

All: Calling out our names.

One: Listen for God.

All: God calls us beloved.

Gathering Prayer

One: God of strength, God of love, surround us with your love. Gather us in as your beloved children. Open our ears to hear your voice. Open our hearts to the power of your transforming love. May your waters of grace pour over us, renewing us for your work in the world. Bless us in this holy time.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Hymn

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
African American Heritage Hymnal #371

CONFESSION of SIN & ASSURANCE of GRACE

One: Loving God, sometimes life seems overwhelming. There is so much happening that we can't control. We feel like we are drowning. Then we hear your voice saying, "Don't fear," and we remember that your love supports and sustains us. You are there when we feel overwhelmed. You are there when we struggle. You give us what we need. Forgive us when we turn away, when we forget that you are here. Help us place our trust in you, as we step away from fear, secure in your love.

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

Assurance of Pardon

God says, "Don't be afraid."

God calls and names us as God's own.

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.

Children may go with leaders to Godly Play.

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.

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

Shine on Me



THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 43. 1 - 7 NRSV

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my sight
and honored and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
and to the south, "Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of the earth—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

God Got This

RESPONSE to the WORD

Sermon Continued

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

Song

*Great is Thy Faithfulness
Glory to God #39*

Invitation to the Offering

We live in security, trusting God's abundant care. Let us give with joy, serving Jesus Christ, God's beloved child.

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

Doxology

*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow
Glory to God #607*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore.
Amen.**

Prayer for the Offering

One: Loving God, you bless us with your love. You know each one of us. We live in confidence and trust, knowing your care for us. We bring these gifts to you, our sources of life. Use them, we pray, that others may experience your grace and live free from fear.

All: Amen

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Invitation to Community Life

Please rise in body or spirit

Song

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

Benediction

One: We are often tossed on the restless sea of time

All: We are trusting the Lord and will understand by and by

One: Trials and temptations are all around

All: We look to God to lead us to the promised land

One: When we are gathered home

All: We will tell the story of how we've overcome

One: For we'll understand it better by and by

All: Amen.

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Preacher: Maggie Harmon

Liturgist: Jan Busch

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Song Leader: Marilyn Reynolds

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Elizabeth Cureton and Shawn Jones

Godly Play: Raenelle Tauro and Anne Margaret Manay

Building the Beloved Community Shares EJI 2025 Calendars



The Equal Justice Initiative's 2025 calendar is a full-color wall calendar that includes hundreds of historical entries and 12 short essays highlighting historical events and issues in our nation's racial history. This award-winning wall calendar is a powerful tool for learning about our nation's history of racial injustice and its legacy. To get your calendar, please see Pastor Matt and he will give one to you.



Come to the Congregational Meeting on January 26 at 11 a.m.

Each year we gather as a church community to elect new Elders and Deacons to help lead and guide our church ministries. We will look back over this last year and celebrate what God has done in our midst and look forward to what God is calling us into.

We will review the 2025 budget and vote on the Pastor's salary. Please plan on staying after the worship service and celebrate what God is doing with us.

Worship Planning Meeting for Lent on January 26 from 12-2 p.m.

Our Sunday worship services are intentionally designed as space for our spiritual formation as individuals and a church community. Do you have creative ideas about prayers, songs, or scriptures for spiritual formation in the season of Lent?

All are welcome to join Pastor Matt, Jake, and Di Pagel (Elder of Worship) as we plan together.

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 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.



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.



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.



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, Oakland Civic 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.

As you know we are in the process of discerning how to be the best stewards of the property entrusted to our care in the form of this campus. For well over one hundred years the faithful have served from Oakland and we seek to continue our service aligned to the needs of the community and the will of God as we understand that. To that end we are asking you to complete a short survey about the use of the campus and your understanding of our role in the community.

You should have received a link to the survey by email, but if you did not please contact Maggie Harmon for access as we hope to have everyone participate! maggieafh@gmail.com; 510-688-8595.

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.



Celebrate January Birthdays!



Please wish these people a happy birthday!

January 10: Eric Witt

January 14: Susannah Prinz

January 17: Sarah Postma

January 21: Cassandra Flipper

January 23: Anna Lisa Fear

January 23: Rebecca Faith Obedeyi

January 24: Penny Taylor

January 26: Christine Kovach

January 29: Rev. Bill Beatty

First Church proudly supports our

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Afterglow Chorus
- Cantare Choirs
- Catalyst Youth Network
- College Awareness
- Community Women's Orchestra
- 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
- ReCares
- The Lucy Kinchen Chorale
- Vituity Care Foundation



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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

Church Staff

Rev. Matt Prinz, Pastor

matt@firstchurchoakland.org

510.488.3812

email to make an appointment

Rev. Joel Mackey, Parish Associate

joelmackey@comcast.net

Jake Fontana, Music Director

jake@firstchurchoakland.org

Micheline La Mont, Community Relationships Manager

micheline@firstchurchoakland.org

510.488.3810

Hours: Wednesday 2-4:30/Thursday 9-2:30

Gus Lopez, Head Custodian

510.290.9677

Erick Bevington, Treasurer

erick@firstchurchoakland.org

Joan Clerk, Bookkeeper

joan@firstchurchoakland.org

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**