

Weekly Newsletter

January 19, 2025

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



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

MLK
Bono

Sleep
Sleep tonight
And may your dreams
Be realized
If the thundercloud
Passes rain
So let it rain
Rain down on him
So let it be

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: God's faithful love welcomes us here.

All: Thank God for this glorious gift!

One: God's faithful love redeems our lives.

All: Thank God for our many blessings!

One: God's faithful love is ours to share.

All: We will offer this gift to God's world.

Gathering Prayer

One: Oh, God, our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the privilege above all privileges, and that is the privilege to worship Thee. Grant that we will never misuse worship, that we will direct it in the proper channel and receive all of the great rewards that come as a result of our kneeling before Thee in humble submission and worshipping Thee throughout the whole wide world. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Hymn

We Gather Together
African American Heritage Hymnal #342

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

One: O thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being. We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive, we love our friends and hate our enemies, we go the first mile but dare not travel the second, we forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against thee. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know thy will. Give us the courage to do thy will. Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray.

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

In Christ's grace, we can boldly embrace God's love.

In Christ's mercy, we can confidently proclaim that God's love is enough.

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

One: O God, the Creator and Preserver of all humankind; in whom to dwell is to find peace and security; toward whom to turn is to find life and life eternal, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of people; that thou wouldst be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. We also pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly goodness all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed in mind or body. Give them patience under the suffering and power of endurance. This we ask in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Song

Shine on Me



THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 8. 1 - 4 NRSV

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him, and there was a man with a skin disease who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be made clean!" Immediately his skin disease was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

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.

Hymn

*I Know Who Holds Tomorrow
African American Heritage Hymnal #415*

Invitation to the LORD's Supper

Hymn

*We Remember You
African American Heritage Hymnal #683*

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

Selections Performed by David Morales

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

O God, our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for life and we thank Thee for health. We thank Thee for the ability to work and to live in this society. Help us to realize that as we make our money that we owe a portion of it to Thee. And help us to give it with open hearts and spirits, realizing that as we give, we give for the ongoing work of Thy kingdom here on earth.

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Invitation to Community Life

Please rise in body or spirit
Hymn

We Shall Understand it By and By
African American Heritage Hymnal #418

Benediction

And now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling.
And now unto him who is able to lift us from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope.
And not unto Him who is able to solve racial oppression if we will cooperate with Him.
And now unto Him who is able to transform this cosmic energy into constructive force.
Now unto Him who is able to transform this midnight of injustice into a glowing daybreak of freedom and justice.
To Him be power and authority, majesty and dominion, now, henceforth, and forever more.

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Preacher: Pastor Ben McBride

Liturgist: Derek Mueller

Music Director: David Morales

Song Leader: Anne Margaret Manay

Liturgy: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from *Thou, Dear God*

Godly Play: Dorrie Dodge and Aaron Ruff

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Sarah and Paul Roberts and Maggie Harmon

Celebrate 2024 Ministry at First Presbyterian Church Oakland

January Jake Fontana started as our new music director, guiding us in a diversity of musical styles to worship God. We joined the Alameda County Homeless count to walk the census tract surrounding our church building and hear the stories of our unhoused neighbors.

February Black History month celebration each Sunday: youth participation, guest preachers, Lucy Kinchen Chorale, and a joyful community meal. Pastor Joel led us in discussing the book *Reading While Black* and reflecting on the cultural and racial lens we bring to our sacred scriptures.



March We walked the path of Jesus the final hours of his life on Good Friday and reflected upon God's invitation to courageous faith. Jake restarted our choir and they led us in our Easter celebration.

April We joined Empower Initiative on a pilgrimage to sacred civil rights sites in Montgomery, Selma, and Birmingham Alabama. We studied the power of faith communities to bring change in the past and were renewed in our commitment to work for God's justice in our own city and neighborhoods. Women's circle met and used lectio divino to reflect on scripture and their personal spiritual journey.



May Pastor Matt visited our college students to encourage them and to hear about their school experience. Deacons sent packages to our college students to support them as they prepared to take their school finals. Bible Study met every Wednesday night to read and wrestle with the scriptures and take new steps of faith.



June Pride month was celebrated each Sunday with liturgy by the enfleshed collective, guest preachers, and education to foster belonging. Jen Edwell led us in a discussion of the book *57 Bus* and looked at issues of gender, the justice and education system, and race in Oakland.

July We joined the Ceasefire night walk anniversary celebration and walked with others to help reduce gun violence in Oakland. The Ceasefire program led to an over 30% reduction in homicides in 2024. Piano and organ music created sacred space in our Friday night 'Soundscape.' We invited neighbors to enjoy the sacred space for pray and reflect and rest.



August We moved out worship services throughout the church campus from the reception room to the courtyard to the fellowship hall. We reflected on the church as the gathered community and packed bagged lunches for our food ministry during communion. We enjoyed community at one of the last A's games in Oakland. We met in member's homes to discuss Richard Rohr's book Breathing Underwater, a spirituality of the 12 steps.



September We celebrated the life of Bill Coburn and his leadership in our food ministry. Godly Play storytellers created beautiful community and learning space every Sunday with our children. We opened our sanctuary for Working Names Studio to host an ambient sound concert.



October We hosted an art show of Susan Allison Hatch mixed media fabric art on justice, the Psalms, and God's call on our lives. Our session voted to seek community discernment about how to continue to faithfully use our church building and campus to love God and our neighbors. Should we continue to make space for local non-profits and performing arts or explore creating affordable housing or are there other options?

November Lucy Kinchen Chorale blessed us on Sunday morning, singing African American spirituals in our worship service. We hosted an art night with OakLife church. Artists shared their poetry, music, and visual art with the community.

December We gathered in homes for Advent dinners each Wednesday night to reflect upon the coming Christ and enjoy Christian community. We sang carols, acted out the nativity story, and carried Christ's light out onto Broadway Ave.



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.

Mark your Calendar for these upcoming Ceasefire Nightwalks

January 24: 6 p.m.

At Thy Word, 8915 International Blvd.

January 31: 6 p.m.

St. Benedict's Church, 2245 82nd Ave.

February 14, 6 p.m.

First Mt. Sinai, 1970 86th Ave.

February 21, 6 p.m.

St. Columbia, 6401 San Pablo Ave.

February 28, 6 p.m.

At Thy Word, 8915 International Blvd.

March 14, 6 p.m.

First Mt. Sinai, 1970 86th Ave.

March 21, 6 p.m.

Tabernacle Baptist Church, 10115 Edes Ave.

March 28: 6 p.m.

At Thy Word, 8915 International Blvd.



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.

Celebration of Life for Fay Hughes Set for February 1



Please join family and friends to celebrate the life of Fay Hughes. Fay was full of life and always eager to talk about her travels and family history. Come and share your fond memories of Fay and please wear something purple, her favorite color.

February 1 from 1-2 p.m.

Woodside Village Mobile Home Park Clubhouse

12155 Luther Road

Auburn

Please confirm your attendance by calling Carolyn Darling-Bliss at 530.613.2135.

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.



Building the Beloved Community Shares EJl 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. To get your calendar, please see Pastor Matt and he will give one to you.

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

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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**