

Weekly Newsletter

February 9, 2025

Temple Tidings

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



Art by Amy Sherald



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

Fix Me, Jesus
arr. Mervyn Warren

Welcome

Responsive Prayer

One: God our maker, we honor the sacred multitude that resides in you.

All: May the guardian in you protect us.

One: May the child in you delight in us.

All: May the friend in you challenge us.

One: May your ashes resurrect us.

All: May your sky shelter us.

One: May the mystery of you liberate us. Provide abundance and healing in all forms for those who need it today, and deliver us from shame, hatred and the chains that bind us.

All: For you have made us. And we are still being made. Amen.

Why We Celebrate Black History Month at First Church

Hymn

Precious Lord, Take My Hand
African American Heritage Hymnal #471

CONFESSION of SIN & ASSURANCE of GRACE

One: Stony the road we have walked and yet we forget our footsteps. We have too often not honored the faith of our forefathers. We have too often strayed from the righteous path. We have too often been drunk on the wine of the world, and not lived out the radical gospel of service and peace. We have too often lived in division and sin. Forgive us, O God. Call us back to our heritage; back to You.

From the Africana Worship Book

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

The musical score is written for two staves, treble and bass clef, in 3/2 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the treble clef, with accompaniment in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Swahili Mun - gu ni mwe-ma. Mun - gu ni mwe-ma.
English Know that God is__ good. Know that God is__ good.

Mun - gu ni mwe-ma, ni mwema, ni mwema, ni mwema.
Know that God is__ good, God is__ good, God is__ good.

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.

Lord's Prayer

Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
Sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
Now and forever. Amen
From the New Zealand Prayer Book.

Hymn

I Want Jesus to Walk with Me
African American Heritage Hymnal #563

THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat the right hand of the throne of God.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Guided by the Faithful Among Us Panel Discussion

A Poem for Reflection

Hymn

Lead Me, Guide Me

Invitation to the Offering

African American Heritage Hymnal #474

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:



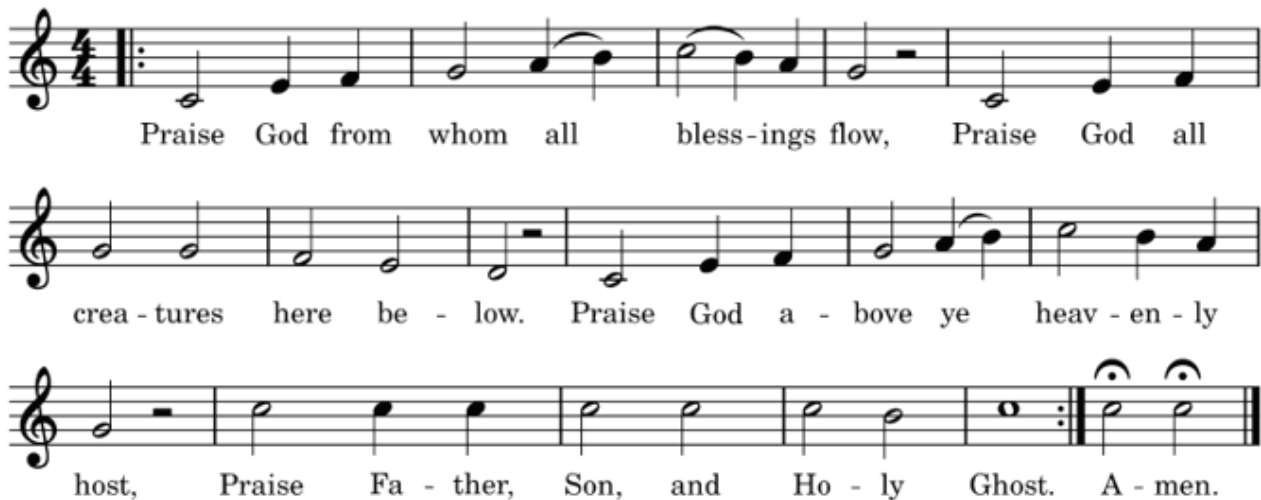
Offertory

“Summertime” from Porgy and Bess

The opera “Porgy and Bess” depicts the trials of an African American couple in 1920s South Carolina. It holds a complex place in music history: its composer, George Gershwin, was white, but he insisted on an all-African American cast at a time when this was rare. Scholars believe Gershwin took the melody for “Summertime” from the spiritual “Sometimes I feel like a Motherless Child.”

Doxology

Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow



Offering Prayer

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Invitation to Community Life

Hymn

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
African American Heritage Hymnal #150

Benediction

New Day's Lyric (excerpt)
by Amanda Gorman

We come together.
We steadily vow that no matter
How we are weighed down,
We must always pave a way forward.
This hope is our door, our portal.
So let us not return to what was normal,
But reach toward what is next.
Those moments we missed
Are now these moments we make,
The moments we meet,
And our hearts, once all together beaten,
Now all together beat.
Come, look up with kindness yet,
For even solace can be sourced from sorrow.
We remember, not just for the sake of yesterday,
But to take on tomorrow.
For when you honor yesterday,
Tomorrow ye will find.
Know what we've fought
Need not be forgot nor for none.
It defines us, binds us as one,
Come over, join this day just begun.
For wherever we come together,
We will forever overcome.

S E R V I N G i n W O R S H I P T O D A Y

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Liturgists: Ruby and Monrovia Prinz

Song Leader: Evanna Lai

Soloist: Marilyn Reynolds

Pianist: Micah Ogden

Panel For Reflection: Nnamdi Iwuagwu, Cole Provost,
Cassandra Flipper, Joel Mackey, Marilyn Reynolds

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Godly Play: Ranelle Tauro and Aaron Ruff

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Nnamdi Iwuagwu and Jameia Hughes

Black History Month Celebration Events at First Church - Looking Back and Moving Forward

Sunday Feb. 9 – Youth Sunday. Youth members will be leading our prayers, reading, and playing music. They will also be interviewing members about their life experiences and getting advice.

Sunday Feb. 9 – Field Trip to see Amy Sherald art exhibit at SFMOMA. Join us at noon as we go to enjoy the beautiful art of Amy Sherald. Many people are familiar with her portrait of Michele Obama and Breanna Taylor. We will carpool over. Let Pastor Matt know if you would like to join us.



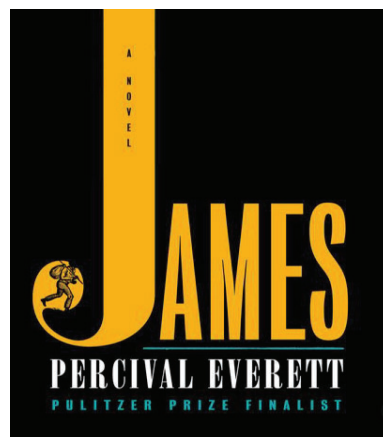
Sunday Feb. 16 – Rev. Chris Logan preaching, inspiration in our musical worship from works by Black female composers, Shawn Jones playing music.



Sunday Feb. 23 – Rev. Riana Shaw Robinson preaching, Lucy Kinchen Chorale sharing their musical gifts. Community potluck meal following our worship service.



Wednesday Feb. 26
Book discussion of James, by Percival Everett. Share a meal and discuss Everett's brilliant novel. Event from 5:30 – 7:30pm at Pastor Matt's house.



General Harriet Tubman - Legendary and Brave Hero

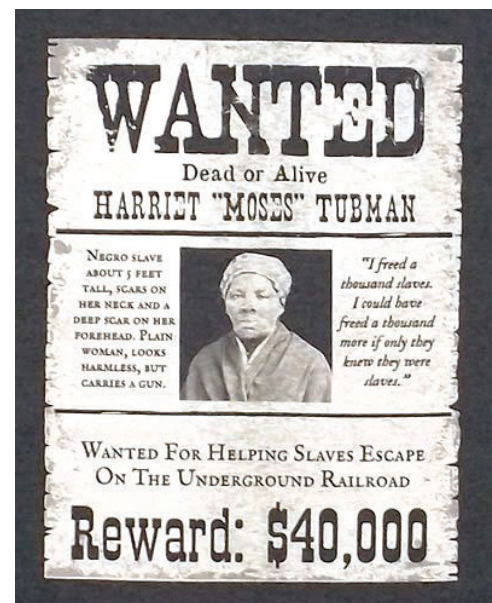
by Henry Gardner

The story of Harriet Tubman is known throughout the world. She was so well known during her own lifetime that Queen Victoria presented her with a shawl in recognition of her unparalleled courage. She was called by many as the bravest person on the continent.

On November 11, 2024, Veterans Day, she was posthumously commissioned a brigadier general. She was the first woman in the United States to lead an armed military during a war.

Her heroism is legendary. She made multiple trips into the South and led a multitude of slaves to freedom on her underground railroad. She said her trains never jumped the tracks and she never lost a passenger. She said she could have freed many more had they known they were slaves.

The rest of the story is world history.



Watch Today's Super Bowl at Chris and Maggie Harmon's



Join Chris and Maggie Harmon for a Super Bowl party! February 9th, 2:30 pm. Kickoff is at 3:30. We don't care about the game so let's watch commercials and have some fun.

Commercial bingo, quarter, half, and game score prizes - buy in will be donated to the church - snacks and revelry.

Please let us know if you plan to attend, bring your favorite football snack to share, and wear your favorite team jersey (football or other).
maggieharmon@me.com or 510-688-8595

2025 Stewardship

By Maggie Harmon

By definition a "pledge" is a solemn undertaking or promise. That feels serious and honestly a little scary. If I pledge to do something I feel like I need to do it, it is not something to take lightly or flippantly. And when it comes to money that can be particularly scary because what if we pledge something and then can't do it, don't have the funds, have an emergency; life is simply not predictable.

In too many places giving to the church, or pledging is extractive and some of the stories used to encourage gifts feel more harmful than joyous. When we talk about pledging and giving to the church we need to be honest about all of the complications that are involved with money, how we use it, who benefits, and who gets to control it.

All of this to acknowledge that when we as a church ask you to make a pledge, whether financial or of your time, we know that it is serious and meaningful. As a community we understand

that we have responsibility for each other, and as Christians we know that we have a responsibility to be present to the needs of our neighbors. So we give, and when we say we are going to do something we do it with integrity, and with an awareness of what we need ourselves.

Do not give beyond your means, either financially or of your time. Do not stretch to the point of breaking. But do, please, make a solemn promise this year to stretch just enough to grow. Pledge to show up to something that might be a little different than what you are used to, pledge to share that skill you have that can help us better serve each other and our neighbors, pledge financially so that it is a meaningful gift knowing that we as a church are pledging everyday to do the work of building a beloved community right now.

Please email your 2025 pledge of time, talent, and treasure to pledge@firstchurchoakland.org.

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 discussed 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.



2025 FPCO Church Directory Coming Soon!

A final draft of the Church Directory will soon be emailed to all those listed in it. If you have any changes you would like to make to your listing (information or photo) please reply to micheline@firstchurchoakland.org.

If you have a new photo you would like to replace what is shown here, please send a high resolution jpg file via email to Micheline.



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, Henry Gardner, Maggie Harmon. 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