

Sunday, July 26, 2026

First Presbyterian Church Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



WELCOME

Visitors:

- If you would like to join our email list, please fill out the form at firstchurchoakland.org.
- 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 three and under.
- You may also use the **Parent Corners** in the back and front right corner of the sanctuary.
- Children's **worship bags** are available in the narthex or from the ushers.
- On the first Sunday of the month we celebrate **Family Worship & Communion**. On all other Sundays, children may join in **Godly Play**. Children are escorted to Classroom 2 during the *Passing of the Peace* and rejoin their families during Fellowship Time.

ORDER of SERVICE

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.

INVITATION to WORSHIP

Prelude *If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee* Johann Sebastian Bach

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: Sing God's praise.

All: Give thanks to the Lord above.

One: Seek the Lord and trust God's strength.

All: Proclaim God's wonderful works.

One: Live in the Spirit of love and grace.

All: Give thanks for Christ's marvelous love.

Gathering Prayer

One: Spirit of God, you intercede for us with signs too deep for words. When all seems lost, you heal our hearts and give us strength to carry on. Set our hearts and minds on you, Great Spirit, that we may know your abiding presence and your never-failing love.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.

Hymn *There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

Glory to God #408

CONFESSION of SIN and ASSURANCE of GRACE

Confession

One: Loving God, as we seek you, search our hearts and ease our troubled spirits. Where we are frightened and unsure of your love, restore us with the assurance of your grace. Even when we give up too easily, we long for the courage to reach for new beginnings. Forgive us. Heal us. We yearn to know deep in our bones that nothing in heaven or on earth can separate us from your great love.

All: Amen.

You are invited into a time of silent, personal reflection.

One: In the name of the one who loves us unconditionally, we pray:

All: Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Please rise in body or spirit.

One: Remember, beloved children of God, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, can separate us from the love of God. Give thanks to God for this marvelous gift.

All: Amen.

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 gather at the side door to follow leaders to Godly Play.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

You may share requests for prayer with the congregation aloud or fill out a prayer card and place it in the offering plate to privately share your prayer need with the pastor. If you would like, there are two tables set up with candles for prayer and salt water for lament.

The Lord's 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.**

Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.

Hymn *Be Thou My Vision*

Glory to God #450

THE WORD

Scripture Lesson

Romans 8. 26 - 39 NRSV

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon *What are you being called to in this moment?*

Rev. Ruth West

RESPONSE to the WORD

Sermon Continued

Rev. Matt will lead the congregation in reflection on reading and sermon. Afterward, please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.

Hymn *Take My Life*, verses 1-4

Glory to God #697

Invitation to the Offering

Let us share our gifts to make God's deeds known. May our gifts and offerings glorify God and tell of Christ's wonderful works.

Ushers will collect the weekly offering. Donations can be placed in the offering plate. You may also donate using this QR code on your smartphone:



Solo

Doxology *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*



Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; praise Christ, all peo-ple
here be-low; praise Ho-ly Spir-it ev-er-more; praise
Tri-une God, whom we a-dore. A-men.

Prayer for the Offering

One: God, bless us with gifts of love and moments of grace and mercy. For this
All: earth and its bounty, we give you our thanks. For our lives and for the
opportunity to share them with those we love, we offer you our praise. Bless
the gifts we lay before you, that they may be signs of your loving kingdom to
a world awaiting good news.
Amen.

SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

Invitation to Community Life

Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.

Song *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* African American Heritage Hymnal #400

Benediction

One: If God is for us, what more do we need?
All: Nothing can separate us from Christ's gracious love.
One: If Christ is with us, what can stop us?
All: Nothing can keep us from sharing Christ's gifts of love and strength.
One: Go with love as our guide.
All: God is our constant companion.

Closing Verse

I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus --
No turning back, no turning back!

SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Preacher: Rev. Ruth West

Liturgist: Lorraine Provost

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Song Leader: Anne Margaret Manay

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Godly Play: Di Pagel and Ruby Prinz

Fellowship Time Refreshments: Lachlan Welsh

Today's Guest Preacher: Rev. Ruth T West

Ruth T West is an ordained PC(USA) Minister of the Word & Sacrament and Spiritual Director. In addition to a Masters of Divinity (MDiv), she has an MBA, a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction and a Certificate in Trauma & Spiritual Care.

Currently Associate Dean at San Francisco Theological Seminary (University of Redlands), Ruth has taught in the MDiv, DASD and DMin programs most recently co-teaching Reformed Worship and created a retreat session called "The Theology of Superheroes?"

She is a contributing author for the spiritual direction textbook, *Kaleidoscope: Broadening the Palette in the Art of Spiritual Direction* (chapter 2).

Ruth participated at the 225th General Assembly on the worship development team as the Lead Liturgist to develop decolonized chapel services; the 226th General Assembly as Preacher with a focus on Greed; and this year's 227th GA to provide spiritual care to commissioners and delegates as a chaplain.

She has developed and facilitated workshops in:

- Resiliency-Building & Spiritual Practices for those working to Dismantle Systemic Racism; Building Affinity Circles: Supporting the Inner Work of Dismantling Systemic Racism
- Perspectives on Shame and Silencing
- Hospitality as Witness; Welcoming the Stranger

Stewardship Generosity

We have all heard that it takes a village to raise a child, or that many hands make light work. What these messages are really conveying is that we can accomplish great things, grow amazing people, and make an impact together.

Thank you for all the gifts you share with the church community to care for, support, build, and bring the open-heartedness of God to the world. As you think about your time, your unique gifts, and the assets you have to share consider what we can do next, together.



July Poetry: William Stafford

This month we will reflect on the poetry of twentieth-century American poet William Stafford. Born in Kansas in 1914, Stafford was a lifelong pacifist and a conscientious objector during World War II. He became a poet during his middle age and moved to Oregon to teach. Writing poetry was a daily ritual for Stafford, whose poetic themes include nature, humanism, mindfulness, and everyday life. His work deeply reflects his pacifist values as well as a lifelong affinity for Indigenous American culture and storytelling.



Waking at 3 a.m.

Even in the cave of the night when you
wake and are free and lonely,
neglected by others, discarded, loved only
by what doesn't matter—even in that
big room no one can see,
you push with your eyes till forever
comes in its twisted figure eight
and lies down in your head.

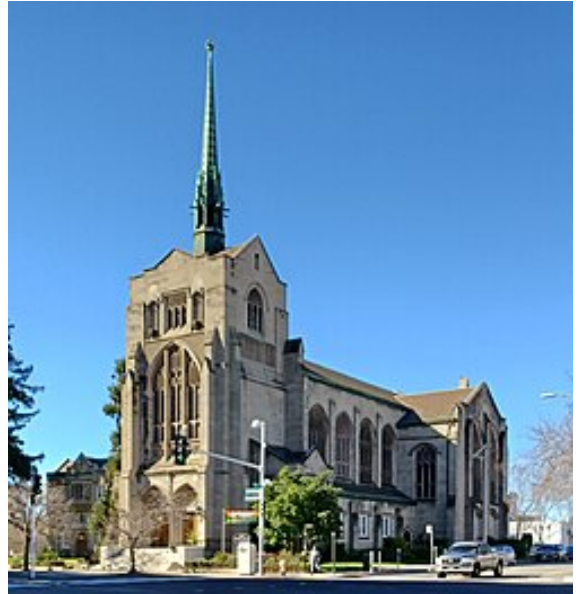
You think water in the river;
you think slower than the tide in
the grain of the wood; you become
a secret storehouse that saves the country,
so open and foolish and empty.

You look over all that the darkness
ripples across. More than has ever
been found comforts you. You open your
eyes in a vault that unlocks as fast
and as far as your thought can run.
A great snug wall goes around everything,
has always been there, will always
remain. It is a good world to be
lost in. It comforts you. It is
all right. And you sleep.

Campus Maintenance and Security Updates

There have been a lot of changes on the campus in the last year with new tenants, familiar faces retiring, physical remodeling, and more. The Session and staff are continually assessing how we make First Presbyterian a welcoming, vibrant, and healthy part of the community. As a part of those assessments, we have recently made some changes to the custodial and security structure for the campus.

As of July 1st, we have three groups focused on specific areas of support that we believe are responsive to the needs of the campus, community, and congregation today.



The 27th St. gate is a programmable “smart-gate” that can be remotely monitored and coded for access as needed. By utilizing these features, we no longer need to have the gate monitored throughout the day. If you need a code, please reach out to Jen in the office, or you can always dial the operator and be connected to someone to let you in during normal business hours.

Vigilant Eye Security, a refugee/immigrant owned organization will be providing trained, uniformed, but unarmed, security services on Sunday and Monday, as well as during special events and programs.

Mr. G. and team will continue to provide daily custodial services, maintenance of the Head Start classrooms, event support, and will ensure the campus is locked and secure as needed.

Cappstone Janitorial will provide deep cleaning services three times a week, focusing a lot of attention on the kitchen and the common areas.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Ben Baab, Elder for Buildings and Grounds or Maggie Harmon, Elder for Finance.

What Does It Mean To Have a Deacon?

Deacons support people attending the Church, both members and regular attendees, by checking in with them to see how they are doing. They are there to offer a helping hand and prayer during challenges times and also there to celebrate and acknowledge special occasions. Deacons help with small things like a ride or errand when need be, or can rally a team of people to provide meals when you're sick. There is even a Deacon Fund offering financial support when emergencies arise. The deacons meet monthly and work together to help ensure that everyone in our Church, including newcomers, feel welcome and supported.

If you would like to have a deacon assigned to you, please contact Martha Bauman (510-421-8639), or any deacon, and let us know of your interest. We would enjoy hearing from you!



Martha Baab

Steve Cabrera and Pat Osborn

Henry and Stella Ekwoge, Maria, Ryan, Sean and Henry Jr.

Terry Muck and Frances Adeney

Aaron and Sarah Postman, Evangeline and Clementine

Pam and Tom Prinz

Ruth Schmid

Lachlan Welsh

Martha Bauman

Erick Bevington

Henry Gardner

Christopher and Maggie Harmon

Diane Hill

Charmaine Irmeter, Chantal and Alessandra Mohar

Julia and Saul Marquez, Joshua Day and Leah

Matt and Susannah Prinz, Monrovia and Ruby

Margaret Sigurdson

Margie and Eric Witt



Cassandra Flipper

Martha Bauman

Gay and Paul Cobb

Dorrie Dodge

Louise Hill

Matthew and Suzie Inadomi & Family

Shawn Jones and Elizabeth Cureton, Theo and Hannah

Derrick Polk

Judy Rowan

Carol Zell

Charmaine Irmiter

Pauline and Angus Ahanotu

Martha and Ben Baab

Anna Lisa Fear and John Goodwin, Elizabeth and William

Marie Henderson

Chris and Christine Kovach, Katherine

Hazel and Isabella Seiden-Miller

Matt Spowart

Leo Sullivan

Chris Weber

**Pam Prinz**

Dorothy Dugger

Anne Huss

Anne Margaret and Siddharth Manay, Arav

Chad and Nicole Provost, Cole and Carter

Lorraine Provost

Marilyn Reynolds

Kerry Sherman

Ann Tisher

**Lorraine Provost**

Linda Carter

Su Coburn

Iheanyi and Brandee Ngumezi

Chima Ngumezi

Keith and Nancy Ogden, Micah and Myles

Elizabeth Pauw

Brian Philpot

Paul and Sarah Roberts

LJ Rose

**Paul Roberts**

David Alexander

Charles Blackwell

Cassandra Flipper

Barbara and Wayne Goodroe

Rich Jones

Nina and Eric Lapachet, Grace and Jack

Di Pagel

Emmanuel Plascencia



Register Now for Our October 2-4, 2026 Church Retreat



Join us at Zephyr Point at Lake Tahoe to gather in a beautiful space, step away from everyday rhythms of life, build community with other members, and connect with God. firstchurchoakland.org/retreat

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



Scan this code with your smartphone for access to all First Church News and past editions of *Temple Tidings*.

Elders

Ben Baab: Building and Grounds
Aaron Ruff
Gay Plair Cobb: Personnel/Food Ministry
David Alexander
Maggie Harmon: Finance
Julia Marquez: Community Life
Suzie Inadomi: Building the Beloved Community

Session Officers

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

Deacons

Martha Baab, Martha Bauman, Cassandra Flipper, Charmaine Irmeter, Lorraine Provost, Pam Prinz, Paul Roberts

Church Staff

Rev. Matt Prinz, Pastor

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510.488.3812
email to make an appointment

Rev. Joel Mackey, Parish Associate

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Jen Edwell, Church Administrator

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Jake Fontana, Music Director

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Gus Lopez, Head Custodian

510.290.9677

Erick Bevington, Treasurer

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Temple Tidings

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

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