

Sunday, August 16, 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](http://firstchurchoakland.org).
- Please feel free to take flowers home to enjoy after the service.
- Ushers can guide parents to the nursery for certified childcare for children three and under.

## 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      *Jerusalem, My Happy Home*

George Shearing

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: To those who eagerly came to worship God,

**All: You are welcome here.**

One: To those who grumbled about coming,

**All: You are welcome here.**

One: To those who are not sure why they are here,

**All: You are welcome here.**

One: In the name of the One who loves and forgives us, you are welcome in  
this place.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

Gathering Prayer

One: Almighty, creating God, you have called us to this place. You breathe life into  
us each day. You welcome us just as we are, with all of our hopes and fears,  
all of our faults and talents. As we worship, may we rest in your Spirit, and  
may we remember that you alone renew our lives. Help us shake off all that  
weighs down, that we may be free to hold fast to you, the One who fills our  
lives with unmerited grace and abounding love. In the name of Christ, your  
Son, we pray.

**All: Amen.**

*Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.*

Hymn

Sanctuary



## CONFESSION of SIN and ASSURANCE of GRACE

### Confession

**One:** Loving God, we come before you knowing that you love us completely. With this knowledge, we confess to you our wrongdoings. Forgive us, Holy One, when we stray from your ways; when we hurt one another; when we ignore the need of others; when we resist your guidance in our lives. Gracious God, accept our prayers and hold us in your love, that we may be the people you call us to be. In the name of Christ we pray.

**All: Amen.**

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

### Assurance of Pardon

*Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing this verse from "Amazing Grace."*

**Through many dangers, Toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.**

### 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.*

# 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.*

## 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      *There is a Balm in Gilead*

### *Refrain*



There is a balm in Gil-e-ad To make the wounded whole;

### *Verses*



There is a balm in Gil-e-ad To heal the sin-sick soul.      1. Some-  
2. Don't  
3. If you



-times I feel dis-cour-aged And think my work's in vain, But  
ev-er be dis-cour-aged, For Je-sus is your friend; And  
can-not preach like Pe-ter, If you can-not pray like Paul, You can



then the Ho-ly Spir-it Re-vives my soul a-gain.  
if you lack for knowledge, He'll ne'er re-fuse to lend.  
tell the love of Je-sus, And say, "He died for all!"

# THE WORD

## Scripture Lesson

Luke 15. 11 - 32

To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

“A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’

“So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

“But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, and he asked one of the servants what was going on. ‘Your brother is back,’ he was told, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.’

“The older brother was angry and wouldn’t go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, ‘All these years I’ve slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!’

“His father said to him, ‘Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!’”

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon *Scandalous Grace*

Rev. Matt Prinz

## 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 *God Has Smiled on Me*



Invitation to the Lord's Supper

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.**

Sharing of the Holy Meal and Offering and Assembly of Sack Lunches

*Communion is **non-alcoholic** and **gluten free**. Donations can be placed in the offering plate. You may also scan this QR code with your smartphone, or by text your donation to 510.880.1329.*



Solo

Prayer

# SENDING OUT to be THE CHURCH

## Invitation to Community Life

*Please rise in body or spirit to join in singing.*

## Song *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You*

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You, Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,  
Stars and angels sing around You, Center of unbroken praise;  
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird and flowing fountain Praising You eternally!

## Benediction

Go in peace to be ambassadors of Christ. Go in forgiveness to be instruments of the love of Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

## Song Continued

Always giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!  
Loving Mother, Christ our Brother, Let Your light upon us shine;  
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.

# SERVING in WORSHIP TODAY

**Pastor:** Rev. Matt Prinz

**Liturgist:** Carter Provost

**Music Director:** Jake Fontana

**Song Leader:** Raenelle Tauro

**Head Usher:** Suzie Inadomi

**Fellowship Time Refreshments:** Aaron Ruff and Sarah Postma

**Cover Art:** "The Return of the Prodigal Son" by Rembrandt

## Community Events



Join FPCO in cheering on the Ballers!

Aug 23 @ 1:05pm at Raimondi Park.

Please register by scanning the QR code. Sliding scale payment options available.

Contact Suzie with any questions (sinadomi@gmail.com).



**Sunday, Aug 16, 3-5pm – FOSNA and NorCal Sabeel Present: Huwaida Arraf, co-founder of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla**

Plymouth United Church of Christ  
(424 Monte Vista Ave. Oakland, CA 94611)

Visit [www.fosna.org/huwaida](http://www.fosna.org/huwaida) to register.

Note: You can also join this event online! Select “Virtual Attendance” at registration.

## Theological Perspectives

Excerpt from Laura Mariko Cheifetz's sermon from the closing worship of the 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Justice and righteousness are integral to the spirituality of our faith. The ancient ruins will be rebuilt, the foundations of many generations will be raised up, a people will be known as the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

If we are really going to do this, then something will be required of us, not just as hearers of this scripture, but us, specifically.

What does it even mean to bring healing to a world in such desperate need of it, when we, inheritors of a religion of empire and a patriotism built of death and domination, are the ones who are so broken, everything we thought we knew and who we thought we were is up for grabs, when things we thought we were good at it turns out maybe don't work anymore. And here is where we are called to have faith.

I do not mean faith as a cliché, an anemic, meaningless word used as a weapon against those who disagree with us.

I mean faith as the foundation, the backbone, the rebar. Faith as the love of a grandmother, the water the salmon swims in, the air we breathe, the soil in which the redwoods and the peach trees and grapevines grow. The faith that is strong enough to name evil for what it is. The faith that calls us to struggle with what ails us, what is really wrong with what we have done, instead of skipping to a quick symbolic action, as though our sins were written on an etch-a-sketch instead of upon the earth.

But our sins are undeniable. They are stamped on us and on the earth... In Topaz, Utah, where my grandmother and her family were incarcerated during World War 2 for the crime of being Japanese American, the outline of that American concentration camp that held Japanese Americans and Japanese people prohibited from seeking U.S. citizenship by law, can still be seen from space. The earth holds the visible outline of that sin and it cannot be undone.

Faith calls us to know these sins in our bones.

We do not have faith.

Faith

has

us.



The full sermon is available at  
<https://www.reyes-chow.com/guest-laura-mariko-cheifetz-general-assembly-sermon-text/>

## **Life of the church: The gift of a new oven**

The new range will keep our many kitchen ministries moving forward safely and efficiently, serving on many levels, for decades to come.



Our kitchen is well used. On M-F, Head Start assembles meals and snacks for the children. The FPCO Food Ministry serves approx. 125-150 meals on Sundays and Mondays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Food Not Bombs prepares nutritious vegetarian meals for neighbors in Oakland. And several times a year Mandela Partners runs a culinary training program for community members who are facing barriers to employment.



A friend of a FPCO member made a generous donation to the church that enabled the purchase of the new range. May we all continue to share about the ministries of the church, inviting our friends and neighbors to join us in service.

# 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](http://firstchurchoakland.org/retreat)

## First Church proudly supports our COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- 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
- Oakland Taiko
- The Lucy Kinchen Chorale



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: Youth and Family  
Gay Plair Cobb: Personnel/Food Ministry  
David Alexander: Personnel  
Maggie Harmon: Finance  
Julia Marquez: Community Life  
Suzie Inadomi: Building the Beloved Community

## Session Officers

Rev. Matt Prinz, Moderator  
Anne Margaret Manay, Clerk  
Maggie Harmon, Interim Treasurer

## Deacons

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

## Church Staff

### Rev. Matt Prinz, Pastor

[matt@firstchurchoakland.org](mailto:matt@firstchurchoakland.org)  
510.488.3812  
email to make an appointment

### Rev. Joel Mackey, Parish Associate

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### Jen Edwell, Church Administrator

[jene@firstchurchoakland.org](mailto:jene@firstchurchoakland.org)

### Jake Fontana, Music Director

[jake@firstchurchoakland.org](mailto:jake@firstchurchoakland.org)

### Gus Lopez, Head Custodian

510.290.9677

### Maggie Harmon, Interim Treasurer

[maggieh@firstchurchoakland.org](mailto:maggieh@firstchurchoakland.org)

## 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](http://firstchurchoakland.org/temple-tidings)