

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

EXPERIENCING CHRIST'S LOVE, EXTENDING CHRIST'S HANDS SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

5th

Service
Worship
Day

January 31, 2010



"..be doers of the word, not hearers only..." - James 1:22

This month on the fifth Sunday, January 31, we will take a detour. Instead of worship and fellowship as usual, we will, after a brief Commissioning Service at church at 10:30 a.m., turn toward the community and focus our attention on people in need to serve them a tangible expression of our faith. We will actually BE the hands and feet of Christ in San Jose!

Starting Sunday, Jan. 10, church members and friends can sign up for one of 5 projects, some at church and some around town. Be sure to sign up!

We are entering into this 5th Sunday ministry with West Valley Presbyterian Church in Cupertino. Jan. 31st will be their third "5th Sunday" ministry day and they are inviting us to celebrate at their church at 5 p.m. on the 31st with worship and a simple (snacks) potluck dinner. Mark your calendars! West Valley Pres. is located at 6191 Bollinger Road Cupertino, CA 95014. Details to follow in flyers given out at church.

Our 5th Sunday Service Worship Projects to date:

At Church:

1. **HELP** assemble lunch bags for our own church Helping Hands Ministry
2. **HELP** assemble toiletry kits for women served by the Commercial Street Inn.
3. **HELP** organize and run a BINGO event and snacks for the residents at Town Park Towers.

Away from Church:

4. **HELP** sort clothing and then distribute the clothing to homeless and poor people at the Georgia Travis Center (Commercial St. and N. 7th St., San Jose)
5. **HELP** with Sunday worship and lunch for 50 homeless men at City Team Ministries (on Zanker Road, San Jose.)

NEW CHURCH OFFICERS INSTALLED

New Elders are: Class of 2012: Judy Lococo, Sherri Taylor, Jim Lathrop (returning); Class of 2011: Pat Plant; Class of 2010: Ole Johnson.

New Deacons are: Class of 2012: Greg Plant and Jo Fukasawa (returning); Class of 2010: Joy Stanton.

Trustee: Class of 2014: John Fukasawa.

Continuing Officers: **Elders:** Class of 2011: Peggy Ripperger, Frederica Strickland; Class of 2010: Pat Smith; **Deacons:** Class of 2011: Susan Hyatt, Carol Lathrop, Jennifer Kamau; Class of 2010: Grace Clark, Joselyn Peralta Johnson.

Trustees: Class of 2013: Pat Smith; Class of 2011: Dan Ripperger; Class of 2010: Charlotte Powers.





TURNING THE TABLES ON HUNGER FOOD DRIVE UPDATE

In 2009 (between June and December,) we collected 1,025 lbs. of food for the hungry people served by Sacred Heart Community Services. That's more than half a TON!

FOOD DRIVE

On January 3 we collected 100 lbs. of canned and packaged food! Thank you so much for your never-ending generosity.

Our next food drive is Sunday, February 7th. Please try and remember to bring as much as you can of items like canned soups and stews, fruit, vegetables, beans, peanut butter, cereal, powdered milk, and pasta rice and dried beans.



Our First Pres. and First Christian Church joint PACT Local Organizing Committee (LOC) continues to meet the second Monday night of each month at 7:30 p.m. at alternating churches. All are wel-

come at these meetings. (Contact either Pat Plant (408 737-7370, or Jodie Wiepking (965-1493) to make sure where any particular meeting will be held). We have chosen the theme of homelessness (near and dear to all the downtown churches) and are doing frequent "research" interviews with local authorities in this area to learn as much as we can so we can develop the very best first project.

We are learning a lot about community organizing from our PACT Organizer, Karen Belote, and others. At our December meeting Pastor Bob taught us to be better "active listeners." At our January meeting, Karen taught us to be better at asking questions and managing research meetings to learn the most we can in limited time with busy officials.

"Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down-and-out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless."
- Isaiah 1:17 (The Message)

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of people." - St. Augustine

MUSIC NEWS



From Eleazar Inciarte:

Rebeca and I are working on a general plan for the Music Ministry including a syllabus for offering a Church Musicians Symposium and Training Workshop in order to learn from and share what we learn with other church musicians in the area.

For our FPC family we are planning ahead to be ready for the pastor and church to select relevant, great music in harmony.

Musical Opportunities:

- We have four basic soloists and we want more
- A music vocal team for Anthem-singing (Main rehearsal Sundays at 9 AM);
- A Praise Band Instruments Ensemble. (Sundays at 9 AM)
- A Harp- Piano Duet (debut was Christmas Eve).
- A Children's Choir (Sundays shortly after 12 noon, right after Church Service and Fellowship-Snack time)

We are preparing forms to give to the 'music team prospects', reviewing the responsibilities.

CHRISTMAS CHILD BOX REPORT

Remember the money you donated to help with the shipping costs for the Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes?



This year we paid the shipping costs on the internet and got a bar code that would allow FPC to track where our boxes were sent. This year the boxes from our church were sent to the Philippines, where they will be greatly appreciated. Thanks again, and all our best wishes for a Joyous and Blessed New Year. — John Fukasawa

Judy Lococo writes: "I viewed the video that was linked to the Christmas Box web site and my eyes welled with tears. There were multiple blessings provided in our Christmas Child boxes! We are going to be encouraging church members to shop year-round for their boxes. Like Change for Change, it keeps us mindful of those in so much need. "

Pastor's Corner



12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Have you noticed that many people have no idea of the meaning of the 12 days of Christmas? While on vacation, an entertainer stated that they were going to sing a version of the 12 days even though it was after Christmas. When I asked if anybody knew when the 12 days of Christmas were, there was dead silence.

It took me years of study to come to an understanding of the meaning of the Christmas season as part of our Christian calendar. Originally the only critical dates in the early church were the events surrounding Easter and the 50 days leading to Pentecost, the birthday of the church. The first mention of the celebration of Christmas occurred in A.D. 336. The choice of the date was probably influenced by two events. First, the ancient Roman celebration to honor Saturn, the god of light took place at the end of the year. The extensive use of lights may have been influenced by this civil calendar of the Romans. Secondly, it was assumed that Mary became pregnant on the spring equinox which is the midpoint between the longest day of the year, Dec 25 (Winter Solstice) and the June 24th date of the longest day of the year (Summer Solstice). This astronomical event occurs when the tilt of the Earth's axis is most inclined toward or away from the Sun. Remember the Latin word for sun is *sol*. The midpoints are called equinoxes and are connected with the seasons. We generally call them spring planting and fall harvesting. The spring equinox was thought to be the time when the earth was the most fertile. So if Mary became pregnant at that time, 9 months later would be Dec 25th.

When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the late 300's then the birthday of Christ became recognized but it was not until 1100 that Christmas became the most important religious festival in Europe.

There have always been civil calendars celebrating cultural special days and religious calendars celebrating holy days (holidays). As Christianity became the official religion the Christian calendar became fixed with seasons of celebration and the two calendars became blurred. Yet we needed a method of teaching the faith. So we created the learning cycle for spiritual growth.

Prior to the 1500s most people were illiterate and relied on the priests and religious to teach us. Churches created art forms including stained glass windows, the Stations of the Cross and much statuary. This was before the advent of the printing press and the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s. Protestants tore down the statues, chose to reduce the number of sacraments to two and gradually abandoned most of the religious calendar.

Today we are rediscovering that calendar during the waning years of the Protestant church as we have known it. Yet there continues to be value in understanding why we followed Christian seasons. We began our annual cycle with preparing ourselves to receive the Christ child during the 4 weeks known as Advent. During the Christmas season, from Dec 25 to Jan 6 [the 12 days of Christmas] we ponder the purpose of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. This ends with the arrival of the three Wise Men, known as Zoroastrian priests. We call it Epiphany or recognizing that the Christ came for all people whether they know it or not.

REPENT!

The season of Epiphany leads us towards Ash Wednesday, the beginning of another season of preparation. We know that John the Baptist saw himself as preparing the way as he cried out "REPENT" for the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent literally means turn around for 180 degrees. So we seek Spiritual revolution or turning your mind around to be one with God's purposes in the world. That prepares us to allow the Holy Spirit **control** over our lives.

It is interesting that the civil calendar cries **repent** as we enter the New Year. We talk about resolutions of change. In our faith communities we talk about revolutions of change as we seek the radical transformation God intends. We cry out for people to use civil discourse and conversation rather than violence to solve the issues of our time. We seek spiritual goals of **peace on earth**, of becoming servants to those who most desperately need **love** beginning in our own households and extending to those we fear the most. We seek to embody **hope** rather than desperation and work on allowing God to grow **faith** within us that we might know the power of that spiritual revolution churning within, seeking expression in our daily lives.

Happy New Year, y'all. - *Pastor Bob*

DEACON NEWS:

Deacons Jo Fukasawa, Sheridan Smith, and Carol Lathrop catered Belle's Memorial Service reception with the invaluable assistance of Alice and Joan from the Evangelical Free Church where the service was held.
- Carol Lathrop

PS: A loan for rental assistance made by Deacons last year has been repaid in full.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:



Donna Arnold	Jan. 3
Debra Crown	Jan. 12
Bob Butziger	Jan. 17
Bruce Powers	Jan. 28

OUR MISSION:

At First Presbyterian Church of San Jose, we are a Spirit-led Community of Faith where the life and love of Jesus Christ is felt and shared.

For more information, please contact:

Reverend Bob Butziger, Pastor
Karleen Duchscherer, Administrator
Eleazar and Rebeca Inciarte, Music Directors
Alanna Spencer, Sunday School Director

Church office (408) 297-7212

email: fpcsj@yahoo.com

Website: www.fpcsj.org

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit items to Greg Plant.

Any format works (in person, church mailbox,
email: gregplant@comcast.net).

Deadline for the February edition is **January 25**.

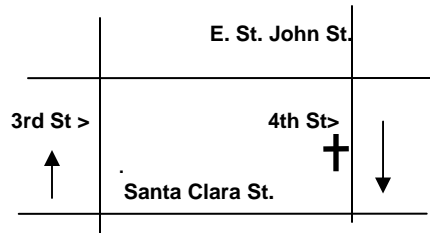
**FRIENDS, VISITORS AND
NEWCOMERS - PLEASE JOIN
US THIS SUNDAY!**

Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.

Fellowship Time: Following Worship

Children attend the first part of the worship service. Following the Children's Message, Sunday School is available for nursery through high school. High school – age children attend worship service on the first Sunday of the month, and a teen discussion other weeks.

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to hide surprises in fu-
ture editions to find out.
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first to call the Plants at
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sure and say what day
and time you called.



First Presbyterian Church of San Jose
49 North Fourth Street
San Jose, CA 95112

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