



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

MARCH 2020

We have entered into the season of Lent—that time when we step aside and focus on self-reflection as we walk the road with Jesus to Jerusalem. It's a time to get honest with ourselves and to enrich our dedication to Christ. We repent of our sins (Ash Wednesday service focuses especially on this). We renew our commitment to live more faithfully and ponder how to do that. We observe during Holy Week Jesus' suffering, rejection, and death (Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services powerfully let us experience that pain and what it means for us). It is a contemplative time, in many ways a time of somber worship as we confront some heavy lessons, never forgetting how much God loves us.

One way we observe this time is to remove the "Alleluia" from our worship services for these six weeks. United Methodist pastor Daniel Benedict notes that this "practice enriches and shapes our prayer and our sense of discipline as we anticipate Easter. It is a kind of fasting from 'ecstasy' and ecstatic praise, letting our 'Hallelujah' lie dormant for six weeks before we again burst out in joyful and ecstatic affirmation of the Resurrection."

Perhaps this litany offered by Benedict will help convey the purpose of putting "Alleluia" away:

When Jesus came down from the mount of Transfiguration, he began to tell his disciples that he would be betrayed and crucified. **SOMETIMES WE LOSE OUR ALLELUIA.**

Jesus did not enter into glory before he stretched out his arms on the hardwood of the cross. **SOMETIMES WE LOSE OUR ALLELUIA.**

Jesus told his disciples, "If you want to become my followers, deny yourselves and take up your cross and follow me." **SOMETIMES WE MUST LET GO OF OUR ALLELUIA.**

At Easter we will again celebrate the Resurrection and sing "Christ is risen." **IN GOD'S TIME, WE WILL FIND OUR ALLELUIA!**

During this Lent, then, we will refrain from our "Alleluias." I will not choose hymns that use the word; we will try to remember to close our worship not with "Alleluia! Amen!" but with only our "Amen." We might well slip up at the close of worship. I might slip up in choosing music. When that happens, we can remember our longing for "Alleluia" to return and the reason why we have put it away.

Lent, after all, is an opportunity. It is an opportunity, built in to a centuries-long tradition in the Christian faith, to attend to the hard work of self-examination and growth. I pray that we may all take this opportunity to grow stronger as people of God.

With Thanks for All of You,
Pastor Katie

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

On October 22, an ecumenical group of churches will sponsor a concert by Bruce Vantine's Cornerstone Chorale and Brass. We are fortunate to be able to host this group here in Las Vegas. They have performed all over the country, including stops at Carnegie Hall and the Lincoln Center. You can check them out at <https://cornerstonechorale.org/>.

Details will be unfolding as the ecumenical committee makes plans. For sure we will need volunteers to help defray the group's tour costs by helping with a dinner the night of the performance and by offering housing and breakfast to singers and instrumentalists.

WORSHIP TIDBITS



OUR LENTEN WORSHIP THEME is “Flawed Servants.” We will have an opportunity during these six weeks to confront the ways in which our very human natures express themselves at the same time we are called and trusted to be servants of God in the world. During this season, take a look at the quilt tops—purposefully displayed back side out—in the sanctuary. If you look closely, you might see some flaws, some messiness. These represent our human flaws. But we know that, despite these flaws, these tops can be made into quilts that provide beauty and warmth; they can become quilts that serve us. Likewise, despite our flaws, we can be God’s servants in the world.

Especially during this season, you might want to dedicate some study time with the upcoming Narrative Lectionary readings. Scriptures for this Lenten season are:

March 1: Mark 10:17-31
 March 8: Mark 10:32-52
 March 15: Mark 12:1-12

March 22: Mark 12:28-44
 March 29: Mark 13:1-8;24-37
 April 5: Mark 11:1-11; 14:3-9

A REMINDER ABOUT COMMUNION: The Lord’s Supper is a feast prepared for us. When served by intinction, communion is an opportunity for us to come forward and take a chunk of the food Christ offers us. Don’t skimp! For two reasons, treat yourself to a chunk, not a crumb:

1. Theologically speaking, we can never get too much of God’s abundant love and grace. It’s there for the taking, symbolized in the bread and cup of communion. Grab yourself a chunk of God’s grace!
2. Practically speaking, tiny pieces of bread always lead to fingers in the juice. And that’s just gross. So don’t try to dip that little crumb into the cup – grab a chunk!

2020 All CHURCH RETREAT

Sept. 18-20, a weekend at gorgeous Ghost Ranch. Please mark your calendars and get your \$50 deposit into the church (mark Ghost Ranch retreat on your check and put it in the offering or bring to office).

We will arrive Friday afternoon and leave Sunday after morning worship. Five meals are included, two dinners, two breakfast and one lunch). There are two housing choices: shared bath with bedroom on either side, or dorm style, two beds with walk to communal bathrooms.

Prices are \$60 per person for meals.
 Rooms with shared bath, \$135/night (various bed configurations)
 Dorm \$85/night (various bed configurations)
 Questions? Ask Judy Long or Lisa Weinstein. All are welcome. Come celebrate 150 years.

Ten reasons to look forward to this event:

10. The Ghost Ranch Museum is pretty cool
9. Time away from the normal routine, whatever that is for you
8. Ghost Ranch offers great hiking trails and
7. Ghost Ranch offers great places to just hang out
6. Learning some new, neat stuff about Jesus’ Great Commission
5. Discovering together God’s plans for First United Presbyterian Church
4. Time for lots of laughing
3. Time with church family outside of the church building, outside of committee work and “churchy” stuff, and inside our relationships with one another
2. Speaker Brad Munroe is awesome
1. Did you hear this is at GHOST RANCH?

Free Lunch, Anyone?

Come join us for good eats and fun!

WHAT

Casual Deacon Luncheon

The perfect winter meal:
 beans and chile with cornbread.

WHEN?

March 5

TIME?

12 Noon

WHERE

Perea Hall

WHO’S INVITED

Everyone

COST? - FREE

TRANSPORTATION?

Call your Deacon to arrange

- Murl Baker 505-429-0670
- Patrick Rucker 505-718-6211
- Juli Salman 505-429-0290
- Bonnie Trujillo 505-425-3972
- Sharon Vander Meer 505-617-0839
- Mary Schipper 505-429-0285



CLERK'S CORNER

I want to give a shout out to the 2020 150th Anniversary Committee! WOW!

Have you checked out our new church website? It's beautiful to look at, easy to navigate, welcoming and chock full of great information. Thanks to D.R., Linda, Denise and Carol for their work on it.

I LOVE the Seeds, Roots, Branches logo! It's who we were, who we are and who we want to be, at a glance. It's clean, engaging and intriguing as it grabs your eyes and keeps them exploring those black and white overlaid spaces!

Bravo to the collaboration of the group on the concept and the realization of the concept in the beautiful art by Juli Sal-man!

I also love that we are exploring the idea of an Interfaith Grove along the Riverwalk, and that the whole community is invited to join our celebration as we process from the Old Town Mission to FUPC to Lincoln Park to picnic together on June 20, 2020.

Did you know Peter Linder and others are writing a history of this amazing little northern New Mexico church in Las Vegas? Projected publication date is December.

And then, of course, there was our beautifully designed and gracefully executed angel of light in the Electric Light Parade, which placed 2nd. She was just lovely! With all of that, I think we're just getting started!

There's more to come! Grand Kudos to you all!

In Session news, we're completing an update of the FUPC Policies and Procedures (P&P) Manual, which describes and explains how our church operates and handles its business. Unlike the bylaws, the P&P don't have to be approved by the congregation, but do have to be reviewed and kept current as they are a resource to members and committee chairs.

Also, as you may know, each year the Presbytery requires the Clerk of Session to have the church register (membership listings) and the session minutes reviewed and evaluated at a clerk training meeting. The FUPC records will be reviewed and scored at the March 7 Clerk Training at the Presbytery Office in Albuquerque. Stay tuned and I'll let you know how our records and minutes rated.

Karyl Lyne, Clerk of Session



OTMCC CONNECTION BRINGS CHORUS TO LAS VEGAS

We often talk about the wonderful legacy that the Old Town Mission Community Center has given us: the first Presbyterian church in the area, the connection to old town, to the UWC, and so on.

Recently a part of our legacy returned to town with good news. Way back in the 1960s, Bruce Vantine was a high school student in the northern plains in charge of his youth group mission trip. They decided to come to Las Vegas and work on the Old Town Mission.

As he remembers it, the place looked like it was about to fall down. Some of us can still recall those days. He and his crew did their part to help get the building ready for the Samaritan House thrift store. And Bruce had his first "up close" encounter with real poverty.

It made an indelible mark on him. So much so that as an adult he created the Cornerstone Chorus and Brass group. You can read elsewhere in the newsletter about this wonderful ministry and how they are coming back to our town. How interesting that the seed of his work was started right here!

D.R. Palmer, OTMCC Co-chair₃



HAPPENING WITH BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Painting the west entrance hall and bathroom was one project completed in February. The work was done “in house” by our crew of Charlotte, Corky and Don. Watch out, Charlotte has her eye on the library next.

We also had our annual warranty inspection done by Critter Control, so we should be good for another year. The same day that was happening, Target Safe did their inspection of the smoke detectors and fire panel.

Two ceiling light ballasts in Perea hall and the bathroom on the East side were fixed, as well as replacing a leaky faucet in the west bathroom.

We are looking into the possibility of putting a different type of flooring in Perea Hall. We have a commitment of \$4,500 from members who want to see that happen. Again we will keep you posted.

If you see anything that we’ve missed that needs doing please fill out the B&G work request form and put it in the B&G box in the East Wing.

Thanks for all of your support and patience.

Robin Carlson, Chair

COMMUNITY LIFE



Lenten Soup lunches will be every Sunday, **March 1 - March 29**. Please sign up to bring *soup or bread, set up or clean up*. Please remember that when you bring soup that you make enough to fill a large Crock-Pot®.

March 29 - Our quarterly **Sundae Sunday**, starting at 4:00 p.m. in Perea Hall.

Sunday **April 5** (Palm Sunday) - Potluck lunch after service.

A friendly reminder for those who so graciously signed up to bring a snack for fellowship, please, please start the coffee before service starts. If you are not able to, see one of the Community Life members and we will set it up for you.

We also would ask that you take out the trash. I know everyone wants to get home, but if we don’t take out the trash it starts smelling up the kitchen.

Community Life meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7:30 a.m. @ Charlie’s.

Lisa Weinstein, Chair



As you receive this newsletter, we will have just begun our Lenten study, so it’s not too late to join us! We’re trying something different this Lent as we discuss Anne Tyler’s novel *Saint Maybe*.

Through the lens of Tyler’s story about Baltimore’s Bedloe family, we’ll have opportunity to talk about relationships, faith, and religion. (Ian, the story’s main character, is a member of “The Church of the Second Chance.”)

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch says of Tyler’s work, “The wisdom behind all of Anne Tyler’s fiction is a loving acceptance of the peculiar but surprisingly predictable habits of individual humans, of all their inherent frailties and eccentricities.” What better way to talk about “flawed servants”?

The discussion group, led by Pastor Katie, will run March 1 – April 5 during the Sunday class hour. If you would like to purchase a book, please see Richard Lindeborg. And PLEASE, do not jeopardize the pace of our discussion or risk ruining another’s reading experience by reading ahead and filling the class with spoilers.

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PRESBYTERY MEETING SUMMARY

On Saturday, Feb. 22, Pastor Katie and Lisa Weinstein attended the winter Presbytery meeting held at La Mesa Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque.

There was a dinner on Friday night with a presentation on Vital Congregations presented through the Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC (USA). Katie, D.R. and Lisa attended this presentation.

Based on scripture, there are **7 Marks of Congregational Vitality**:

1. Lifelong Discipleship Formation
2. Intentional Authentic Evangelism
3. Outward Incarnational Focus
4. Empower Servant Leadership
5. Spirit-Inspired Worship
6. Caring Relationships
7. Ecclesial Health

If you are interested in learning more, there will be a 2020 Vital Congregations Gathering in Austin, Texas, April 27-30. Please see Katie or Lisa if you are interested.

Three items of particular interest from the Presbytery meeting include:

1. Discussion and voting on each person's top three versions of the proposed **Santa Fe Presbytery logo**. The logo committee will work on the top three and present this information at the summer Presbytery meeting in July (which happens to be here at FUPC). Lisa has a copy of the proposed logos if anyone is interested in looking at them.
2. An **Improv Worship Service**. The worship team (troupe) did an excellent job! Attendees were asked to choose a bible story; we chose Noah's Ark. The whole order of service was based on this story. The "congregation" was asked to choose the hymns. Katie will likely be trying this out one of these Sundays.
3. **The Concurrence of Overtures** was an interesting and important part of the meeting. The Presbytery Overtures Task Force asked us to approve concurrence on 17 overtures from other presbyteries. We voted to concur on 16 of these, voting down concurrence on an overture to form a commission to write a new confession. These overtures will be submitted by their originating presbyteries to the General assembly which meets this year in Baltimore, June 20-27.

FYI: Santa Fe Presbytery: Moderator, Seth Finch, Stated Clerk, Stephen Rhodes, Administrator/Associate Stated Clerk, Tiffany Lo-Finch.

Lisa Weinstein

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Weekly assignments are:

March 1: Chapter 1, "The Airmail Bowling Ball"

March 8: Chapter 2, "The Department of Reality" & Chapter 3, "The Man Who Forgot How to Fly"

March 15: Chapter 4, "Famous Rainbows" & Chapter 5, "People Who Don't Know the Answers"

March 22: Chapter 6, "Sample Rains" & Chapter 7, "Organized Marriage"

March 29: Chapter 8, "I Should Never Tell You Anything" & Chapter 9, "The Flooded Sewing Box"

April 5: Chapter 10, "Recovering from the Hearts-of-Palm Flu"



WORSHIP AND MUSIC

(a.k.a. WAM)

Worship and Music is a very busy committee. The annual report has a complete list of what we do, but I would like to mention a few items that we work on each month:

With the help of Joyce Litherland, we provide Worship Leaders for each Sunday.

Karyl Lyne works with Katie on the music.

Charlotte Wootton arranges for the audio visual operators.

We also find pulpit supply for when Katie is away.

Worship and Music is also responsible for planning themes for Lent, Pentecost and Advent. We do this with Katie's guidance and the Narrative Lectionary. We spend, usually, a Saturday working on this through reading the scriptures and discerning the meaning.

Worship and Music meets the 1st Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in the church library.

–*Lisa Weinstein, Chair*



Our theme for this year's Lent is *Flawed Servants*. Through Lent, think about your flaws, but also remember although we are flawed God's mercy and grace are new each day.

Lent through Holy Week Worship Services

- Palm Sunday - April 5 - 10:30 a.m. followed by potluck lunch
- Maundy Thursday - April 9 - 5:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Peace
- Good Friday - April 10
 - 8:00 a.m. - St. Paul's Peace
 - 10:00 a.m. - United Methodist Church
 - 7:00 p.m. - Tenebrae Service at FUPC
- Easter Sunday – April 12
 - 6:00 a.m. - Sunrise Service at the Old Town Mission Community Center followed by pastries and coffee
 - 10:30 a.m. - Easter Worship at Douglas Avenue Church



MISSION AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE UPDATE

M&P serves as an FUPC anchor for a number of groups that report in to us and to which a number of us belong. The Understanding Immigration Task Force (UITF), which meets in Perea Hall on alternate Mondays at 5:30 pm, is one of those groups.

We were fortunate to have Rev. Mark Adams, Mission Co-Worker from Agua Prieta, Mexico, speak at a short-notice lunch 2-21-20. Mark has served in Agua Prieta and Douglas, AZ, for 20 years, has married and is raising his multinational family there. Mark emphasized that neither he nor his family has ever felt threatened or afraid there. He reminded us that the barriers at the border were erected during the Clinton and Obama Administrations and separate a border community. Mark shared some poignant stories of people at the border and the challenges they face and have faced before arriving there. We were lucky to be able to hear Mark's stories and learn about the work of many compassionate agencies at the border.

UITF is also sponsoring an art show, *Where Edges Meet*, at NMHU Kennedy Gallery March 2 – April 1, with the opening reception on Monday, March 9, from 4-7 p.m.; and an 'art talk' by the artists and closing reception on Tuesday, March 31, from 5 – 7 pm. The show has invited works dealing with "borders, barriers and boundaries as containers, keeping in and keeping out"

On Feb. 16, Pat Halverson reported to the congregation that HJR1 (House Joint Resolution 1) to tap one percent of the New Mexico Permanent Land Grant Fund of \$20 billion to support Early Childhood Education in New Mexico, was stopped in the Senate Rules Committee when six senators left the room leaving no quorum. Pat suggested that as an *Advocating Church (one that speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves)*, in this case the children of our state, we should contact the senators and request that they give this issue a fair hearing.

As in the past, M&P invites members to support the One Great Hour of Sharing national offering which goes to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) 32 percent, Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) 36 percent and Self-Development of People (SDOP) 32 percent. This offering is made at Lenten Soup Luncheons after church the Five Sundays of Lent beginning March 1, as we donate what we might have spent for lunch out that day.

Karyl Lyne, Chair

Hope

We await Your timing, Lord,
but in the waiting, let us share,
gift by gift, day by day
so others know Your love and care.

In the labyrinth of our days
this moment is all we know,
Everything in its time
shapes our lives ebb and flow.

We work through You
to plant the garden now,
and trust in You
to show us how.

Everything will come to be
in Your time and by Your will
as we live each moment
our purpose to fulfill.

Lord, grant that every day,
we let You define the pace
for how we use our gifts
to make this world a better place.

–Sharon Vander Meer

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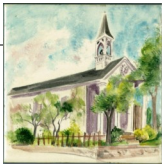
Sunday Schedule

8:30 a.m. - Jumpstart Breakfast:

9:30 a.m. - Bible Based Study


10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship

Fellowship Hour following the worship service



MARCH 2020



**Deep and Wide**
*A Contemplative Service at the
Old Town Mission*
5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.
Second and Fourth Tuesdays
at the Old Town Mission Church
This is an ecumenical gathering open to all,
sponsored by FUPC.



Communion is offered each Sunday from October 6 through Pentecost (May 31, 2020) and on the first and third Sundays of each month from June through September. We do not celebrate Communion on the fifth Sunday of a month due to the addition of the Healing Liturgy to the service.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 2nd **Jan Beurskens**
Bob Pearson
- 5th **Bruce Wertz**
- 6th **John Arnold**
- 14th **Pat Halverson**
- 16th **Karyl Lyne**
- 27th **Jackson Awuzing**
Jim Croto



Samaritan House Food Donations
For MARCH
Canned meats, tuna, chicken
Coffee and Tea are always appreciated