



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

FEBRUARY 2021

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Dear FUPC Family and Friends,

We are fast approaching the season of Lent—the time in our church calendar when we engage in self-reflection and focus on acts of repentance. Some of us grew up in church communities that encouraged us to “give something up for Lent.” Growing up in the Roman Catholic church, I was always told to give something up for this season—usually something like candy or soda. My mother served meatless meals during Lent; we could count on the Friday table offering grilled cheese, tuna salad, macaroni and cheese with tuna stirred in, or fish sticks. I understood that we did these things, but I didn’t really understand why; when I asked, the response was “because it’s Lent.”

Of course, the liturgical seasons of the church are meant to be a way to guide our spiritual practice rather than to ask people to do something without understanding why. In Advent we anticipate the day that marks Jesus’ birth and his coming to the world to bring salvation; we use this time for self-reflection and preparation; we make room in our hearts to welcome the baby Jesus. In Lent we reflect on our spiritual journey and turn toward repentance, which literally means turning around or turning back. In Lent, this “turning back” means turning toward the Christ who guides us to new life rather than following the false prophets of our culture—materialism, consumerism, nationalism, and many others. It also means working to turn away from those things that keep each of us from enjoying a full, free life on a personal level—addictions, bad habits, broken relationships.

Some people find that giving up a food they love or fasting in some way (skipping lunch one day a week, adopting a diet of particular foods) helps them remember to observe the season more faithfully. They commit to spending that lunch time in prayer or meditation or their commitment to eat only a small bowl of rice for one meal each day of Lent reminds them of many people throughout the world who have no clean water and very little to eat.

A friend of mine, who battled poor health and obesity because of her poor eating habits, gave up sugar one Lent. She lost some weight, gained healthier eating habits that lasted, and was able to start exercising in ways she hadn’t been able to before. For her, this was a way to repent of the ways she had been neglecting her physical health and to learn to better respect her body as a gift from God. Seeing the issue as a dimension of her spiritual life allowed her to follow through on a commitment in a way she’d not been able to before.

While I encourage you to observe this liturgical season as part of your spiritual practice, I also encourage you to give that practice serious thought. I remember one year when I was still a child but old enough to think in more complicated ways, I decided that perhaps I would give up licorice for Lent. It was in the spirit of what I’d been told to do—give up candy. The fact that I never liked licorice and therefore never ate it anyway seemed to me a logical approach to a practice I didn’t understand. Choosing to keep doing something we’ve always done or to give up something of which we’ve never partaken doesn’t really capture the spirit of Lent!

Perhaps your practice will be to give up something. If that’s the case, make it something whose loss will make a difference to you, something that will help you turn toward a healthier, fuller, more God-centered life. Perhaps you will, rather than give up something, take on something. Commit to immersing yourself in Scripture each day if you don’t already do so. Commit to writing a letter every day to someone with whom you want to establish, re-establish, or mend a relationship...or someone whom you know is lonely. Examine yourself; spend time in prayer to know how you can best observe the spirit of Lent.

One more thing...make Ash Wednesday and Good Friday worship part of your Lenten observance. Our personal Lenten practices and our joint recognition of our need for repentance (Ash Wednesday) and of our recognition of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross (Good Friday) help us prepare for and better appreciate the glory of Easter Sunday and the empty tomb. That is the point: new life in Christ!

With thanks for all of you,

Pastor Katie



LENTEN WORSHIP TIDBITS

SEEING BEYOND THE BLINDERS



Our Lenten worship theme, “Seeing Beyond the Blinders,” challenges us to view God’s word through a broader perspective, without the blinders each of us wears. In each of our Scriptures during this season, we will hear parables and see encounters with Jesus that help us remove those blinders, help us better understand things, help us find things we perhaps didn’t know we’d lost or perhaps were unwilling to look for. Along the way, we’ll think about what our personal blinders allow us to see and what they block out.

The Lenten season begins on Feb. 17 with our **Ash Wednesday** worship via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. Please plan to attend; Ash Wednesday sets the stage for our season of Lent. Usually on Ash Wednesday, someone marks us on the forehead with the sign of the cross made in ashes. The symbol of ashes comes from the “ashes and sackcloth” that God’s people used to express grief, sorrow, and repentance. The ashes remind us that we are called to repent of those things in our lives which separate us from God. Also tied to Lent are the words, “Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return,” words often spoken as the ashes are placed on our foreheads. These words come from the creation image in Genesis 2 in which God creates the first human from the dust of the earth. The words are a reminder that we are human and that we are mortal. Since we can’t be together on Ash Wednesday with our bowls of ashes, we invite you to instead grab a spoonful of dirt—“dust of the earth”—from your yard, mix it with a little water, and make some mud with which to mark your forehead. If you don’t have a yard, you can no doubt find a bit of earth (from a potted plant, perhaps, or in your neighborhood) to use.



Mark your calendars! Our Annual Congregational Meeting will follow our worship service on Sunday, February 7. We will receive the annual report and the 2021 budget and will vote on the pastor’s terms of call. This meeting is brief but important in the life of our church community!



CLERK'S CORNER



Happy New Year! It's Janus time—you know, the two-faced Roman god who looks backward to the past and forward to the future. At Janus time, we report our church statistics for 2020 on membership and finances to PCUSA, and we review our membership roll. We have 78 active members at the end of 2020, and will have eight Session members when we ordain and install Pam Abreu and Judy Long on February 7.

According to Treasurer Mary Schipper, FUPC is faring well financially. We average 55 or so at Sunday Zoom worship and host an active adult Sunday school class. We have a busy schedule of committees, who address our finances, worship, community life, the celebration of our 151 years of existence in Las Vegas, mission outreach here and beyond, our physical spaces and our employees.

We continue to prepare meals for Samaritan House, deliver morning devotionals and provide meaningful worship of God every week. All this in time of COVID when we can't gather, can't sing together, can't worship in our sanctuary and can't take communion together. SO, are we church? You bet we are, and we are blessed beyond measure!

As we look forward, it's time to honor FUPC's financial commitment to the larger church—PCUSA, the Synod of the Southwest and the Presbytery—by paying our per capita apportionment and our Unified Mission Pledge. You'll remember that per capita or 'per head' literally, is the fee that each member pays to support the church writ large. The fee is \$35 per person and is apportioned as follows: PCUSA \$8.98; Synod of the Southwest \$5.75; and Presbytery of Santa Fe \$20.27. FUPC has pledged to pay our per capita of \$2800, that's 80 (2019 membership) x \$35, by April 14, 2021. SOOOO, it would be great if each of us pays our per capita by that time. Our unified mission pledge of \$1800 is paid monthly, so you can help with that whenever works for you during the year. Yes, we are the church and we are people of God!

Karyl Lyne, Clerk of Session



Deacon Ministry

SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR

Eliza Cook - 1818-1889

Old Time has turned another page
Of eternity and truth;
He reads with a warning voice to age,
And whispers a lesson to youth.
A year has fled o'er heart and head
Since last the yule log burnt;
And we have a task to closely ask,
What the bosom and brain have learnt?
Oh! let us hope that our sands have run
With wisdom's precious grains;
Oh! may we find that our hands have done
Some work of glorious pains.
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year,
While the holly gleams above us;
With a pardon for the foes who hate,
And a prayer for those who love us.
We may have seen some loved ones pass
To the land of hallow'd rest;
We may miss the glow of an honest brow
And the warmth of a friendly breast:
But if we nursed them while on earth,
With hearts all true and kind,
Will their spirits blame the sinless mirth
Of those true hearts left behind?

No, no! it were not well or wise
To mourn with endless pain;
There's a better world beyond the skies,
Where the good shall meet again.
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year,
While the holly gleams above us;
With a pardon for the foes who hate,
And a prayer for those who love us.
Have our days rolled on serenely free
From sorrow's dim alloy?
Do we still possess the gifts that bless
And fill our souls with joy?
Are the creatures dear still clinging near?
Do we hear loved voices come?
Do we gaze on eyes whose glances shed
A halo round our home?
Oh, if we do, let thanks be pour'd
To Him who hath spared and given,
And forget not o'er the festive board
The mercies held from heaven.
Then a welcome and cheer to the merry new year,
While the holly gleams above us;
With a pardon for the foes who hate,
And a prayer for those who love us.



TIME, TALENT, & TREASURE UPDATE

We have never had a year like 2020 but some things do not change. Annual giving of members and friends was 99 percent of expectations! While we know too many in our community are struggling and facing extreme hardships and losses, we are especially thankful that we have found a way to continue to worship together and do God's work.

At our January meeting, TT&T enjoyed a brainstorming session exploring the church's long-term financial stability. The committee thought I was a little premature in this planning as we are optimistic and thankful for our vibrant and active congregation. As important as monetary donations, we are thriving because of our generous donation of time and talents: contributing to Zoom worship, landscaping, the Unity Orchard, making cookies, making phone calls, the OTM, Samaritan House meals, Mustard Seed, and much more. However, we need to think about how we continue to do all the things we do in 2030, 2050, and beyond, when we are no longer in a position to do what we do best. Are there things we need to do now to ensure we have a vibrant membership. It is not too early to be thinking about this. Stay tuned for future developments.

Carol Linder, Chair



SUNDAY CLASS DISCUSSES JESUS' "I AM" ASSERTIONS

On the first two Sundays in February, the Bible-based class for adults and youth will continue discussion of the book *"He said – I am ... and He is"* by Glenn C. Carlson, former Navy pilot, media personality and Presbyterian pastor. The book deals with the seven times Jesus asserted "I am" in the Gospel of John.

While in seminary, Carlson was also a teaching fellow, teaching classes in ways to prepare and present the Christian gospel by radio and television. With his wife and infant son, he went to Scotland, where he received a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. He has served Presbyterian churches in Ohio, Washington State, and Arizona. After retiring, he was the organizing pastor of a Presbyterian church in Phoenix, Arizona, and briefly served Methodist churches in Arizona and Oregon.

In each chapter of this book Carlson presents one assertion and examines it in three ways: "Who Jesus Is," "What Jesus Does," and "What Jesus Wants Us to Do." Jesus uses these "I am" metaphors to explain what his followers are to do in carrying out his mission. Carlson feels the author of the Gospel of John was writing for converts from varied spiritual backgrounds who sometimes did not get along and needed to hear Christ's words in unifying context.

Coincidentally, the author and our own Chad Boliek met and became friends while both attended San Francisco Theological Seminary as ministerial students. While there, they met and fell for their future wives, who were also students at SFTS! Before all that, Carlson and Boliek studied simultaneously in the department of Radio and Television Communications at the University of Southern California but did not know each other.

The book is available from Xlibris.com in soft cover for \$14.99, for \$11.85 with free shipping from Amazon Prime and as a Kindle book for \$3.99. There are also a few used copies available for \$5 to \$10 with shipping from AbeBooks and Alibris.

Reading assignments (book chapters and Bible chapters) are:

February 7 -- "I Am the Good Shepherd," pp. 21-25 (John 10) and "I Am the Resurrection and The Life," pp. 33-37 (John 11) about the death and raising of Lazarus;

February 14 -- "I Am the Way and the Truth and the Life," pp. 39-44 (John 14); "I Am the True Vine," pp. 27-31 (John 15); and "The End? Just the Beginni," pp. 45-46.



LENTEN STUDY: *ARE WE THERE YET? PILGRIMAGE IN THE SEASON OF LENT*

Our Lenten study this year will be discussion of the book *Are We There Yet? Pilgrimage in the Season of Lent*, with an introduction by Marek P. Zabriskie (2017). In this book, each chapter is written by a different author or two, describing the penitential and purgative process of walking to/around/through some of the most beloved pilgrimage sites in the Christian tradition or of making an internal pilgrimage, a journey through difficult terrain of the soul.

The book is published by Forward Movement, a ministry of the Episcopal Church in the United States dedicated to supporting Christians in their spiritual journey through offering books, daily devotional materials, studies and curriculum for small groups, apps, websites and online resources. More than half a million people read their daily devotional resource, “Forward Day by Day.”

The book is available new in paperback from Amazon Prime for \$13.22 or used for as little as \$5.99 including shipping; from Alibris for as little as \$2.77 plus \$3.99 shipping; or AbeBooks for \$2.79 plus \$2 shipping. You may be able to get Paper Trail to order a copy, or Richard Lindeborg can have a copy drop shipped to your home.

Are We There Yet? is broken down into an introductory section and weekly sections. Each weekly section includes a scripture passage, a description of the journey, one day’s meditation, a list of suggested practices for the week, and meditations for each remaining day of the week. The reader can treat each week as a set of daily readings, tackle all the readings as a “chapter” or anything in between. Each week’s section ends with the Sunday class discussion.

Weekly reading assignments: (Note that sections for the second and fifth week are skipped)

Feb 21: Introductory material pp. 7-14: Forward, Introduction, The Journey, Walking and Welcome

Meditation on Camino Frances (the French Way) by Marek Zabriskie, founder and director of the Center for Biblical Studies.

Feb 28: pp. 15-28: (The Week [starting] Ash Wednesday) “Purgation and Penitence”

Meditations on a pilgrimage on El Camino de Santiago: St. Jean Pied-de Porte, France, to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Pamplona, Spain, a distance of 478 miles, by Nancy Hopkins-Greene, an Episcopal Priest at the Church of the Redeemer in Cincinnati and author of *Moving Meditations*.

Mar 7: pp. 29-46: (The First [full] Week of Lent) “Forgiveness and Freedom”

Meditations on historic lynching sites in the American South by Catherine Meeks, a retired Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies at Wesleyan College.

Mar 14: pp. 73-92: (The Third Week of Lent) “Insight and Inspiration”

Meditations on a pilgrimage beyond Galicia to Avila – the city of Teresa of Avila – by Teresa Pasquale Mateus, author of several books on trauma and recovery and Executive Director of The Mystic Soul Project.

Mar 21: pp. 93-112: (The Fourth week of Lent) “Healing and Hope”

“Meditations on the journey within” by Bo Cox, leader of therapeutic activities at a psychiatric hospital and Consultant to St. Alban’s School in Washington, DC.

Mar 28: pp. 133-150: (Holy Week [a week early]) “Reconciliation, Redemption and Returning Home”

Meditations on the Appalachian Trail by Frank and Victoria Logue, authors and leaders of spiritual retreats. Frank is Canon to the Ordinary in the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia, and Victoria is a tertiary in the Third Order of St. Francis.

Classes are led by Richard Lindeborg and are Sunday mornings at 9:15 on Zoom, using the same link as for the worship service.



UNITY ORCHARD UPDATE

The Unity Orchard had its first community Zoom meeting on Monday, Jan. 18. Guided by our Zoom technology experts, D.R. Palmer, Carol Linder, and Juli Salman, the meeting was moderated by Judy Long and Jan Beurskens. There were guest appearances by Elizabeth Juarros, speaking for the Friends of the Gallinas River Park project, Mike Boden, who is donating trees from the former Omar Barker orchard in Sapello, and our own Beth Urech, who announced a surprise gift from Jane Lumsden and Semilla's.

The meeting was well attended with more than 60 participants. An interest survey was distributed on-line. D.R. will be grouping respondents into categories of interest and next step will be forming committees and determining how to proceed.

Additional next steps (in addition to committee formation) include scheduling several work days to clear the site of large rocks, putting up signage to designate the orchard, finalizing MOUs with the City and West Las Vegas schools, and working with the landscape firm Groundworks Studio on the irrigation plans.

It is an exciting project with much community based interest – indeed, it is beginning to feel like the UNITY orchard.

Jan Beurskens, Unity Orchard Task Force



MUSTARD SEED GRANTS

Does your nonprofit have an innovative idea but you need a little help getting it off the ground?

Apply for a Mustard Seed Grant

Mustard Seed is a grant awarded by the First United Presbyterian Church, which funds special new and innovative projects. The “seed” money, ranging from \$200 to \$1,500, helps organizations with a project for one-time expenses. Since its launch in 1999, more than \$161,000 has been distributed to 180-plus organizations

Submission guidelines may be downloaded at

<https://lvpresbyterian.org/main/mustard-seed-2021-proposal-information/>

2021 MUSTARD SEED PROPOSALS

Due Monday, March 1, by noon

Mail to: PO Box 37 – Las Vegas, NM 87701

Email: fupc.nm@gmail.com

For more information

Call the church office: 425-7763

or email: carollinder@msn.com or ckh5@me.com



ONLINE GIVING REMINDER

If you are using our online giving process, please check the “end date” of your automatic payments. And thanks for giving so generously this year. Contact the church office if you have any questions.



If you are not on the email distribution list for our Sunday Online Worship bulletin and would like to be, please send an [email](#) to the church office requesting that your name/email be added. The bulletin is emailed on Thursday or Friday for the service along with a message from Pastor Katie.



WEEKLY SOCIAL GATHERINGS VIA ZOOM

Sunday morning fellowship following worship. Hang around after the postlude and spend some time chatting with folks!

Coffee with Katie, Tuesday mornings at 9:00. We'll chat over coffee (I prefer tea) and breakfast if you'd like. It's an opportunity to visit together with no agenda, just getting to know each other better.

- I have decided that, **beginning in February, I will not hold Thursday afternoon tea time.** Over the last several weeks, I've had maybe one visitor. Clearly, this is not a good time for folks. I am happy to schedule another time during the week when we can chat, but clearly 3:30 p.m. on Thursdays is not that time. If you have a suggestion, let me know.



TO JOIN ANY FUPC EVENT VIA ZOOM:



The easiest way to join worship or other FUPC public events is simply to go to our website (lvpresbyterian.org) and click on the “Join Us on Zoom” link.

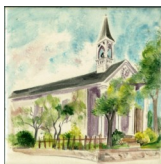
You can also open your web browser and go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>. If you haven't been on Zoom before, you'll see instructions for downloading the Zoom app and allowing your camera (if you have one) and microphone to be used by Zoom, and then the meeting will open.

If you are new to Zoom, we recommend going to the link above a few minutes before the event so that you can get the Zoom app set up ahead of time.

If you don't have a computer but want **to join by phone, call 312-626-7699** and enter the meeting ID number (573-920-0081) when prompted. Please note this is a Chicago number, so if your phone plan does not have unlimited calls, you may incur long-distance charges.

For committee meetings and other non-public meetings, you'll receive a link from your committee chair.

1000 Douglas Avenue
PO Box 37
Las Vegas NM 87701
505-425-7763



Website: www.lvpresbyterian.org

Facebook: Las Vegas First United Presbyterian (NM)

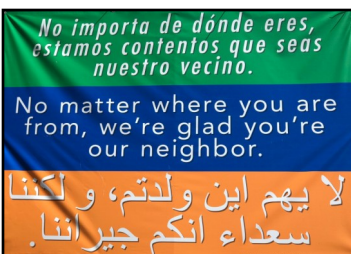
Email: fupc.nm@gmail.com

Sunday Schedule

9:30 a.m. - Bible Based Study via Zoom

10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship via Zoom

Fellowship Hour following the worship service on Zoom



➔ **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!**

Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, February 7th
Following worship via Zoom



Samaritan House Food Donations

FEBRUARY

Pasta and Sauce

Coffee and Tea are always appreciated



Our Daily Devotionals

Our weekday devotionals offer a chance to take just a few minutes to **devote** some time thinking about your spiritual journey. Some are uplifting, some are thought-provoking, but all remind us to live in thanksgiving to God and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. You can find our devotionals on the FUPC Facebook page or by clicking on the “devotionals” link under “Latest News” on our website – lvpresbyterian.org

Thank you to those who have committed to providing weekly devotionals:

Monday – Pastor Katie Tuesday – Beth Urech Wednesday – Rod Billingsley

Friday – Denice Spicer Thursday – Pat Halverson



3rd Charlotte Wooton
Pauline Dimsey
17th Christie Baskett
28th Claire Weinstein



We're a
MATTHEW 25
church

pcusa.org/matthew25