



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

APRIL 2021



Dear FUPC Family and Friends,

If you participated in worship on March 7, you were an important part of FUPC's efforts to brainstorm ideas for our proposal to the Lilly Endowment for a National Clergy Renewal Program grant. This grant would provide monies to fund travel, lodging, and other expenses for a time of sabbatical for me in 2022 and, just as importantly, it would also secure monies to fund a renewal program for our congregation. Following indications of broad congregational support for us to pursue this grant opportunity, a Renewal Grant Task Force came together to work on the specifics of our proposal; members of that Task Force are relying heavily on your input to make decisions about the kinds of renewal activities that might allow our church family to track our spiritual journeys, to experience our interests in new ways, to become even closer as a faith community, and to refresh our energy so we can better look to the future. I am grateful to the Task Force members who have already done so much toward this opportunity for renewal. They are Pam Abreu, D.R. Palmer, Renee Soderlund, and Denice Spicer.

I thought you might like to hear the results of the March 7 breakout room discussions. Each group was asked to answer three questions: What activities make your heart sing? What is your favorite part of worship or what would you like to be included in worship that isn't? What word best describes your journey with God?

As might be expected, our spiritual journeys take on many different flavors, but many people mentioned growth, possibility, and challenge; many others spoke of God's presence and comfort; some talked about a commitment to service; some spoke about waves and mountains and valleys. These responses tell me that we are in a good place to enter into a process of renewal. We seek spiritual growth and challenge and have those among us who will remind us of God's comforting presence.

Your responses to questions about worship and activities that make our hearts sing are guiding us as we think about what worship might look like during a time of renewal and what events might best offer us a chance to track our interests in new directions. Music was a clear favorite for many of us in response to both questions—within the context of worship and within the context of our personal passions. Other heart-song activities included all manner of nature experiences, arts/crafts, and social gatherings. In addition to music, top responses for worship indicated a desire for close community/connections in a variety of ways, and more movement during worship.

We started generating ideas about renewal knowing we wanted to immerse ourselves in "Exploring the Word," both in terms of the capital "W" Word—Christ and Scripture—and the lower case "w" word—our own words, how we express and live out who God intends us to be. After listening to input from the congregation, from the Session's recent online retreat, and the Task Force's discussion around all the ideas we heard, we have revised our theme from "Exploring the Word" to "Tracking the Word," realizing that God is already in our midst; how do we track God's presence in our lives and what tracks do we leave as we live out our identity as Christ-followers?

If you have input toward our grant proposal process, please feel free to email me or other Task Force members. The proposal is due April 21; stay tuned for updates between now and then!



With thanks for all of you,
Pastor Katie



WORSHIP TIDBITS

Easter Sunday is upon us! Soon we will find ourselves shouting “Christ is risen!” We will celebrate the new life we find in Christ and offer joyful thanks for the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross.

But not all of us will understand that sacrifice in the same way.

The dominant theology of the cross in many Christian churches is one of atonement—that Jesus had to die to atone for our sins. But even within this theology, there are several different understandings. Jesus’ death was a ransom to Satan, for instance, to buy the salvation of humankind; Jesus took on the sins of the world and carried them to the cross because only someone both human and divine could make that sacrifice; Jesus was a scapegoat—the innocent victim of a violent crowd who couldn’t recognize who he was. There are several theories of how atonement works within this theology, and there are other beliefs, too, about how Jesus ended up, crucified on a cross, and how his crucifixion saves us.

This Easter season, I’d encourage you to think about your relationship with the saving Christ. How do you understand Christ’s saving grace? How does that understanding align with what you think about the power and character of God?

Perhaps you’ll want to suggest that we get together to talk about our varying understandings, questions, and confusion about the mystery of the cross. I would love to have that discussion with you!



WELCOME CRYSTAL K. WESTERN FORD



Our new office manager, Crystal Western Ford, started work at the church on March 22, 2021. Linda Solyntjes will train her for two weeks and then Linda will say goodbye to the job she's done for over 11 years for us. She's not leaving us, just retiring to travel and quilt even more.

Crystal is a New Mexican, born and raised in Las Cruces, lived for about 15 years in Albuquerque, and moved to Las Vegas in 2017. She and her partner bought a house along with a two–unit apartment building (dating back to approximately 1890), which they renovated and now rent out. She comes from a Baha'i background and attends Quaker meetings with Bob and Carrol Pearson and Jackson and Niki.

Crystal has been a legal transcriptionist for many years and has experience in office management and bookkeeping. She loves gardening, canyoneering, animals, hiking as much of the Southwest as she can in one lifetime and being outdoors. Over the last few years she has helped her partner in building the Ocate Cliffs Retreat Center in Mora County, an ongoing project. Crystal and her partner have two daughters in college.

We are happy to welcome Crystal into her new job with us. She'll be in the office 8:30–1:30 Monday–Thursday. We are looking forward to getting to know her and working together.



CLERK'S CORNER

My Clerk's Corner this month is a small world, large church story. Some years ago, a group of friends of Patrick's and mine, who have traveled together, met in Louisville, Ky., to spend time seeing the sights and having fun. In preparation for the trip, I contacted John Detterick to see if our group could tour the PCUSA Headquarters there. John enthusiastically responded yes and set up a tour for our group with a woman named Emily Odom. We had a wonderful tour.

Fast forward to 2020. You'll remember that last year the M&P Committee decided to have our PCUSA Giving Catalog event, when FUPC fundraises for a Village Well, in July instead of December when we participate in the PCUSA Christmas Joy Offering. We called it Christmas in July and the congregation responded by donating \$1890, enough for 1.26 Village Wells! The Christmas in July motif, or the amount raised, or both caught the attention of a PCUSA Mission Agency Staff member Teresa Mader, who asked for the story.

As the chair of M&P, I wrote it up emphasizing that our keen awareness of the importance of clean and secure water sources in Northern New Mexico, made it a joy for us to do this Christmas in July project. The next thing I knew, Katie and I received a request for a telephone interview with a person named Emily Odom. The name rang a bell, but I didn't know why.

Well, Katie and I spent more than an hour and a half telling Emily, now an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament and a PCUSA News Agency Writer, our story. Emily had been caught by FUPC's story of providing water to villages with no wells, because of our own New Mexico challenges with water, and wanted to use it for a PCUSA World Water Day (March 22) release. Once on the zoom call, Emily said I looked familiar and remembered the tour she had given me and our group so many years ago. The confluence of a chance meeting in Louisville, FUPC's Village Well giving project, Emily's writer's instincts and World Water Day, 2021, leave me believing even more strongly than I always have that God is, indeed, in his heaven!

You can see Emily's story, *Let the Rivers Run*, online in the Daily News from Presbyterian Church U.S.A. March 15, 2021 by Rev. Emily Enders Odom. The subtitle is Presbyterian Giving Catalog helps New Mexico congregation to support life-giving water initiatives. You can also read the story in this newsletter. What a personal joy this was!

– Karyl Lyne, Clerk

Dear Katie, Karyl and Colleagues in Santa Fe Presbytery,

Please find below the link to a Presbyterian News Service article, published this morning, focusing on First United Presbyterian Church's support of the Presbyterian Giving Catalog – specifically the Las Vegas congregation's water-related initiatives – which also ties in to the forthcoming observation of **World Water Day, Monday, March 22**:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/let-the-rivers-run/>

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share this aspect of your congregation's story with the PC(USA). I always marvel at how small the Presbyterian world is that my late ministry colleague, John Detterick, commended me as the Presbyterian Center tour guide for Karyl's visiting group some years ago.

As always, we encourage churches and presbyteries to share this news with your constituents as well as across your own social media platforms. (I have copied my friend and fellow Union Theological Seminary alum, Takako Terino, on this message so that she'll have my current email address if she doesn't already. She and I were working together a good bit when I served on the staff of Union. Greetings, Takako!)

Rev. Emily Enders Odom
Mission Interpretation Strategist
Mission Engagement and Support
Presbyterian Mission Agency - Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

UPDATE FROM TIME, TREASURES & TALENTS (TT&T)



Your TT&T committee includes a dedicated group of individuals that keep track of our finances and plan how to put to good use all the talents and generous donation of time our church family contributes. We are also thinking about the long-term financial stability of our church and take care of other duties that crop up; long time members Richard Lindeborg and Van Swan keep me on track.

Here is an update of the latest committee activities:

2022 budget planning will start in June this year; this change will allow committees to develop their budget requests prior to the Session leadership transition on Aug. 1. The current timeline often results in new committee chairs developing budget requests as soon as they start on a committee.

Associate Treasurer Denice Spicer and TT&T member Pam Abreu are conducting the annual review of our 2020 Finances. Richard Lindeborg has performed this review in years past and was happy to be relieved of that responsibility this year, although he continues to provide support.

Denice and Pam are also evaluating the possibility of using Church Windows to handle our payroll. We are currently using ADP payroll services.

Pre-COVID many different groups used our church facilities, both 1000 Douglas and the Old Town Mission Community Center. As we plan for loosening restrictions, we are exploring the logistics of renting out our commercial kitchen to community members. The kitchen is currently used twice a week by our Samaritan House meals team. Stay tuned for upcoming news about this as we move forward.

—Carol Linder, Chair

Trustees

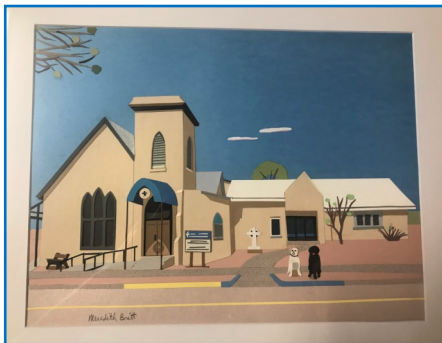
Carol Linder, President

Tom Trigg, Vice-President

Judy Long, Secretary



Many thanks to all of you for the wonderful cards and gifts you've given me as I retire as the FUPC Office Manager. My last working day at FUPC will be Thursday, April 9th. Then I'm off to other adventures.....including quilting, gardening, and traveling "up north" (northeastern Minnesota) this summer.



The Meredith Britt collage is absolutely fabulous...how cool to have Cheyenne and Garcia sitting on the curb!! I've always wanted one of Meredith's collages. Thank you, too, for the gift certificate to the Prairie Hill Café at Plaza Hotel. Might save that to celebrate Gene's and my 30th wedding anniversary in August.

There are so many people to thank! Please know I appreciate all the good wishes you've sent me.

Blessings to you all! Linda

P.S. - Our new Office Manager, Crystal Western Ford, will take good care of all of you and the church's business. You're in good hands.



Class for Adults and Youth: Pandemic in the Old and New Testaments

NOTE: There is no class on Easter Sunday

After Easter the Sunday morning Bible-based class for adults and youth will begin discussion of books by leading Old and New Testament scholars designed to put the current pandemic in a faith perspective:

Virus as a Summons to Faith: Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty by Walter Brueggemann.

God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath by N.T. Wright.

Brueggemann is the William Marcellus McPheeters Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at Columbia Theological Seminary. He is a leading interpreter of the Old Testament and author of numerous books, including *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*, and *Reverberations of Faith: A Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes*

As one reader comments, “Through scriptural interpretation and prayer, Dr. Brueggemann’s treatment of the current situation of global pandemic and environmental destruction gives us freedom to groan in our fear and suffering, to admit to our human culpability, to strive to let go of the past in order to live more compassionately in the present, and to hope in the everlasting and creative love of God.”

Wright is the Chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He is the award-winning author of 80 books, including *After You Believe*, *Surprised by Hope*, *Simply Christian*, *The Challenge of Jesus*, and *The Meaning of Jesus* (coauthored with Marcus Borg).

Wright isn't content to just provide pat answers, or to give us the answers we want to hear, according to one reader. He keeps going back to the Bible, back to Jesus, and back to our responsibilities as image-bearers of God. In an age of knee-jerk reactions, social shaming, and trying to out-shout your “opponents,” such a stubborn view of the issues is not only refreshing and welcome, but necessary if we are to maintain our status as the people of God.

Brueggemann’s book is available from Amazon.com in paperback for \$14.00 (with a few used copies for less), and on Kindle for \$9.99. Other online vendors, such as Alibris.com and AbeBooks.com, have a few new and used copies for competitive prices. Paper Trail may be able to order copies, and Richard Lindeborg can order a new copy from Amazon Prime (shipping free).

Wright’s book will be provided free. Register with Richard Lindeborg by April 5.

- Classes are from 9:15 to 10, Sunday mornings using the same Zoom link for Sunday worship.

The reading assignments for the series are:

April 11 Brueggemann pp. vii – xii “Forward, and ”Preface” and Wright pp. 1-6 Ch. 1: “Where do we Start?”

April 18 Wright pp. 1-14 Ch. 1: “Reading the Old Testament” and Brueggemann pp. 1-20 Ch. 1: “Reaping the Whirlwind—Leviticus, Exodus, Job.”

Apr. 25: Brueggemann pp. 23-34 Ch. 2: “Pestilence...Mercy? Who Knew?--2 Samuel” and Ch. 3: “Until the Dancing Begins Again—Jeremiah.”

May 2: Brueggemann pp. 35-56 Ch. 4: “Praying Amid the Virus--1 Kings.” And Ch. 5: “The ‘Turn’ from Self to God--Psalm 77.”

May 9: Brueggemann pp. 57-72 Ch. 6: “God’s New Thing--Isaiah 43” and Ch. 7: “The Matrix of Groan--Isaiah 42.”

May 16 Wright pp. 15-29 Ch. 3: “Jesus and the Gospels.”

May 23 Wright pp. 30-51 Ch. 4: “Reading the New Testament.”

No class May 30



2021 Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women

The Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women was born in 1922 when Hallie Paxson Winsborough challenged each member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to give a penny for each year of her life as a "birthday gift" for Miss Dowd's School for Girls in Japan. For just shy of 100 years, this offering has provided life-giving grants to mission projects throughout the world. Take a moment to consider all that has taken place since the Birthday Offering was established! From world wars to the internet, being the hands and feet of Christ has been a constant joy for Presbyterian Women, in easy and difficult days.

The Birthday Offering has become an annual tradition. It has funded over 200 major mission projects that continue to impact people in the United States and around the world. While the projects and donation amounts have changed, PW's commitment to improving the lives of women and children has not. Support through the birthday offering means PW can continue funding mission projects like the ones selected for 2021. Give as you have been blessed, generously and as led by the Holy Spirit. Following are descriptions of the three recipients for this year.

Garden Gate Ranch, Inc., Des Moines, Iowa, \$150,000. The Birthday Offering will assist Garden Gate Ranch in their mission by providing a separate education center for programming, therapeutic services and vocational rehabilitation.

Memorial Drive Ministries, Inc., Stone Mountain, Georgia, \$77,061. The Birthday Offering grant will provide a desperately needed roof to replace one that leaks onto the gymnasium floor where sewing, karate, dance, Frisbee, badminton, basketball and other after-school activities take place. This costly but necessary fix will ensure that Memorial Drive Ministries can continue to provide a place of welcome to diverse worshipping communities and innovative community services.

Nkhoma Mission Hospital Women's Health Center/OBGYN Theatre, Nkhoma, Malawi, \$129,145. The Birthday Offering grant will provide funds to build an obstetrics and gynecology-specific operating room next to the existing prenatal and maternity wards. This new theater will help decrease delays and reduce maternal deaths caused by having to move patients a significant distance across the hospital's grounds. This theater expansion will aid in the hospital's goals of becoming more self-sustainable by expanding the surgical services that are offered and living into its vision of being a leader in quality, Christian healthcare and training in Malawi.

LOOKING FOR VIDEO VOLUNTEERS



We need a few volunteers to help make the videos that accompany the worship music each week. Tegan Palmer has been volunteering to do this by herself for close to a year now, and will be "retiring" from the position after Pentecost (May 23). The video volunteers will be trained on WeVideo, which is video editing software that runs in the cloud and has an enormous library of licensed images and video clips, plus the ability to add titles and lyrics. It is not difficult to use, and Tegan will provide the samples of what she is currently doing to use as a template.

Each week, the video team will receive audio files from Karyl Lyne (for the hymns) and Em Krall (for the prelude and postlude). The team will then select appropriate images and clips that fit the theme of each piece and the words of the hymns. They will add titles and lyrics and then export the video to a file that will be used during Zoom worship.

Please contact D.R. Palmer (303-775-7259) if interested or if you have questions

Prayer Shawls Make a Difference



At our February Deacon Meeting, the deacons were sharing prayers and concerns, and when it came to be my turn, I asked prayers for one month old Joelle Brooks-Rogers. She is the daughter of Pita Brooks and Kristen Rogers, very special friends of our daughter, Julie, and her husband, Michael in Ohio.

Little “J.J.” was diagnosed at less than two weeks of age, with a rare cancer, Neuroblastoma, and had lost leg and bladder function from the tumor growing on her spine. She underwent immediate surgery, and then just last week began her chemotherapy. Her overall prognosis is excellent. She has one more chemo round in two weeks.

The deacons suggested that we send her a prayer shawl. With the prayer shawl, I let Pita, her mom, know that our entire church was praying for them. She sent this note of thanks:

“I received the prayer blanket from your church. The blanket is beautiful, and I’m humbled by the gesture and generosity! We are so grateful for all of your support and the support of your church. Please keep sending prayers.”

“I want you to know that the package came at just the right time. We’ve had some bumps in the road, which have held up our chemo treatment. Just when I thought I was stressed to the max, and couldn’t handle anymore, that beautiful blanket arrived and I cried with joy at the thought of the kindness and unwavering support holding me up all the time!”

This is a photo I received March 16, of Baby Joelle with her prayer shawl. Her family wanted it to be shared with the entire church family.



Your prayers are so powerful – keep ‘em coming!

Mary Schipper, Chair, Deacons



GAIL AND BERNIE ARE MOVING!

Our beloved Gail Malley and Bernie Meadows are moving this weekend (April 10th), to another chapter in their lives. They are resettling to a Pacifica Senior Living apartment in Santa Fe, an assisted living facility. Two of Bernie’s children will be here to help with the move. We are sorry to see them moving away from us, but they will be just down the road and welcome outdoor visits after their 14 day quarantine. We will especially miss them singing alto in the choir once we can begin that again.

Mary and Judy will be taking them bread for the journey this week to send them off with love from the whole FUPC community. Although they will be physically gone from Las Vegas, we are all still community with zoom church and other ways to connect. Gail’s phone remains the same, 505-426-7269. New address is Pacifica Senior Living. #225, 2961 Galisteo Road. Santa Fe. NM. 87505. I know they would love continuing to receive cards and notes.

Lots and lots of love, Gail and Bernie. See you on Sunday zoom!

OUR COLUMBARIUM

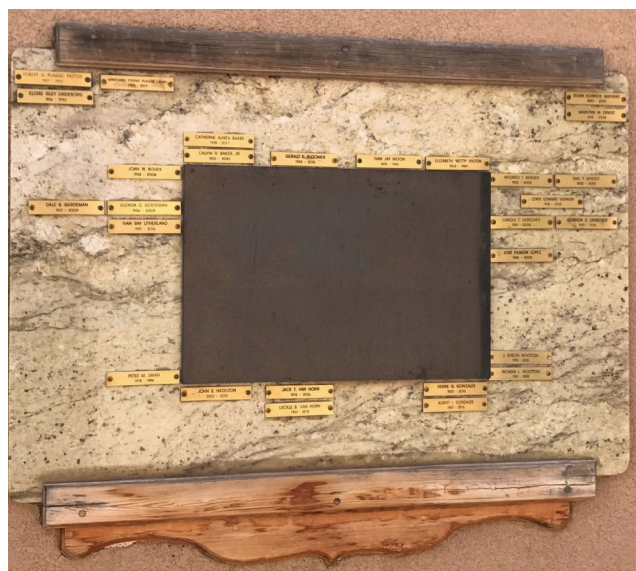


In ancient and in Christian times the dual traditions of burial and cremation were practiced. As well as our cemetery (see March newsletter), we have a niche burial within our church in the Memorial Courtyard garden. Our columbarium is a vault with recessed metal compartments of niches for the placement of earthly remains after cremation. Each metal niche is enclosed with a protective front of bronze, with an attached bronze plate with name and dates of birth and death.

We currently have four niches with cremains, and have six niches reserved. Four more are pending reservation of the total 20 niches. Our columbarium was designed as a module, with additions easily placed to keep the shape of the cross.

We would like to encourage you in your future planning to think about reserving a space in the columbarium. Niches can be reserved by advance commitment, singly or for family groups. The purchaser receives a certificate which indicates the choice of niche. This certificate entitles a person to a bronze nameplate and assurance of perpetual care.

If you are interested in talking about this or want further information, including price, please contact Judy Long or Katie Palmer.





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

Let's Get Together!

Remember that we have social gatherings via Zoom each week:

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.

zoom



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.

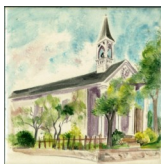
You can also open your web browser and go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>. If you haven't been on Zoom before, you'll see instructions for downloading the Zoom app and allowing your camera (if you have one) and microphone to be used by Zoom, and then the meeting will open.

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)

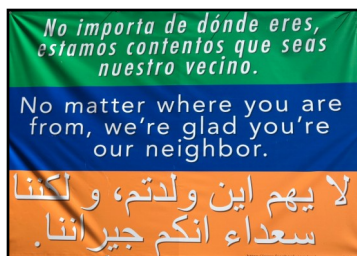
Email: fupc.nm@gmail.com

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



Our Daily Devotionals

Remember that you can find our weekday devotionals on the FUPC Facebook page or by clicking on the “devotionals” link under “Latest News” on our website at lvpresbyterian.org. These devotionals provide a short time out from the bustle of our daily activity to spend time focused on our spiritual journey.

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

Monday – Pastor Katie

Tuesday – Beth Urech

Wednesday – Rod Billingsley

Thursday – Pat Halverson

Friday – Denice Spicer



We're a
MATTHEW 25
church

pcusa.org/matthew25



Samaritan House Food Donations

APRIL

Boxed potatoes or other entrees
Coffee and Tea are always appreciated



2 nd	Carol Linder
4 th	Trudi Samuelson
9 th	Bernie Meadows
10 th	Alex Ditton
19 th	Beth Urech
21 st	Art Trujillo
22 nd	Frank Hager
24 th	Carrol Pearson
30 th	Judy Long