



Sharing the Love of Christ

First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

PO Box 37

1000 Douglas Avenue

Las Vegas New Mexico 87701

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

MAY 2021

Dear FUPC Family and Friends,

In mid-May, I will be on study leave, attending the Festival of Homiletics. “Homiletics” means “the art of preaching,” and this festival is all about preaching—five days of preaching. Now in its 30th year, the Festival brings in well-respected preachers and professors of preaching. Participants worship together daily (and get to hear these folks preach), attend lectures and workshops about preaching, and enjoy music from contemporary Christian artists (such as Luther-Seminary-based bluegrass band “The Fleshpots of Egypt”—see Exodus 16:3).

This year, like last, the Festival is being held virtually. Of course, it’s not the same as experiencing the fellowship and the excitement of a new city, but it has its advantages. No rushing from one venue to a venue several blocks away between sessions; no listening from the balcony of a huge lecture hall, but instead having speakers fill your computer screen; no travel expenses for cross-country airfare, meals, and lodging.

Many of the participants are scholars of theology I have quoted in sermons; several are folks you might know, like authors Diana Butler Bass and Brian McLaren; Sister Simone Campbell who is known for leading “Nuns on the Bus” during cross-country social justice advocacy trips; Bishop Michael Curry, who is the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church.

My excitement about this week of listening to these voices is building as I look at some of the titles of sermons and lectures I will have an opportunity to hear: “Are We the Second Book of Acts?” “The Church Expecting.” “Leaving the Tombs.” “Believing is Seeing.” “When the Preacher is the Doubter.” “Deep Listening—the Cornerstone for Prophetic Leadership.” And many more.

My weather app tells me that the average temperature here in mid-May is in the 70s. Perhaps I will get to enjoy the Festival from my patio or front porch or near an open window, soaking up the sun and feeling a nice breeze. Wherever I choose to be, I look forward to soaking up some words of wisdom, pondering some new ideas, enjoying the creativity of the presenters, and being inspired to look at Scriptural texts in new ways.

With thanks for all of you,

Pastor Katie

P.S. You’ll find a poem below that seems appropriate to the renewal of spring.

The Trees by Philip Larkin

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too,
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.



WORSHIP TIDBITS



When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. —Acts 2:1-4

We will celebrate Pentecost on May 23. Sometimes referred to as the church's birthday, Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day of Easter—the seventh Sunday after Easter. It celebrates the coming of the Spirit to the apostles and other Jesus followers in tongues of fire as they gathered in Jerusalem. You'll notice that the term "Pentecost" occurs even in the Book of Acts, for it is also the word used for the Jewish Festival of Weeks ("Shavuot" in Hebrew). This feast celebrates the wheat harvest in Israel as well as the revelation of books of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai.

PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERING

May is the month for the Pentecost Special offering. I hope you will join me in making a generous donation to this offering that supports our youth. Through this offering we are supporting Educate a Child; Transform the World national initiative which advocates for at risk children; participants in the Young Adult Volunteer (YAVS) program; and the Presbyterian Youth Triennium. Forty percent (40%) of the offering we collect stays here to be used for ministries that support at risk children in our own community. Last May we used our portion of the Pentecost offering to help 100% Community do their work here in San Miguel County. You can read more about their initiative to provide each family and community member with access to needed resources to survive and thrive at <https://www.annaageeight.org/nm-san-miguel/>. I

If you have an idea for what we can do with our portion of this year's Pentecost offering contact the Mission and Peacemaking committee.

Carol Litherland, Chair

TRACKING THE WORD: EMBODYING THE SPIRIT

We did it! With your input and support and the work of many contributors, we have submitted our grant proposal for the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program. Many thanks to all those who played a special role in preparing this proposal: members of the Renewal Grant Task Force, Pam Abreu, D.R. Palmer, Renee Soderlund and Denice Spicer; D.R. Palmer, who finalized both the clergy and congregational budgets and carried out all the "tech stuff;" Karyl Lyne, who along with Pam wrote some sections of the proposal; Richard Lindeborg for research into some of the details required in the proposal; Mary Schipper for providing a summary budget for the submission; and Mary, Karyl, and Carol Linder, whose signatures (along with Pastor Katie's) finalized the proposal and allowed us to hit the "submit" button.

If you participated in worship on April 18, you heard some of the details of our proposal, titled "Tracking the Word: Embodying the Spirit." If you missed it, you can still find that worship service on our website.

We are supposed to hear in late August whether or not we will receive the grant.



CLERK'S CORNER

THE LOST IS FOUND!

Some of you are aware that I have been agonizing and haranguing for some time about the loss of a gray plastic tub, containing the five reels of microfilmed church records from 1880 to 1998 and paper records from 1998 to 2009. When I became Clerk of Session, Carol Linder gave me those records for safe-keeping. I decided they should be kept at the church, so Linda and I put them in the East Wing locked cabinet, where other church records are stored. After a few years, I began to investigate preservation of church records. I decided I should get those materials out to see how much needed to be copied or filmed. I opened the cabinet, and low and behold, the gray plastic tub was not there! What could have happened to it? Not only that, but what do they do to clerks who lose 100+ years of church records? I calmed down realizing they had to be here somewhere and I would find them. I decided to look in every cabinet and closet in the building, and asked everyone else to look as well. No gray plastic tub; it had vanished!

Fast forward to April 16, 2021, when Linda, on her last day before retirement, called me and said, "I found them."

"Found what," I asked.

"What you've been looking for all these months," she said.

Huh? The microfilmed session records. "WHAT? Where?" I asked.

"Exactly where we put them a few years ago," she said.

"NO!"

"YES! I'll bring them to you," she said.

I was enormously relieved, but still a bit puzzled. How did I miss seeing them? Here came Linda with the records, but no gray plastic tub! They were in a brown cardboard box. Revelation! Clearly, I remembered incorrectly and that memory prevented me from seeing the box. Often, we see only what we expect to see. What a lesson to learn in light of our Lenten theme of *Looking Beyond the Blinders*! Many thanks to Linda!

UPDATE FROM THE RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE

The Task Force has submitted guidelines to Session for our re-entry to in-person worship. Once approved, we'll be posting these guidelines on our website and getting information out to the congregation through newsletters, weekly bulletins, and Facebook. In the meantime, please keep your eye out for a survey that will be coming your way, as we need to know how many folks plan to worship in person once we are able to open the church. Please respond to the survey when you receive it! Pending Session approval of the guidelines, completion of equipment installation for hybrid worship and our county remaining in the "turquoise" zone, we hope to offer in-person worship beginning in June. Those who worship in person will need to wear masks and follow social distancing and other appropriate guidelines.



SMALL GROUP GET TOGETHERS (SGGT)

Our small group summer outdoor social times were such a success last year that Community Life would like to organize them again for June and July of this year. We would limit each group to six people (including the hosts), and suggest that people bring their own food and drink like last year. Still staying safe and having a time to socialize in person. Hosts would get a list of the people in their June and July group and then plan a time that works for all.

If you are interested, please let Judy Long or Pam Abreu know by May 15. If you can host, that would be great, if not, plan to sign up to be included in a get together. See you outside in June and July.



NEW POSSIBILITY AT OLD TOWN MISSION COMMUNITY CENTER

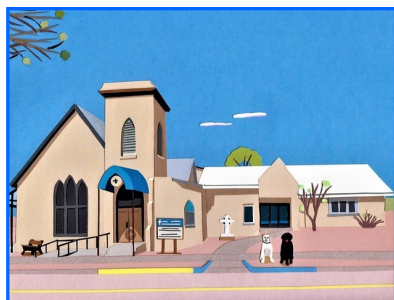
Don't get your hopes up. Don't count your chickens before they hatch. Also, something about eggs in baskets? Well, that's where we are at the Joint Operations Team of Old Town Mission Community Center.

About a month ago we got word from our friend, Elizabeth Ratzlaff, that there was a request for proposals to a grant offered by The Next Generation Fund, administered under the auspices of the Children's Trust Fund. This group provides grants to organizations that provide positive youth development programs in an authentic, proactive and trauma-informed manner. The total amount per grant was \$50,000.

The trouble was that we learned of it pretty late, which left very little time to pull information together and submit. Additionally, none of us are experienced grant writers. With less than three weeks to condense all that we want to do into two double-spaced pages using 12 point font, D.R. Palmer and Pat Leahan wrote and submitted the proposal on time. They had some editing help from Tom Trigg, but the bulk of the work was done by them. The budget we submitted totaled nearly \$37,000.

We won't know for a while whether or not we got the grant. However, should we be granted the money, we will see a strong increase in the number of Friday Night Fun events over the school year. We also included funding for a part time staff person who would offer a long-needed physical presence at the Center. This person would do all the organization work for the Friday Night events and seek out neighborhood input for other events as well.

Please stay tuned for the outcome! And watch out for those little chickens!



PRINTS AVAILABLE

Meredith Britt has agreed to make prints of this collage for \$30, unframed. If you are interested, let me know and I'll put in the order. It's such a beautiful capture of our church. The original was created as a retirement gift for Linda and includes Cheyenne and Garcia, her dogs, sitting on the sidewalk.

Email me at longfam@newmexico.com or call 505-429-0379.

Judy Long



MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN THE CHURCH COURTYARD

In previous newsletters, we have talked about the cemetery, the columbarium, and now the memorial plaque. All are ways to remember a loved one or make final plans for yourself. This picture does not do justice to the beauty of the plaque, the written word and the names of loved ones. When the church is open again, please stop by the garden and see for yourself. A friend or member of the church can be honored with a brass name plate and dates of birth and death. I choose to put both my parents on the plaque since they loved this church and attended whenever they visited us.

We ask a \$100 donation to cover costs and upkeep of the memorial garden and courtyard.

Please contact Judy Long if interested or have questions.



CLASS CONTINUES PANDEMIC DISCUSSION AND PREPARES TO MOVE ON

The Sunday morning Bible-based class for adults and youth will continue its discussion through June 6 of books by leading Old and New Testament scholars designed to put the current pandemic in a faith perspective.

The two pandemic books are:

Virus as a Summons to Faith: Reflections in a Time of Loss, Grief, and Uncertainty, by Walter Brueggemann, and
God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath, by N.T. Wright.

Both books are available from Amazon.com new or used in paperback and on Kindle. 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 get copies fairly quickly as can Richard Lindeborg.

Brueggemann is a leading interpreter of the Old Testament and author of numerous books. Wright is a New Testament expert and the award-winning author of 80 books. Classes are presently from 9:15 to 10 Sunday mornings using the same Zoom link for Sunday worship.

The remaining reading assignments for the series are:

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

June 6 Wright pp. 52-76 Ch. 5: "Where do we go from Here?"

NEW SERIES JUNE 13 – JULY 18

The next book for discussion by the class is *The Hope of Glory: Reflections on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross* by Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize winning biographer of George H.W. Bush, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson, and author of *The Soul of America* and *American Gospel* among others.

For Meacham, as for believers worldwide, the events of Good Friday and Easter reveal essential truths about Christianity. Meacham delves into the seven phrases Jesus spoke from the cross combining rich historical and theological insights to reflect on the Christian story.

It is probably best to order the Meacham book by May 15. Used hardbacks available from Amazon and Alibris for as little as \$5 including shipping, and from AbeBooks for as little as \$7.32. Kindle copies are \$11.99. Paper Trail may also be able to order copies, as can Richard Lindeborg.

The first session of the Meacham series is June 13. The reading assignment for that session is the Prologue, pp 3-32. The other reading assignments will appear in the June newsletter. (No class on July 4)



KUDOS TO CHARLOTTE

We have been remiss in not celebrating Charlotte Wootton's creativity and skill in designing the sanctuary environment so faithfully for each season during the past year and continuing today. Even though we are not holding services in person yet, we do use photos of the sanctuary during the hymn videos. Seeing the environment change over the year has helped keep us connected with our physical space. Thank you, Charlotte!

WORSHIP SPACE UPDATE

As you may know, our year of Zoom worship has been blessed with the presence of long-distance folks who have been attending regularly. We have participants in Canada, Montana, Massachusetts, Virginia, Colorado and more! Once we move back into the sanctuary for in-person worship, we don't want to lose our connection with folks far away or with folks who don't feel comfortable coming back to the physical building yet. And, we have had long-distance preachers and worship leaders as well, which we would like to continue. Session approved funds for a "hybrid worship" system in late 2020. We have been working for months to make our sanctuary suitable for both in-person and remote worship, and it is starting to take shape.

We have designed and purchased a system including two computers, many adapters, and a new remote-control camera to connect with our existing sound board and sanctuary monitors. This system will let us create and share a livestream of sanctuary worship on Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, etc., while letting remote users Zoom in and have a presence on the sanctuary monitors. In parallel with the creation of that system, our Buildings and Grounds committee has been designing, building, and installing an Audio/Visual Center; expanding the sound system corner to also include room for the two computer stations needed for video. They are making a beautiful built-in space in a similar style to the pulpit and railing at the chancel, so it will fit right in.

We are also designing a projection video system for Perea Hall so that we can participate in the live service from overflow seating. The system will also support watching other video presentations direct from Perea Hall.

We hope to have this all in place sometime in May, barring delays. Questions? Call D.R. Palmer at 303-775-7259.

—D.R. Palmer, *Worship and Music*

CELEBRATING SPRING 2021!



As our world opens up slowly due to the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine and declining numbers of infections here in New Mexico, it's time to celebrate spring! In a recent article it was reported that research shows that people who nurture daily celebratory and gratitude habits have more energy, less anxiety, and better physical health (www.veranda.com). It's also important to acknowledge that things will still be different this year – and that's okay.

It has been recommended that keeping rituals and holidays special will create distinction from one day to the next. Recently, I decorated for Easter and it was a nice change to see my Easter tree with many types of Easter eggs collected over the years. Consider activities such as listening to your favorite music, decorating the table, and wearing your favorite outfits on special days. We have Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, and Flag Day arriving soon.

On the CDC's website, recommendations include decorating your home with holiday themed items and banners, host a video chat party with family and friend to share in the celebration, plan a special meal inspired by the holiday, have an outdoor celebration with individuals wearing masks and social distancing, and watching virtual events and celebrations. Yes, it's a different world now filled with new opportunities for us to celebrate these spring holidays and gather together when we can. I encourage you to participate in the Community Life gatherings both on Zoom and when we can meet in person.

—Rene Soderlund, *Deacon*



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 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.

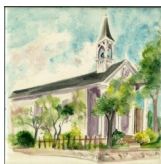
You can also open your web browser and go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5739200081>. If you haven't been on Zoom before, you'll see instructions for downloading the Zoom app and allowing your camera (if you have one) and microphone to be used by Zoom, and then the meeting will open.

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
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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



Samaritan House Food Donations

MAY

Rice and Beans

Coffee and Tea are always appreciated

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION CLASS

On Saturday, May 1, at 9:00 a.m., Pastor Katie will hold a **Membership Information Class via Zoom**. If you enjoy worshipping with us and would like to learn more about membership, how our particular church operates, and the PC(USA) denomination, plan to Zoom in just as you would for worship.

There are no geographical boundaries; if you worship with us from out of town or out of state, you are still welcome to join in this class.