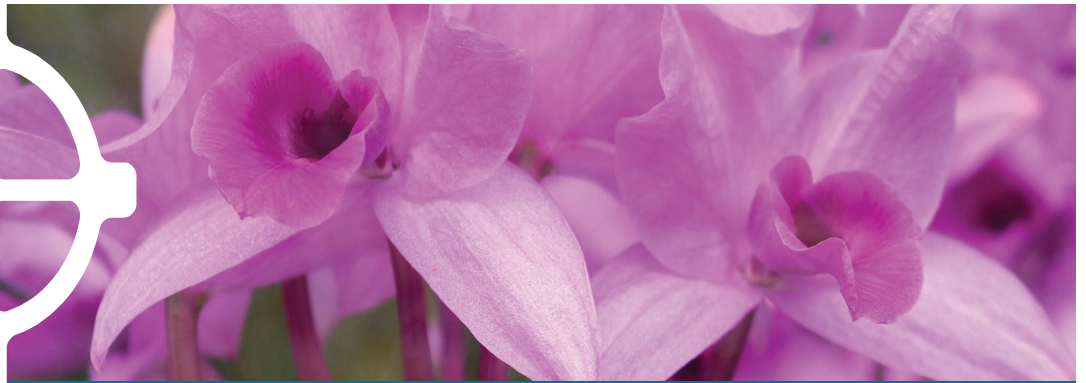




MARCH 2024
Volume 25 Issue 3



HIGHLIGHTS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SAN LEANDRO

Into the Crucible -- the Journey of Holy Week

True confession time: I was never good at chemistry. I knew I was in major trouble in college when I went up against all the other incoming freshman who thought they were pre-med.

One thing I did like in chemistry was heating up chemicals and watching them turn into something else. I remember vividly the experience of heating some particular substance that looked hard only to find out it turned into a flaky fluff. The container we used was a crucible. The word crucible has other meanings as well. It can mean a severe test of some kind, as well as "a place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development."

Holy Week acts as a kind of "crucible" for the Christian faith. For Jesus and the disciples, the actions and responses that week provided a crucible for colliding visions of the world, the world that Jesus envisioned that would free people, and the one that those connected with the powers of the day worried might end, that kept people subjugated and imprisoned. It became a severe test of stamina and strength, faith and fortitude.

The journey of Holy Week for us today is a different kind of crucible. Each year, through the re-telling of the story of that week, we participate through the vessel of the story: Jesus and his followers entering the hot-bed of Jerusalem in the midst of the High Holy time of Passover amid the power of the Roman Empire. We hear of the clashes between entrenched religious powers and those on the edges wanting all God's children to be invited in. We see the clash of the Empire's desire for security driving out voices calling for liberation. We see betrayal inside the group following Jesus, and the ultimate price of faithfulness given.

In the crucible of this experience, we are offered the opportunity to receive new life, as the first followers were. Traveling with God means we are not left as we are but called into the fuller life of resurrection possibility. We are all invited to be on the journey, knowing our transformation is around the corner.

Blessings and light,

Renée



Visit us online at WWW.FIRSTPRESBYTERIANCHURCHSL.ORG

The Abundance & Fullness of Lent

This Lent we are exploring and experiencing Abundance & Fullness through the Full to the Brim theme in weekly worship, as well as through weekly Bible Study and Daily Lent Devotional/Prayer emails. The Full to the Brim concept is helping us to trust in the promise of our baptisms, for God has already claimed us as God's own and nothing we can do will ever change or erase that.

Full to the Brim Lent Bible Studies

A Full to the Brim Bible Study guide with weekly Bible Studies to help you further explore the Sunday morning sermon text through reflection, questions and life application is available at church. This guide may be used at home for individual study or as part of the Group Bible Study opportunities listed below as you reflect, share and discuss each study with others in a small group setting.

- ♦ **Sunday Study at 11 am in the Fireside Room**
led by Kathy Pearson & Jeanette Rauscher
- ♦ **Wednesday Night Simple Soup Supper & Study at 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**
facilitated by Renée Rico & Lou Pennebaker with individual Table Discussion leaders.
- ♦ **Wednesday on Zoom at 10 am** led by Art Walton

All three Bible Study groups are using the same guide so you are welcome to participate in whichever group best fits your schedule each week. Please sign up ahead of time, especially if you plan to participate in the Wednesday Night or Zoom Group so that we can be sure to set a seat at the table for you or send you the Zoom link.



Additionally, there is a sign-up in Fellowship Hall for those who would like to provide a pot of soup, or help in the kitchen with set up, serving and/or cleanup for any of the remaining Wednesday Night Simple Soup Suppers. If you are willing to help in any of these ways, please sign up!

Full to the Brim Daily Lent Devotional & Prayer email

Are you receiving the Full to the Brim Daily Devotional & Prayer email from the church? These daily Lent emails began on Ash Wednesday and will continue through Easter Sunday, but it's not too late to begin receiving them. Email office@firstpresbyterianchurchsl.org and request to be added to the distribution list to receive a daily email in your inbox with an Abundance and Fullness Reminder for the Day and a Prayer. These emails may be used as a personal devotional and/or a journaling prompt each day for the remainder of the Lent season.

Holy Week Worship Services and Events

Palm/Passion Sunday - March 24; 9:30 am

On Palm Sunday we will celebrate Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem as well as look ahead to the significant events that led to Christ's crucifixion on the cross as we experience the Passion through story and song.



Palm Sunday Breakfast - March 24; 8 am

Before worship, our traditional Palm Sunday Breakfast of pancakes, eggs, sausage and fruit will be served in Fellowship Hall beginning at 8 am. The cost is \$10 for adults; children are free. Tickets will be available for purchase beginning Sunday, March 10.

Maundy Thursday March 28; 7 pm

The word "Maundy" refers to Jesus



washing the feet of his disciples in the Gospel of John. This year, our service will feature a hand washing experience as we remember Jesus washing the feet of His disciples, and Holy Communion as we remember Jesus' last supper with His disciples. Come to deepen your experience of Holy Week.

Easter Sunday - March 31; 9:30 am

On Easter Sunday, we will proclaim "Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!" as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior. The Chancel Choir and Chancel Bells will present special music and there will be a couple of special parts to the service that those who attend will discover!





Don't miss the Fun of Holy Humor Sunday on April 7

G.K. Chesterton once wrote:

*"Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.
Never forget that the devil fell by force of gravity.
He who has the faith has the fun."*

Holy Humour Sunday (also known as *Laughter Sunday*, *Hilarity Sunday*, *God's Laughter Sunday*, *Bright Sunday* or *Holy Fools Sunday*) has its roots in a number of different Christian traditions, dating back to the 15th century. The Sunday after Easter was first celebrated in Bavaria as *Risus Paschalis* ('God's Joke,' or 'the Easter laugh'). Priests would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons in an attempt to make the faithful laugh. After the service, people would gather together to play practical jokes on one another and tell funny stories. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead. The observance of *Risus Paschalis* was officially outlawed by Pope Clement X in the 17th century. (Perhaps people were having too much fun.) In 1988, the Fellowship of Merry Christians began encouraging churches to resurrect one Sunday each year to celebrate God's gift of laughter and joy using some of these ancient Christian traditions.

So, join us on April 7 and bring along a sense of humor and maybe a friend too! This lighthearted service will probably have a surprise or two along the way.




















A Poem from *Full to the Brim*

Water Marks

Rev. Sarah Speed, A Sanctified Art

Jesus probably kneeled down.
He probably took Peter's heel
in his hands
to wash his feet.
And I wonder if they both thought of Jacob—
the heel-grabber,
the trickster who wrestled
with God.
I wonder if it felt like a do-over,
a fresh start for creation.
I wonder if the basin overflowed
when Jesus poured the water out.
I wonder if it splashed,
leaving water marks on the floor—
proof that love was really there.
I wonder if I would have let Jesus do the same.
Would I have been like Peter and said,
"Not just my feet but my head and my hands"?
I suppose I can look at my life today
and answer the question.
Have I allowed myself to be loved?
Are there water marks on the floor?

MARCH 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 <i>Winter Camp at Calvin Crest</i> 9:30 am Worship Service 11:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim	26 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	27	28 10:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim via Zoom 6:00 pm Lent Simple Soup Supper & Study	29 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	1	2 7:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill
3 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Donuts 11:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim 	4 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	5	6 10:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim via Zoom 6:00 pm Lent Simple Soup Supper & Study 	7 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 	8	9
10 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS-SPRING FORWARD 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/ Manna Bags & Equal Exchange Chocolate Sales 11:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim 	11 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	12	13 10:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim via Zoom 6:00 pm Lent Simple Soup Supper & Study 	14 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 	15	16 1:00 pm Deacons set up for Meet and Greet 1:30 pm Deacons Meeting 
17 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/ Deacon's Meet and Greet 11:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim 	18 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	19 6:00 pm Session Meeting 	20 10:00 am Lent Bible Study: Full to the Brim via Zoom 6:00 pm Lent Simple Soup Supper & Study 	21 11:30 am Young at Heart Luncheon/Program 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 	22	23
24 PALM/PASSION SUNDAY 8:00 am Palm Sunday Breakfast 9:30 am Worship Service 	25 11:45 am Women's Book Club 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	26	27	28 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Service 	29	30 9:30 am Chancel Bells-Review Rehearsal 
31 EASTER SUNDAY Chancel Bells Performance 9:30 am Easter Worship Service 	1 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	2	3	4 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	5	6 7:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill

Looking Ahead

Men's Bible Study Breakfast Women's Fellowship Breakfast

The monthly Men's Bible Study Breakfast and Women's Fellowship Breakfast will both take place on **Saturday, March 2** at 7:30 am at the Manor Grill, located at 526 Manor Blvd. in San Leandro. All are invited and welcome to join!



Meet and Greet - March 17 During Coffee Fellowship

On this fun St. Patrick's Day, we will have time during coffee hour for everyone to meet their deacon and fellow parishioners and enjoy some special treats. Join in renewing or making a new connection!

Young at Heart

The Young at Heart luncheon and program will be on **Thursday, March 21** at 11:30 am. We're happy to have Joe Winkel from the USS Potomac give a presentation about its history. The USS Potomac was built in 1934 as the Coast Guard Cutter Electra. Be sure to sign up ahead of time, so we have an accurate count for the delicious meal prepared by Bob Kraut and his team. Sign up on Sunday mornings or call the church office. Donations to cover the meal cost are appreciated on the day of the event.



Women's Book Club

Mark **Monday, March 25** at 12:00 pm on your calendar for our discussion of "*The Story of Arthur Truluv: a Novel*," by Elizabeth Berg. We will meet in the Fireside Room. Please bring your own brown bag lunch.



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

For over 70 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has partnered with others to take action to share God's love. This offering supports three programs that work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, the work of these three programs fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. Through these three life-saving programs, we Presbyterians are there to help others around the world.

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering will be received on **Palm Sunday, March 24**. You may use the special envelope in your offering box or a special One Great Hour of Sharing envelope in the pew to contribute. You may also mail a check, payable to FPCSL, with "One Great Hour of Sharing" in the memo line. Thank you for your support of those who are in tremendous need at this time.



Deacons

Deacons list: Michelle Owyang, Shari & Tom Plunkett, Sue Robertson, Scott Crosbie, Val & Jim Watts, Will Stengel, Dennis Hollenbeck, Sylvia Smith, Susan Sprague, Jim Wakeman, Suzanne Yee, Maria Carter, Laura Gile, Jeanette Driscoll, Lynn Roman



The next Deacons meeting will be on **Saturday, March 16** at 1:30 pm. Lynn will be at the church at 12:45 pm if you want to come early to set up for our **Meet and Greet on Sunday, March 17**.

Condolences to Rich Meadowcroft

We offer condolences to Rich Meadowcroft, our church custodian, whose much beloved daughter, Kelly, passed away suddenly on February 1. The funeral service for Kelly was held at the church on Friday, February 16. Many thanks to the Deacons and members of the church who helped to put on the service and lunch reception. The beloved community gathered in a very Christ-like way during a sad time.





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Daylight Savings Time

March 10 will be a day to “spring forward” as we enter Daylight Savings time. Don’t worry, if you forget to change your clock, we’ll greet you at coffee hour for fellowship time!



Easter Flowers will be available to order in March. Check your weekly bulletin for an insert with details on ordering. The Chancel Guild will use the plants you purchase to decorate our sanctuary for Easter morning. After service you will be able to take your purchased plant home or you may wish to donate your plant to our Friends at Home unable to attend the service. Our Deacons will deliver the plant with a Greeting Card from their church family.