

APRIL 2024
volume 25 • issue 4

HIGHLIGHTS

First Presbyterian Church San Leandro

Special Worship Services in April



Holy Humor Worship Service - Sunday, April 7

This service will be full of brightness, joy and fun. This is still a worship service, but one that will put a little bounce in your step and warm your heart. Invite a friend to join in the holy hilarity! The likelihood of the unexpected will be high.

Holy Humor 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.

Creation Celebration Worship Service and Plant Exchange on Sunday April 21!

Celebrating God's good creation here on earth

On **April 21**, we will have a service that we're calling Creation Celebration – a service that affirms a traditional theological notion – the goodness of creation by God the Creator. We'll focus on the beauty of the earth and our roles as stewards of this good creation, and how we can live into those roles through prayer and action.



Following the worship service, we will have a Plant Exchange in Fellowship Hall during Coffee Fellowship. Any and all are invited to bring seeds, transplants, cuttings, seedlings, and/or established plants, to share and swap with fellow plant and garden enthusiasts! Even if you don't have anything green or leafy to exchange, you are still welcomed and encouraged to come and possibly find a new

plant to take home with you. So be sure to join us for this fun-filled celebration of both God's beautiful creation and Earth Day.

Programs and Events This Month...



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, **April 6 at 7:30 am** at the Manor Grill, located at 526 Manor Blvd. in San Leandro. All are invited and welcome to join!



Young at Heart

This month's luncheon and program will be on Thursday, **April 18 at 11:30 am**. We are delighted to have the Sax Time Quartet provide the program. Be prepared to enjoy some fun music. Please 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.

Reports and Updates from the Session...

Repair of the Sanctuary Stained-Glass Window

Shortly after Christmas, the "Jesus Window" in the Sanctuary was vandalized by someone throwing rocks through it. Unfortunately, while we have video of the event, there is no way to identify who did it.



On the bright side, insurance will cover most of the cost of the repair. We have signed a contract with Helios Art Glass in Oakland to repair the window. They place scaffolding on the exterior of the window, remove the center section of the window and place plywood in the middle while the section is restored. The work is expected to take 4-6 weeks.

Renewal of Transitional Pastor Contract

As our transitional pastor, Pastor Renée can only contract with the Session for up to one year at a time. The Session approved the renewal of Pastor Renée's contract at the March meeting. If the church finds a new pastor before the end of her contract, there are provisions in the contract to end her work earlier.



Session Update on Budget

The Session met following the congregational meeting, where we explained the budget shortfall expected for this year. There are two efforts underway to respond: to look for further budget reductions, and to ask the congregation for further

contributions. A stewardship team, consisting of Faye Wilson, Jim Watts, and Chad Pennebaker has been formed for this latter effort. Look for a letter later this month from the team.



Women's Weekend: Rooted and Reaching with Rev. Dr. Sandy Tice - April 19th-21st, 2024

This month FPC SL women will attend the Women's Weekend at Westminster Woods to rest and reflect, celebrate and sing, contemplate and lament, and be in community with one another. Rev. Dr. Sandy Tice, a retired Teaching Elder in the PCUSA, will be the speaker for the weekend this year. Sandy will help the group to embody Christ's Love in Action through inspirational speaker time and experiential worship. Using the image of the redwood forest as a guide, participants will explore biblical texts, prayer, and lived experience in order to hear God's invitation to flourish and grow. To attend Women's Weekend register online at <https://www.westminsterwoods.org/womens-weekend>.

New Classes this month...

New Member Class on Sunday, April 21st

MEMBERSHIP CLASS



Would you like to explore becoming a member of San Leandro First Presbyterian Church? Pastor Renée will lead a new member class on Sunday, April 21st, from 12 noon to 2:00 pm at the church for those who wish to explore joining the church. We'll look at what it means to be a disciple of Christ and part of membership, review a little about being Presbyterian, and those wishing to join will meet with Session members. Lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Pastor Renée. Sign up for the class in Fellowship Hall.

NEW Sunday Morning Study:

The Cup of Our Life — *Continuing Our Journey of Abundance with daily prayer and reflection*
Begins Sunday April 7



How is your prayer life going? If you're like me, it goes in cycles, and sometimes I need a new focus to enrich my spiritual life. If you are at a place like this, or simply would like to try something different, you are invited to engage with Joyce Rupp's book *The Cup of Our Life*, which is a seven-week program for spiritual growth. Rupp uses the image of the cup as the container for our lives, and noticing that when our cup is full, it needs to be emptied so that something else can be put into it. The book is a guide for six weeks of prayer with a different focus each week. There are daily readings, invitations to meditation, prayers and questions for journaling and art.

Options:

Solo journey: Some of you may simply want to buy the book and follow the guide on your own.

Sunday Morning Class: Begins April 7 for Seven Weeks in the Fireside Room

Some of you may find gathering each week for reflection with others on this journey a way to enrich your experience.

We have ordered a limited number of books. Sign up in Fellowship Hall for a book, and indicate whether you want to go solo, or join the weekly class. The cost of the book is \$15.00, scholarships are available if needed. You can also individually order this book as an eBook.

– Pastor Renée



Winter Camp



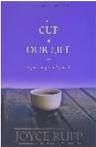
"I love the Night Hike, where you walk around and see the stars. I love that it was very peaceful, and I got to hear owls. I felt God's presence in the Frogs Ribbits, a location where there are multiple frogs close to the camp. I will always remember my amazing time at camp, and thanks to First Pres church who helped sponsor me to go!" - Audrey, middle schooler

"I loved the giant swing, and the Night Flight. The Night Flight is big zipline and it was about 30 seconds long; it goes over the lake. The Giant Swing is a huge long swing where you can go as high as you want. I felt God's presence when I was singing worship songs with other campers, it was so special. I thank the church at First Pres for sponsoring my campership, I wouldn't have been able to go otherwise. Thank you!" - Sydney, middle schooler

"[Winter Camp at Calvin Crest] was very fun, it was very welcoming and I considered going again". - Jasion, High Schooler

"I really enjoyed how engaging the staff were!" - Raimund, High Schooler

APRIL 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 EASTER SUNDAY 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship	1 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	2	3 6:00 pm Mission Study Team Meeting 	4	5	6 7:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill  MEN'S BREAKFAST
7 9:30 am Holy Humor Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Donuts 11:00 am Adult Class: The Cup of Our Life 12:00 pm Nominating Committee 	8 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	9	10	11	12	13
14 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/ Manna Bags & Equal Exchange Chocolate Sales 11:00 am Adult Class: The Cup of Our Life 	15 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	16 6:00 pm Session Meeting 	17	18 11:30 am Young at Heart Luncheon/Program 	19	20
21 9:30 am Creation Celebration Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship/Donuts 10:30 am Plant Exchange 11:00 am Adult Class: The Cup of Our Life 12:00 pm Lunch & Learn: FPCSL Membership 	22 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal 	23	24	25	26	27 9:00 am - 1:00 pm Mission Study All-Church Half Day Retreat 
28 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee Fellowship 11:00 am Adult Class: The Cup of Our Life 	29 6:17 pm Chancel Bells Rehearsal	30	1	2	3	4 7:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast/Women's Fellowship Breakfast @ Manor Grill

Memories from Winter Camp at Calvin Crest

The last weekend of February a small group of students and adults from our church attended Winter Camp at Calvin Crest. Calvin Crest is a sister camp of Westminster Woods located at an elevation of 5,000 ft in the Sierra Mountains near Yosemite National Park. Unfortunately there was no snow except for that seen on the distant mountain tops but everyone still had a wonderful time. Our group of 2 middle schoolers, 2 high schoolers and 4 adults joined with groups of students and adults from 3-4 other churches to worship and learn together in large and small groups, share meals, explore God's creation, make crafts, hike, play games, and go zip-lining at night only after solving the camp-wide mystery of which character stole the zip-lining equipment and why.



The theme for the weekend was "WORTHY." Throughout the weekend the students looked at stories from the Gospel of Matthew about the Kingdom of God. They were challenged to consider, *What are you holding on to that is keeping you from grasping all that God has to offer you? What is one step you have taken toward God in the past year? What's one step you might be open to taking next? How do you feel that God sees you; do you feel worthy of God's love?* The weekend ended with Sunday worship and communion before everyone headed down the mountain and back home.



Here are some comments from our participants...

"I had never been to a youth Church Camp before. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the kids to learn more about Jesus Christ and to have fun with each other. We tagged along on one of the treks through the woods and were made to feel part of the group by the kids and the counselors. I was pleasantly surprised by the good food and lots of it." -Conrad Milner, adult

"The program / teaching was excellent. I appreciated being invited into the activities, as an adult without direct responsibility. When the kids went to discussion groups with their leaders, the unassigned adults were invited to participate in a circle of prayer support for the conversations that were taking place." -Anne Milner, adult

For comments from the students and photos see the Winter Camp Collage on insert.

Summer Camps at Westminster Woods

Camp Soulspring is the new name for all Christian Summer Camps at Westminster Woods. This summer there will be three weeks of Camp Soulspring for ages 8 – 17 as well as three specialty programs: **The Grove**, a Family Camp for all ages; **Woods to Waves**, an offsite leadership adventure camp for ages 15 – 17; and **Friendship Camp**, a program for adults with developmental disabilities. Further details about all of these camps can be found at <https://www.westminsterwoods.org/summer-camp>. Families of San Leandro First Presbyterian campers please contact Lou Pennebaker for further details regarding registration and the cost of summer camps.

Thank You to the Deacons



Thank you to the deacons for organizing a lively St. Patrick's Day meet and greet! It was a real hit, with 108 of us gathering for worship then bringing the fellowship hall to

life with festive charm and delicious food. A special thanks to everyone who joined us for making it such a memorable event! If you missed the Meet & Greet and want to know who your assigned Deacon is or who else is in your Parish, check out the Parish Lists posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.



With Sincere Sympathy

Passing of Dorothy Himango

We offer our deepest sympathies to the family of Dorothy Himango, who passed away after a short time under hospice care. According to her granddaughter Connie, Dorothy peacefully transitioned to heaven and the family is grateful for the prayers, love and kindness from Dorothy's church family.

Cards may be sent to the family at:
278 Northampton Dr.
American Canyon, CA 94503

Passing of Bob Koupal

We also offer deep condolences to the family of Bob Koupal, especially his wife, Fay, and daughter, Olivia. Bob passed unexpectedly and was remembered by family and friends at a memorial on March 25.

Cards may be sent to the family at:
957 Lee Ave.
San Leandro, CA 94577

Coming Next Month...



A Saturday afternoon BEE You Tea

Mark your calendar for Saturday, **May 18** and plan to join us for a gathering of Christian Fellowship, along with tea and treats. Look for more information in upcoming bulletins and next month's Highlights.



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Highlights April 2024

Mission Study Team Update: Let's Define Our Values!

All-Church Half-Day Retreat, Saturday, April 27; 9:30 am to 1:00 pm



The Mission Study Team needs your help! So far, we have assessed the congregation's views with our CAT survey and have interviewed community leaders. Now it's time to define our core values as a church as we look to the future.

Everyone is invited to attend an all-church half-day retreat on **Saturday, April 27**, from 9:30 am to 1 pm, in Fellowship Hall. We will ground ourselves in scripture and prayer, discuss what our research has shown us so far, and all will have the opportunity to reflect on our church's core values.

Of course, we don't expect you to do this on empty stomachs. We'll have plenty of snacks and lunch. 😊 Please mark April 27 on your calendars for this important event. Thank you.

Blessings,
The Mission Study Team
Sue Goodnow
Chad Pennebaker

Lowell Hickey
Linda Pollard

Leland Morine
Ex-oficio, Renée Rico

Do you love Sunday Donuts??

Thank you to everyone who supports donuts on Sundays!



In the past, donut sale proceeds have been earmarked to a restricted Campership account. Session has approved depositing the donut sale funds into the General Account to help with the current Budget shortfall, beginning in April. This doesn't change our support of Camperships, but it does introduce financial flexibility.

Volunteers are also needed to staff the donut table. This can be a one-time commitment OR a recurring opportunity. If you are curious, please contact Anne Milner, or stop by the donut table in April.