



**Sharing the Love of Christ**  
**First United Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)**  
**PO Box 37**  
**1000 Douglas Avenue**  
**Las Vegas New Mexico 87701**



**JULY 2018**

### **Pastor's Ponderings**

Greetings! I hope you are enjoying our long summer days. As I write this, I'm anticipating leaving for vacation in a couple of days. D.R. and I are very excited about our upcoming trip, and I'm excited not only about traveling for a bit, but also about coming back to some exciting things going on here. (See "A Welcoming Place," p.2) You'll remember that last month I outlined some of the ways session members and committee leaders see us meeting our vision statements and what sorts of possibilities we see in our future. This month, I'd like to share the results of another exercise we completed at our leadership retreat.

If you look at church websites, you'll notice that they often have a "Who Are We?" or "What Do We Believe?" page. We don't have one of those on our current website, but I asked folks at our retreat how they would describe us. Each person received a couple of sentence starters taken from real church websites and was asked to complete the sentence. Here are the results. What do you think? Is this the FUPC you know? Do you have anything to add, any comments about what you see here? If so, let me know!

At First United Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, we believe Jesus is our savior; without him, we cannot find our way. We believe that relationship with God and with God's creation is a way of expressing our faith. We believe that humanity is God's creation working to "build" the kingdom of God on earth. We try every day to follow Christ's lead by being active in our community, our country, and the world.

We want to create an atmosphere that makes all people feel welcome; we are a place of acceptance that encourages spiritual growth. We believe spiritual growth happens when our hearts are open and there is guidance and acceptance. We value education that improves our understanding of the world. We practice openness and believe that people of other faiths are sincere seekers of the Divine. As part of the Presbyterian Church (USA), we are inclusive and believe in justice for all.

We celebrate our many ministries and community work. We believe worship is a celebration of God's love and an opportunity to hear about how God loves us. We believe that music and art are talents given to us by God to be used for God's glory. We believe that the Lord's Supper is in remembrance of the Last Supper and open to all who seek to follow Christ.

We believe our facilities are community spaces and that stewardship means caring for God's creation at all levels. We value action that glorifies God and serves our community—action that follows Christ's directive. We believe diversity is celebrated in our church and leads us to grow and to love one another. We believe social justice is basic to Christianity, but recognize and lament that it is not always practiced in our world.

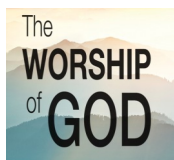
In short, we are:

- a church that takes risks, that honors diversity, that loves music.
- a church of community involvement that is active and collaborative.
- a place of hospitality and caregiving that practices openness and inclusivity.
- a place where "church" happens both inside and outside our doors.

We are a centering place. We are a FAMILY.

Read on to hear about some opportunities for you to take part in our efforts to celebrate God in worship, to continue to grow our space as a place of hospitality, and to serve our community.

With thanks for all of you,  
Pastor Katie



## Worship Tidbits From Pastor Katie

A close friend of mine has a favorite saying: *Grace Abounds!* Indeed, God's grace does abound; indeed, God's grace comes first. First before what? Before everything. God poured grace upon creation, announcing that it was good. God promises that grace—unmerited, freely given favor—always awaits us. On July 15, our worship will focus on grace. The Worship and Music Committee invites you to bring a cross—what better symbol of God's grace?—to church so that we can make a “Wall of Grace” full of crosses. Please bring your cross no later than July 8; there will be a basket in the narthex that day to collect crosses. During the week, you can bring your cross to the office during normal hours (M – Th, 9:00 – 1:00). Remember to put your name on the back of the cross so it can be returned to you later in the summer!



## Supporting Samaritan House Clients



Do you have a passion for nurturing people with good meals? Are you a good organizer?

It has come to our attention that Samaritan House needs some help providing evening meals for its clients. Each evening, Samaritan House serves a meal to 12-20 people. Many of these meals are provided by local restaurants, but there are currently three evenings (Monday, Thursday, Friday) that are not covered. Meals need to be prepared in a commercial kitchen (guess what? we have one of those here in the church) and delivered to Samaritan House by 6 p.m. If you are interested in coordinating the preparation and delivery of meals for one of these nights, please let Pastor Katie know. With someone to run point, preparation could be a fun time of working together to serve our community!



## A Welcoming Place

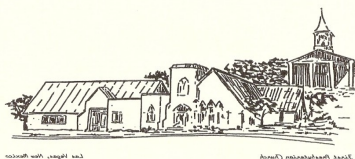
If you read “Pastor’s Ponderings,” you know that our church officers and committee chairs see our church as a place of welcome and hospitality. In its continuing discussion of how we can make our space as welcoming and functional as possible, Session members have designated four areas of facility improvement that they’d like to get started on right away. Please consider joining one of the following teams, who will be making plans to get some projects underway. If you’re interested in serving on one of these teams, please email or call the church office ([fupc.nm@gmail.com](mailto:fupc.nm@gmail.com); 505-425-7763):

**FURNISHINGS**—This team will be designing a plan for furnishings—especially for the East Wing—to enhance our ability to offer social gatherings and other events. What kind of tables and chairs would best serve the space? Reading nooks with easy chairs? Sofas? Round tables to encourage small group discussion? What kind of storage space is needed? How can we spruce up the cabinets and counters?

**SOUND SYSTEM**—Anyone who sits in the sanctuary on Sunday knows that our sound system could use an upgrade. And wouldn’t it be nice if we had a portable system for use in Fellowship Hall, the East Wing, or the Old Town Mission? Join this team to help us all sound better!

**LANDSCAPE**—Have you noticed that our “front yard” is more bindweed than anything else? How might we give our yard an update in times of water restrictions? What would an inviting landscape look like to folks driving down Douglas? Xeriscape? Picnic space? What about the back patio?

**STAINED GLASS**—Have you admired the stained glass in our sanctuary lately? How would you feel if someone threw a rock through one of those window panes? This team will be looking at options for protecting the stained glass.





Join us for New Members classes in August! If you're interested in learning about what membership in First United Presbyterian means, please come to these gatherings where we'll talk about Presbyterianism and especially about how our congregation lives out its commitment to be Christ's church together, and we'll answer your questions about being a part of our church family. Committee chairs will have a chance to share how their committees carry out our mission. We'll meet for a light supper (locations and times to be announced) on August 5, 12, and 26.



Thank you, thank you, thank you! The generosity of this congregation never ceases to amaze.

- The **One Great Hour of Sharing** Offering was \$1525.83, which supports Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People.
- The **Pentecost Offering** was \$824.00 which supports child advocacy, youth ministries and the YAV program as well as local youth ministries. Each of us has gifts to share and your sharing is truly abundant! Mil gracias!



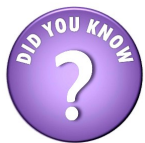
**Church Service and Picnic at Old Town Mission Church  
August 19th at the Old Town Mission church.**

More information to come but mark your calendars and join your church family for worship and fellowship and food!!



**Congratulations!**

Siobhan O'Connell-Croto, long-time member of FUPC, has completed all of the requirements of the Presbytery Commission on Ministry and Commission on Preparation for Ministry and will be presented to the Presbytery of Santa Fe at its meeting on Saturday, July 28, in Penasco. She will be asked to say a few words about her journey to become a Commissioned Pastor and the Presbytery will welcome her in this new role with prayers and the laying on of hands. With this, Siobhan is ready to be commissioned to serve.



In the early 1970s government and other grants were flowing quite freely and our church, in cooperation with other churches and civic organizations, established what we called "extended mission programs" with individual budgets of \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year with significant facilities and even paid staff.

In 1972, we bought a building on Bridge Street from former West Las Vegas Mayor Junio Lopez for nearly \$16,000 to house a university/community coffee house called The Upstairs, a crisis center called The Bridge, and a drug program called *La Salida*.

By the mid 1980s, funds were drying up and programs shutting down. We sold the building for nearly \$53,000 and bought a large plot of land north of town in anticipation of building a new and bigger church to accommodate our growing congregation. The trustees felt the 1000 Douglas Ave. church was too old and deteriorated and "not conducive to adding on or to making a second story. Plus there is limited parking, particularly for weekday activities."

Today we can see that the congregation actually shrank, we built on the east wing, and added a second story. Only the parking problem remains!

*--from FUPC annual reports 1971 through 1977 and 1984*



## Class: Christianity's Many Challenges Stress Its Historic Resilience

After taking a break for the Las Vegas Fiestas, the Bible-based class for Adults and Youth is resuming its discussion of *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, by Phillip Jenkins, a professor at Pennsylvania State University. The final chapters cover the present status of Christianity and the outlook for its future.

Class sessions are at 9:30 Sunday mornings in the East Wing immediately after to Jump Start Breakfast, which is at 9 a.m. Childcare will be available. Books are available in the Church office for \$15.00.

### **July 8 – August 5 - Reading assignments and topics for discussion:**

- July 8, Chapter 6 - *Coming to Terms* (Not Your Great-Great Grandparents' Christianity)

The types of Christianity that have thrived most successfully in the global South have been very different from what many Europeans and North Americans consider mainstream. They are more enthusiastic, more concerned with the supernatural, prophecy, visions, ecstatic utterances, and healing (some say bordering on paganism).

- July 15, Chapter 7 - *God and the World* (Christianity and the Nation State)

The greatest change from present assumptions is likely to involve our Enlightenment-derived assumption that religion should be segregated into a separate sphere of life, distinct from everyday reality. Colonial Christian churches enjoyed state support and took conservative political stances. Liberation theologies took very different courses depending on the policies of the region where they took root.

- July 22, Chapter 8 - *The Next Crusade* (Christianity and Religious Strife)

The critical political frontiers around the world are not decided by attitudes toward class or dialectical materialism, but by rival concepts of God. Religious warfare is rampant in some of these countries, including Sudan, Egypt, Pakistan and Nigeria. Conflict among Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists could even lead to global war.

- July 29, Chapter 9 - *Coming Home* (Christians Evangelizing Each Other)

Traditional mappings of left and right are ill fitted to comprehend present and future religious changes. Even as mainline northern churches move in liberal directions, many churches in Africa and Asia remain strictly conservative on moral and sexual issues, including the role of women. Conservative northern denominations often find allies in conservative Southern groups. Is it possible that Southern Christian groups will one day “reChristianize parts of the North through these alliances?”

- August 5, Chapter 10 - *Seeing Christianity Again for the First Time* (Is Christianity Preparing for Its Challenges?)

Christianity in the global South is “a growth industry,” but, for their vast wealth, many churches in North America and Europe have far less interest or commitment in the global South than they once had. University religion courses in Northern countries tend to neglect Southern trends. Northern and southern Christians can read the Bible in very different ways when it comes to themes such as dreams, prophecy, martyrdom, oppression, exile, and suffering. Christianity is flourishing among the poor and persecuted while it atrophies among the rich and secure, but it has always had the ability to transform weakness into strength.



## Mission & Peacemaking

In worship on 6-24-18, the Mission & Peacemaking Committee read the 6-16-18 statement of Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, PCUSA, at the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly on the separation of children and parents at the US-Mexico, encouraging all to be guided in thoughts, actions, dialogue and prayer by these words.

“What has this nation become?” Nelson queried. “How have we wandered so far from Jesus’ kind admonition, “Let the little children come to me...” He also criticized the Justice Department’s stated use of separate detention of parents and their children as a “deterrent” to immigration and accused the administration of selective use of scripture, saying the citing of Romans 13:1 to obey the law (presumably whatever the law says), while ignoring the higher scriptural demand that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10) is a blatant misuse of the biblical message.

As Presbyterians gather for the meeting of our 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, we are mindful of the many issues of justice, peace and compassion we face, both as citizens of the United States and members of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we face issues of peace on the Korean peninsula, tragic injustice in the Middle East, and the spectre of climate change in our nation and our world, there is nothing of more urgency than the tragedy that is unfolding at our borders, where children are ripped from their parents and placed in holding cells, while their frantic parents scream in agony at the separation.

What has this nation become? How have we wandered so far from Jesus’ kind admonition, “Let the little children come to me ... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs”? How can this be happening in a nation in which so many claim the traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and the critical importance of families to the fabric of our lives together?

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of this policy is the willingness of the highest legal official of our nation to suggest that if a mother has fled violence in her own country to save herself and her children but has not had a chance to make a proper petition for safety in the U.S., she should be taught a lesson by having her children taken from her. It is almost incomprehensible that these acts should be used as a warning to others who would come.

What makes matters worse is the audacity of quoting the Apostle Paul’s admonition to believers in Romans 13:1 to obey the law (presumably whatever the law says), while ignoring the higher scriptural demand that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10).

The crisis of tens of thousands of desperate people coming to the United States for relief seems almost overwhelming. But as the officials of our government attempt to address the crisis, we cannot afford to tarnish the highest values of our nation. We must not punish desperate parents by tearing their children away from them, leaving the parents without access to the children or assurance of their welfare.

In the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stop!

In the faith we share,

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



The following is an op-ed written by M&P member, Bob Pearson, which was in the Sunday, May 27, Optic.

### **Do Palestinian Lives Matter?**

As of May 17, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), operating at the 1949 armistice line between Israel and Gaza, have killed over 100 Palestinians and injured many thousands. This was the Israeli response to largely nonviolent protests marking the 50th anniversary of the Nakba, the “catastrophe”, when Palestinians were driven from their homes and land. The demonstrations also protested the intolerable living conditions imposed by Israel’s blockade for the last eleven years. To assess this situation, we need to consider how Israel, in its past and present dealings with Palestinians, has abided by international law and agreements, including the laws of war. International law is a set of rules governing countries rather than individuals. It is intended to promote behavior that, in war or peace, protects the safety, dignity, and human rights of individuals.

The UN partition plan of 1947 gave the future state of Israel 55% of the land of historic Palestine, although at that time Jewish inhabitants owned only 6% of the land and comprised about 33% of the population. Jerusalem was to be under international control, with its final status to be determined after ten years. Incensed by the unfairness of the land division, surrounding Arab countries attacked Israel when it declared independence in 1948. During this war, Israel took control of 78% of the land, including the western part of Jerusalem. Before and after independence, Israel displaced by force or threat about 750,000 Palestinians, who then became refugees. Over 500 villages were forcibly depopulated, with most being completely destroyed. In 1967, fearing another attack by Arab countries, Israel took preemptive action and in the process seized the rest of Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has refused to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, a right guaranteed under international law.

Since 1948, Israel has committed many more violations of international law. Israel has taken Palestinian land without compensation; moved large numbers of its own population into Palestinian territory; jailed Palestinians in Israel rather than in the occupied territories; arrested and imprisoned Palestinians, including children, without charge or trial; destroyed Palestinian private property; employed collective punishment; appropriated natural resources, especially water, from the Palestinians for Israeli use. In its military operations it has failed to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants in its use of lethal force. Lethal force, in most cases, has not been necessary or proportional to the threat. Military occupation, according to the laws of war, is supposed to be “temporary”. Does 50 years fall within a reasonable definition of temporary? The Fourth Geneva Convention states that an occupied people has the right to resist occupation.

The recent protests in Gaza were organized by civil society in Gaza, not by the governing party Hamas, although Hamas officials and members joined the protests. It was agreed that no arms would be carried, nor flags of political parties. Many families attended the protests. Although lethal force can be used only in the face of an imminent threat to life, among those killed and injured by Israeli snipers were children, journalists (clearly marked “press”) and individuals at prayer. On May 14, 19 medical personnel were shot with live rounds while wearing high-visibility jackets which had been identified to the IDF through the International Committee of the Red Cross. Many of those injured by live fire were struck with exploding bullets which cause permanent disabilities. Despite the largely nonviolent nature of the protests, Israeli and U.S. officials have falsely blamed Hamas for the Israeli violence. Demonizing Hamas is meant to give Israel license for its deadly actions. The complicity of the U.S. government runs even deeper, as it supplies Israel with over \$3 billion in military aid each year.

This account of Israeli violations of international law and the human rights of Palestinians is not meant to delegitimize the state of Israel, but to condemn its policies. What will be the future nature of Israel as a result of these policies? Israel has failed to remove the Palestinians from historic Palestine, which was the Zionist vision over a century ago. The Palestinian population in the West Bank has been fragmented and isolated by Israeli settlements and infrastructure, removing the possibility of a viable two-state solution. Israel faces the choice of maintaining a system of oppression labeled by many as apartheid, or giving all people under its control equal rights. The apartheid option does not have a promising history.

Bob Pearson



### Guest Preacher from Pilgrims of Ibillin - July 8th

Rev. Laurie Lyter Bright is a life-long Presbyterian, a deep down Midwesterner, and is forever planning her next adventure. Laurie will be our guest preacher on Sunday, July 8, as well as doing a presentation on the Pilgrims of Ibillin. She is the executive director of Pilgrims of Ibillin, an organization dedicated to building peace through education in Israel and Palestine. She's completing her PhD in education at Colorado State University and her first book (*Vagabonding: In Defense and Praise of Millennial Faith*) will be published this fall. Laurie is married to Jesse Bright, mom to the incredible Matilda (Tillie), and grateful for her four-legged constant companion, Nova "Danger" Bright, the Carolina Dog.

- Mission and Peacemaking will sponsor a light lunch at noon in the Fellowship Hall followed by Laurie's presentation at 12:30 pm.

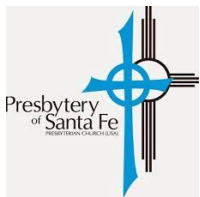
Many of you learned about the Hand in Hand educational program in Israel in April and we invite you to learn about this program as well. Certainly, there are many efforts to bring the people of Israel together for the betterment of the youth and ultimately everyone. It is from programs like these that we can draw hope for peace and reconciliation for the Israeli and Palestinian people. While this is an informational presentation and not intended to be a fundraising event, donations will be gratefully accepted. Please put this event on your calendar and plan to attend!

### The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner of the Presbytery of Santa Fe

October 18, 2018

First Presbyterian in Albuquerque

215 Locust Street



Hospitality and Registration at 5:30 pm

Dinner at 6:00 pm

Program at 7:00 pm

*A Visual Collage of Congregations*

Recognition of former leaders: Moderators, Stated Clerks, Executives

Presentation on the future of the Presbyterian Church:

Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II

Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**Reservations are required** – hopefully every congregation will be present. Consider the ways the Presbytery has supported your congregational life; consider the individuals from your congregation who served on presbytery committees and as presbytery leaders. Think about the impact of the Presbyterian Church in the life of your particular region and in our state as a whole. The 150 years of Presbyterian witness in this region is worthy of celebration.

And...the celebration will be incomplete if your congregation is not present! Begin now to plan your participation.

Individual seating is available at \$20 per person; a table, seating 8, costs \$150.

Whether your congregation is small or large there will be space as long as you make your reservations by August 30<sup>th</sup> by email at” [office@santafepresbytery.org](mailto:office@santafepresbytery.org) or by phone, 505 345-5657.

## First United Presbyterian Church

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

Website: [www.lvpresbyterian.org](http://www.lvpresbyterian.org)

Facebook: Las Vegas First United Presbyterian (NM)

Email: [fupc.nm@gmail.com](mailto:fupc.nm@gmail.com)

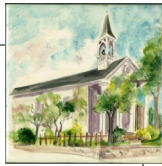
### Sunday Schedule

8:30 a.m. - Jumpstart Breakfast:

9:30 a.m. - Bible Based Study

10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship

Fellowship Hour following the worship service



Communion is offered on the first and third Sundays of each month from June through September. We do not celebrate Communion on the fifth Sunday of a month due to the addition of the Healing Liturgy to the service.



### **July Birthdays**

9 <sup>th</sup>	Sharon Vander Meer
21 <sup>st</sup>	John Detterick Bryan Johnson
26 <sup>th</sup>	Murl Baker
27 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Litherland
30 <sup>th</sup>	Randy Campbell
31 <sup>st</sup>	Gordy Thatcher



### **Deep and Wide**

*A Contemplative Service at the Old Town Mission*  
5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. - Second and Fourth Tuesdays  
at the Old Town Mission Church

This is an ecumenical gathering open to all,  
sponsored by FUPC.  
Questions? Call D.R. Palmer 303-775-7259