



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



Pastor's Ponderings

NOVEMBER 2018

If you're like me, you're getting into the habit of grabbing that jacket when you leave the house. Maybe you've pulled your winter clothes out of the cedar chest and have donned a turtleneck or sweater. Perhaps you've checked to make sure there are gloves in your coat pocket. And if you get into your car early in the morning, you've probably been turning the heat on. Winter is coming! And, according to most reports I've heard, it will be colder than average this year. *The Farmer's Almanac* says our part of the country is in for "stinging cold."

Now, most of you who are reading this newsletter are doing so in the comfort of your home. You might be drinking a cup of coffee as you read and hearing the soft purr of your furnace as it works to keep you warm.

Not everyone is so lucky. In our community, many people walk the streets all day during the winter. Those who may have enjoyed the hospitality of a meal and a cot at Samaritan House must leave the shelter at 7:00 a.m. because the shelter is not yet able to provide a day center. These folks have no warm place to relax and have a cup of coffee until the shelter reopens for dinner at 6:00 p.m. Imagine feeling the cold creeping through your gloves after a couple of hours on the street. In your mind's eye, see the red, stiff fingers of someone who doesn't own gloves. And sense the lack of feeling in that person's cold feet.

But you know what? We can do something about this problem. God has given us space in in the Samaritan House facility to share with others. If we can provide Samaritan House with volunteers to host a Day Center, they will be able to open their space to people who would otherwise be on the street. Plus, a Day Center in their space has the advantage of allowing clients to work with staff during office hours on issues such as housing and finances. And that is exactly what I'm hoping we will do.

But we can **only** do it if we have a large enough group of volunteers to host the center. We need you - lots of you! Samaritan House would very much like to have the center open from 7:00 a.m. 5:30 p.m. every day. And we'd like for each volunteer host to have to commit no more than two 3-4 hours shifts per month. So, in order for this to happen without burdening our volunteers, we need lots of volunteers to commit. Can you be one of them? Can you ask your friends to participate, too?

Now I know that many of you work during the week and so can't volunteer to be at Samaritan House on, say, a Wednesday afternoon. But you know what? It's cold on the weekends, too, and we'd like to be open every day. Can you spare a few hours on one or two weekend days each month over the next few months?

If you'd like to help keep people warm, please let Nancy Ellington nancy.ellington@gmail.com or me pastorkatiepalmer@gmail.com know right away. It's cold NOW; we need to get this thing going! We'll pass on your name and contact information to Samaritan House.

And if you've already volunteered, your name and email address have been forwarded to Samaritan House staff. Thank you!

Please join us in showing God's love this winter.

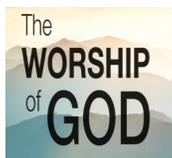
With thanks for all of you,
 Pastor Katie

Introducing Perea Hall!

Session members voted last month to rename our Fellowship Hall "Perea Hall."

The name recognized Rev José Ynez Perea, who supervised the building of the Old Town Mission Church.

In recognizing Perea, we also recognize our Hispanic heritage.

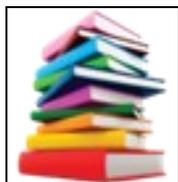


Worship Tidbits From Pastor Katie

Many thanks to the elders who designed and led worship on October 21 while Clerk of Session Karyl Lyne and I were at the presbytery meeting at Ghost Ranch. Thanks to Denice Spicer, Christie Baskett, Robin Carlson, and Lisa Weinstein. Great job! I trust that, after hearing their message, we are all ready to do some bread-tasting as we look for our “Passion Bread”!

As we move into November, we’ll be remembering that *Every Day is Harvest* when we work to honor and serve God. God’s blessings are plentiful; at the same time, there is always much to be done to plant and grow the kingdom. During this month, we’ll be talking about that harvest and asking that you prayerfully consider your commitment to serving God through the work of this congregation. What spiritual disciplines will you practice? When and where will you commit your time? What particular gifts will you share? What will you give of your financial resources, not only to help with the basic needs of the church, but to share the bountiful harvest with others? I hope that, in all these areas, you’ll choose to stretch yourself a bit. Together let’s see our daily abundance and find ways to make the most of it!

And, speaking of plentiful harvest, let me encourage you to eat of the fullness of God’s table when you come forward to take communion. Remember: it’s new life and God’s grace you’re eating when you take that bread—gifts God pours on us generously. Take a big bite! Doing so will help you remember God’s unfathomable generosity toward us. And, on a more practical level, it keeps fingers grasping those little bits of bread out of the shared cup!



Book Discussion With Pastor Katie

This discussion group met for the first time in October to talk about Jerry Herships’ *Last Call: From Serving Drinks to Serving Jesus*. I think we all agreed that the book was worth the read; it raised some provocative questions about what church should look like and encouraged us to get out there and SERVE!

The group decided we would not meet again until January, since scheduling time during holiday months is always a challenge. So stay tuned; we’ll let you know what we’ll be reading next, as well as when and where we’ll meet.



Enchilada Dinner and Auction

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! To all who helped with the enchilada dinner and silent auction. People who served, bussed tables, sold tickets, publicized, donated auction items, worked the auction, bought at auction, made monetary donations, and any jobs I left out. Looks like we made \$5,203 on the dinner and tickets and \$924 on the silent auction. For a grand total of \$6,127. Both dinner and auction were a huge success and more and more community people know about and support our Mustard Seeds grants.



Active Shooter Training Workshop at FUPC - November 10

There will be an active shooter training workshop for the congregation on Saturday, November 10, from 10 am to noon in the sanctuary. Lt. Michael Lopez of the Las Vegas Police Department will conduct the workshop. All are encouraged to attend. While this is not something we want to think about, we know that we must be prepared for emergencies and disasters.

The Session is developing a disaster preparedness manual for the church, which will contain information like where first aid kits are located in the church, emergency phone numbers to call, where to go in the church in case of weather emergencies, fire, gas leaks, flood, etc. Do put this workshop on your calendar and plan to come.



D.R. Palmer's discussion of the book *The Naked Now: Learning To See As the Mystics See* by Richard Rohr continues through November. Rohr explores methods for letting go of division and living in the present. Drawing from the Gospels, Jesus, Paul, and the great Christian contemplatives, he examines how many of the hidden truths of Christianity have been misunderstood or lost and how to read them with the eyes of the mystics rather than interpreting them through rational thought.

Readings

November 4: Chapters 13-16

November 11: Chapters 17-22

November 18: Appendixes and Wrap up.

Classes are at 9:30 Sunday morning in the East Wing, right after the Jumpstart Breakfast at 8:30. There will be no Class or Breakfast on November 25, Thanksgiving weekend.

Presbyterian Women Thank Offering

Fall weather reminds women of the church that it's time to make Presbyterian Women Thank Offerings. For 130 years Presbyterian Women have joyfully expressed gratitude for God's blessings by sharing those blessings with those in need at home and around the world. The Thank Offering funds programs that provide education, safe housing, clean water, health care, help for prisoners, justice for women, and so much more.



An overview of the 2017 recipients will be on the bulletin board of the west hallway, along with a touching story about a Thank Offering grant recipient. Thank Offering envelopes are on the Action Table in the Narthex, or you may get one from Joyce. All offerings must be made by November 30th. Put "PW Thank Offering" on the memo line of checks. Please support the PW Thank Offering generously.

Presbyterian Women's Annual Mission Pledge

Pledges for the Presbyterian Women's Annual Mission Pledge for 2019 should be turned in to Joyce by December 9th. All payments for the 2018 Mission Pledge should also be made by that date as the money needs to be submitted by PW of the Presbytery of Santa Fe by December 15th. Pledge forms are available on the Action Table or from Joyce.

The Mission Pledge, PW's annual fund, supports every mission and ministry of PW. All women of the church are members of PW. "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8



I was pleased to see that a man I know was one of the two winners of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The Peace Prize this year went to two individuals who have struggled mightily against sexual violence against women. The man that I know is Dr. Denis Mukege, long time head of the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu in eastern Congo. The hospital specializes in providing care for victims of rape. For decades, conflict in eastern Congo has produced tens of thousands of victims of sexual violence. Dr. Mukege was one of the first to point out that sexual violence was a deliberate strategy used by both national army soldiers and the guerrillas fighters on the other side of the conflict. Dr. Mukege and Panzi Hospital are recognized as a center of excellence in terms of gynecologic surgery. In addition to sewing these victims back together, Panzi Hospital has developed a network of service providers that can give these women the continuing social and medical care they need for the rest of their lives. These needs continue to grow as the conflict continues and more victims show up seeking treatment from Panzi Hospital.

Read more at:

<https://www.economist.com/international/2018/10/13/the-nobel-committee-shines-a-spotlight-on-rape-in-conflict>

Murl Baker, Mission & Peacemaking



Presbytery of Santa Fe Fall Meeting at Ghost Ranch

Last weekend, October 20 and 21, the Presbytery of Santa Fe met once again in the golden glory that is fall at Ghost Ranch. In addition, for the 150th Anniversary of the Presbytery of Santa Fe, the meeting was shared with the Synod of the Southwest (New Mexico Presbyteries of Santa Fe and Sierra Blanca, and Arizona Presbyteries of Grand Canyon and de Cristo). On Saturday we worshipped together celebrating the installation of the Synod Moderator, the Lord's Supper and a sermon by J. Herbert Nelson, PCUSA Stated Clerk. Rev. Nelson shared his perspective on the General Assembly march of 1000 Presbyterians through the streets of St. Louis to the municipal jail to deliver \$50,000 for bail bond to people incarcerated for misdemeanors and unable to make bond. As a black man whose family had marched in the 60's Civil Rights Movement and who had witnessed the brutality of that time, Nelson was brought back to that in his mind as he led the march, which had not obtained march permits through St. Louis. He recalled a "shaking fear," but held strong to his faith that this was the right thing to do and that the marchers would be safe. Indeed, they were safe and the bail bond money is now being used over and over by people in need at the St. Louis jail. His message was that, as a church, we must move forward with faith and love to help each other and the oppressed of our world.

This message fit in so beautifully with the work of the Presbytery this year as we have examined uneven privilege in our society today. We've looked at our own privilege by accumulating paperclips in a workshop situation. We've heard personal stories from members of the Presbytery about issues of social, economic, gender, race and disability un-privilege. At Ghost Ranch we focused on the matter of un-privilege for Native Peoples. This un-privilege began centuries ago—during the Crusades in 1026--with a series of papal bulls now known as the Doctrine of Discovery and a notion of justified takeover of land, property and rights by Christians called Manifest Destiny.

Based on Christ's instructions to Peter to "feed my sheep," Pope Innocent IV in 1245 posited that "Both infidels and the faithful belong to Christ's flock by virtue of their creation, although the infidels do not belong to the sheepfold of the Church, and so it seems that the pope has jurisdiction over all men and power over them in law but not in fact." Then through a series of theological and legal arguments, Innocent IV concluded that it was legal for Christians to occupy territory invaded "because in such cases the legal title reverted to the Church and to the pope who represented all men."

In the U.S. the 1887 Dawes Act, by which each Indian was given an allotment of land, undermined the concept of communally-held tribal land. The Dawes Act opened the way for the federal government to declare all unallotted land as surplus and open for sale. Lands were allotted from 1887 to 1934. By the time the policy ended in 1934, with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, American Indians had lost 90 million acres of land!

The presentation of the Doctrine of Discovery was followed by small group discussions responding to questions about how this Doctrine continues to affect Native Americans now. PCUSA has developed a document about the Doctrine and 'How PCUSA congregations can support Native Americans in their ongoing efforts for sovereignty and fundamental human rights,' a list of 12 actions the denomination can take now.

One of the actions alluded to above encourages mid councils (presbyteries and synods) "to begin their meetings with an acknowledgment of whose land they are meeting on and a greeting to the assembly that includes a welcome from those Indigenous peoples currently living on the land." The worship service for the Presbytery proceeded with that theme of honor to Mother Earth and the people who inhabit her. Moderator Bryan Beck from Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian installed incoming Moderator Jane Stringfellow from Santa Fe First, who installed incoming Moderator-Elect Rev. Seth Finch from Covenant Presbyterian.

The Necrology Report was given with flowers being put into vases on the table for each elder lost during 2018. A member of the deceased's congregation carried the flower forward as that person's name was read. A flower was carried forward for Las Vegas Elder Susan Swan.

As always, the Presbytery meetings provide a rich opportunity to visit with people across Northern New Mexico about their churches' practices and traditions. We met the four new Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) and heard from Bernie and Farsi Adeney-Risakotta, Mission Co-Workers to Indonesia. It is always a joy to visit, share, sing and pray together and enjoy the beauty of God's creation at Ghost Ranch.

Karyl Lyne - FUPC Commissioner



Upcoming Events - November, December



November 21st - Pumpkin Pie Sale - \$15 each

Sign up sheets will be in the Fellowship Hall

Pick up - Wednesday, Nov. 21st in the Fellowship Hall from 11:00-1:00

The funds will go into our 2020 retreat fund.

December 1st- 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off - 4:30 p.m.

Please bring a crock pot of your favorite chili. We will start @ 4:30 to give everyone time to eat, vote and watch the parade.

We will have a sign up sheet in Fellowship hall for Chili, Drinks, Cornbread, Crackers or whatever you like to eat with chili.

December 15th---Annual Christmas Luncheon at Charlie's @ Noon

Community Life meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Charlie's at 7:30 a.m.



How to Start the Conversation



Over Labor Day week-end six of us from First United Presbyterian Church attended a conference sponsored by The Center for Action and Contemplation . After listening to very thought provoking speakers I felt challenged to in some small way bridge the divisions in our country. After studying this just a little bit, it became evident that this division is not only here, but widespread!

These are polarized times, not only in the USA but Europe and perhaps all over the world. Too often people slip into tribalism, knowing that “our tribe is right” and without any personal contact labeling the other tribe as wrong. In a New York Times article, David Brooks states that persuasion is no longer an important part of public conversation. Too often our congress people do not deliberate, but just vote along party lines. He says that in this toxic atmosphere it is common to create a stereotype about a disfavored group and then apply that stereotype to people you’ve never met. He goes on to say that “It is clear we need more forums for personal encounters between different kinds of people. The atmosphere detoxifies disputes when it is personalized.”

In Europe the social and political environment is somewhat fractured. In this information age and post truth society the increased secularization is changing the European cultural landscape. For the first time Lutheran World Federation gathered 20 congregations together to discuss the need to improve communication. It hopes to help provide tools for churches to better communicate the 2000-year-old message of God’s love and guidance.

A Presbyterian Church on the east coast developed a series of classes on how to talk with those with different views. Through a Webinar they shared excellent tools on how to start those conversations. The Mission and Peacemaking committee has agreed to explore ways for “How to Start the Conversation.” On November 8 at 5 p.m. the Mission and Peace Making committee, members of Community Life Committee and the six attendees from FUPC who attended the conference over Labor Day will gather for a potluck dinner to try to establish plans for enacting such a process. If you are interested, please join us.



This Year's Pledge Drive Builds on the Past and Looks to the Future

In recent years, our fall pledge drive has culminated with a Consecration Lunch the first Sunday in November. This year the drive kicks off on November 4 and the Consecration Lunch is on November 18, the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

The timing is perfect for this year's stewardship theme, "Every Day is Harvest."

This fall, we asked our committees to dream up some new ways of sharing God's bounty in our church community and beyond. The energy they devoted to this task was inspiring:

We are in the final stages of starting a program to provide one evening meal a week for the clients of the Samaritan House shelter. Volunteers from our church and the community will prepare a meal in our kitchen and deliver it to the shelter.

Looking ahead to our 150th anniversary in 2020, we hope to set aside enough money to have an affordable retreat at Ghost Ranch, a beautiful place with a long Presbyterian past.

The grounds of both our church buildings need improvement to be more attractive and useful for doing God's work.

We want to maintain our wonderful worship experience by keeping our audiovisual software up to date and our handbells and chimes in good repair.

And we want to pay our employees fairly for all they do to inspire us and support us.

Attempting these things is a challenge. We mourn the deaths of loyal members and prepare Bread for the Journey for others seeking greener pastures. Even as our town shrinks, we continue to welcome new members to our midst. But as Christ said to his disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.*"

We have planted the seeds in the form of good ideas. The Spirit is moving through our church, but it will take increased giving to turn the seeds of this vitality into a harvest of reality.

Please give prayerful consideration during this time of harvest to increasing your pledge, making a special designated gift, committing your time and talent, and adding a gift to the church in your estate planning. All these ways of giving build on the past accomplishments of our church and support new plans.

Our pledge card is more complicated this year to reflect all these ways of giving back to God. Please carefully look over the card, fill it in, and bring it to worship on November 18th. The session is already planning a great lunch to consecrate

Presbytery of Santa Fe 150th Anniversary Celebration



The Presbytery of Santa Fe celebrated its 150th Anniversary with an evening of food, fellowship and presentations at First Presbyterian Church in Albuquerque on October 18, 2018. There were 276 in attendance who enjoyed New Mexican cuisine served by Menaul School Students, music by members of Camina de Vida Church, and retrospectives on the beginnings of the Presbytery—community, mission, and ministry—delivered by Conrad Rocha, 2001 Moderator and current Executive Director of the Synod of the Southwest; the development of the Presbytery—education and medical ministries delivered by Jim Collie, Executive Presbyter from 1994 – 2010; and the expansion of the Presbytery—ecumenism and inclusion delivered by Catherine Robinson HR. Kay Huggins, 1996 Moderator, shared points in the history of the Presbytery of celebration and reflection as the first woman pastor in the Presbytery; and David Martinez, a Hospice minister, and Ginna Bairby, pastor at Taos First, shared visions for the future suggesting that the church will look very different 20 years from now, particularly with regard to the ownership and maintenance of buildings.

The 150th Anniversary Committee developed 8 large posters featuring photos of the men and women who established the church in Northern New Mexico and the various church buildings, and medical and educational facilities established by the church. Included in that are our own founders Rev. John Annin, and Rev. Jose Inez Perea. Everyone enjoyed strolling through the 150 years and the hundreds of people and places that contributed to who and what we are today. There are 41 churches in the Presbytery of Santa Fe, which were established between 1867 (Santa Fe First), 1870 (Las Vegas First) and 2008 Camino de Vida in Albuquerque. The FUPC contingent—Christie Baskett, Robin Carlson, Siobhan Croto, Rudy Laumbach, Katie and DR Palmer, and Karyl Lyne and Patrick Rucker thoroughly enjoyed the event, learned so much and came away with a sense of pride and joy in the history we are privileged to share. Rudy purchased one of the posters, which is on the bulletin board in Perea Hall. Check it out!



A Valuable "Tax Tip From The Treasurer (and Mr. Slott) Make A Charitable Contribution

Have a heart for a worthy cause? If your dreams for a lifetime of savings include helping a charity, it may be worth using your retirement funds to make a difference. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 made qualified charitable distributions permanently available from IRAs.

This law lets individuals 70½ or older make tax-free donations, known as qualified charitable distributions, of up to \$100,000 directly from their IRAs to a charity as part of their required minimum distribution. Such a distribution doesn't count as income, reducing any income tax liability to the donor.

But be aware that individuals who make tax-free charitable distributions from their IRAs won't be able to itemize them as a charitable deduction.

"You get one or the other," Slott says. "Whoever uses this strategy will pay less in taxes, so if you're charitably inclined, it's the best way to make donations."

To reiterate, this tip applies to those of us over 70 and 1/2 who have regular IRAs. The cool thing is that this donation comes straight from your IRA to the charity (FUPC) and does NOT get counted in your gross taxable income. However, as pointed out above, you cannot take it as an itemized deduction. With the now relatively huge standard deduction, many of us will no longer need or want to itemize.



Charles Dickens once said that we are somewhat mixed up here in America. Instead of having just one day set aside for Thanksgiving Day each year, he said, we should have 364. "Use that one day just for complaining and griping," he said. "Use the other 364 days to thank God for the many blessings he has showered upon you."

That kind of seems to fit, doesn't it? As a country we tend to pause on this one day. We gather with families and friends and we take some time to think about all the blessings that we have. The problem is that tomorrow, we will gripe that the sales start too early. We will gripe that the lines are too long. We'll grumble because we are eating turkey, again. The next day we will grumble about having to go back to work. We will complain that it's too cold or too sloppy or too dreary or too warm or whatever else we can find to grumble about.

Here is our opportunity to take this one day and be encouraged by God's grace to turn it into 365 days of thankfulness to him. To do that, we count our blessings. As you count your blessings you'll want to listen to the words that Habakkuk was inspired to write. Habakkuk 3:17 -- 18



Thanksgiving dinners take 18 hours to prepare.

They are consumed in 12 minutes.

Half-times take 12 minutes.

This is not coincidence. (Erma Bombeck)

First United Presbyterian Church

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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 each Sunday from October 7 through Pentecost (June 9, 2019) and 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.



6th	Maridell Monnheimer
7th	Christina Litherland
18th	Theresa De Herrera Nicky Litherland
22nd	Gabino Rendon
27th	Katie Palmer
28th	Rodger Kretz
30th	Karen Topping



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.



Samaritan House Food Donations

For November

Pasta and Sauce

Coffee and Tea are always appreciated