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Love God.
Love Our Neighbors.

SPIRE

March 2023



CW concert on March 19

The Meadowlark Trio (Janet Bebb, flute; Ann van Bever, oboe; and Betsy Goy, cello) and the MT Duo (Mary Rowell and Tatiana Kolchanova, violin/viola) come together for a joint Celebration Works concert of music for winds and strings on Sunday, March 19, at 2 pm. Movements from Johann Christian Bach’s charming 18th-century quintet in D major for all five instruments will open the program. The group will then split into smaller combinations to present a witty and playful quartet for English horn and strings by Jean Francaix, while a classical and elegant quartet for flute and strings by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart provides contrast. A work for two violins by Russian composer Inna Zhvanetskaya, “Variations on a Jewish Folk Tune,” will be played by MT Duo. The program will close with all five instruments (plus alto flute and English horn) in Arthur Bliss’s 20th-century piece, “Conversations,” a series of five short movements that bring familiar scenes to mind in musical terms. A reception will follow. Free admission and free parking in FPC’s garage. Please plan to attend!



Photos from Doug Blomgren and Richard Blomgren: Two Generations Behind the Camera February 5 - March 26, 2023

Doug Blomgren is a member of First Presbyterian and a retired lawyer. He is an amateur photographer—emphasis on “amateur.” His father Richard Blomgren was born in 1920 in Cambridge, Illinois. He served as a photographer in the U.S. Army in Italy in the mid-1940s and became a professional photographer in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Richard had contracted polio as a young boy but escaped the worst of what that disease could cause. Nursed by his mother and two aunts, he recovered well, but for a weak left leg that resulted in him not being accepted into the armed forces until 1944. His younger brother Dean was already serving in Bari, Italy when Richard entered the service and was stationed in Rome and Caserta. He remained there for about two years. The palace at Caserta, north of Naples, had become the headquarters of the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations. As a result, many of Richard’s photos were of arriving and departing generals, government dignitaries, and others. However, he did have time to take photos of his surroundings and, while on leave, in northern Italy and Switzerland. His photos were mostly taken with a Speed Graphic large format press camera. He also used a Rolleiflex medium format camera which he acquired by trading his cigarette rations.

As a teenager, Doug worked for his father—mostly mopping floors but also in the darkroom and, on occasion, taking photos his father probably thought simple enough for a kid. Perhaps because his father’s work was entirely in black and white until the last half of his professional career, Doug prefers black and white too. He opts for color primarily when he thinks color is critical to the image. Doug’s interest lie in what some might call “street photography,” capturing the faces and activities that occur around us. He also is drawn to the geometry of our surroundings—the shapes of buildings designed by architects and engineers but made real by craftsmen, craftsmen, and laborers who turn designs into places.

New Members have joined! - December 18, 2022



Susan Dingle



Jackie Lowthian



Matt Sloan



David Jimerson



Beckie Staples



Helen Crutchfield

Blessed are you the body of Christ in this community,
as you journey through this season of Lent,
may the God who put on human flesh and dwelled in the messiness of life,
may the God who wandered in the wilderness,
who walked the path to the cross,
who loved the world so much death was not too high a price to pay;
may this God journey with you this season of Lent.
May this God call to you as you walk the way.
May this God’s love be revealed in deep and meaningful ways.
May this God bless you to be a blessing to others.

-Pastor Brenna

Pastor’s Pen

Lent is my favorite liturgical season because it is a time that is set apart to reflect deeply on many aspects of our faith. Ash Wednesday is an invitation to reflect on our finitude and also our connectedness to the larger world. The 40 days of Lent is a time to reflect on repentance, which just means to turn around. It is an invitation to look at what are the things in our lives that have been keeping us from God. Many people will engage in the spiritual practice of giving up something to cultivate an alignment with the sacrificial Christ. I have found for myself that taking up something has been more fruitful in my faith life. This year I am taking up the spiritual practice of blessings and so I would like to offer a blessing to our church family as we journey to the cross together.

To Everything There is a Season

In July, we will be sending six youths and four adults as ambassadors from First Presbyterian Church to visit for the first time our mission partner, the Ingas Leyte project located on the island of Leyte in the Philippines. The mission of the Ingas Leyte Project is a non-profit, interdenominational Christian service organization dedicated to helping develop caring communities for underprivileged children and their families. Its focus is on children and families who are the victims of poverty. Mission committee member Marci Hope founded the organization in the 90s, and FPC formed a relationship with the organization after they received a grant from the Capital Campaign Mission giving team to help build a new community center. Please hold our youth in prayers as they represent our faith community as they go to learn and serve as Christ served. Also, please mark your calendars for April 30th for a fundraiser event!

-Pastor Brenna



Can you help FPC make its Per Capita payment?

Every year, FPC makes a payment to the Presbytery of the Cascades to help cover the costs of our Presbyterian form of government. This payment, called a Per Capita, is a set amount per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church. FPC's payment helps to cover the costs of the work done by the Presbytery of the Cascades, the Synod of the Pacific, and the General Assembly.

How much is this year's Per Capita? For 2023, the Per Capita is \$45.60 per member.

At its heart, Per Capita is part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. It exists to allow the whole church to share equitably in those things that make us Presbyterian:

- our theological identity;
- our connectedness;
- our system of mid councils that allow elders and ministers together to discern the mind of Christ;
- our ecumenical connections that make us part of the church universal;
- our core structures that keep us together as a church; and
- our call to work for full participation in decision-making.

If you can and would like to contribute toward that payment, please put a check in the offering plate, send a check to the office marked "2023 Per Capita," or go to www.firstpresportland.org click on the Donate button in the upper right of the screen, select One Time Giving from the dropdown menu, and designate your donation as "2023 Per Capita." Thank you for your ongoing support of the life of the church.

Walk the Wildwood: We have a date!

The 2nd Annual Walk the Wildwood event will take place Saturday, August 12, 2023, at Washington and Forest Parks, starting at Stevens Pavilion and ending there with a lunch for the participants. Our inaugural event last year was a GREAT success, raising over \$7000 for Kamwenge Secondary and Vocational School in Uganda. We had just over 60 walkers last year and we are hoping for 100 this year, so mark your calendars now, tell your friends, and plan to join us for this fun and family-friendly event.

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book will meet on Tuesday, March 7 at noon in the Heritage Room and on Zoom. Marilyn Weber will lead the book discussion on "The Personal Librarian" by Marie Benedict and Victoria C. Murray.

The story is written about the glamorous life of Belle de Costa Greene who negotiated acquisitions of rare books and art for the J.P. Morgan Library during the Gilded Age. Did Belle keep her carefully guarded secret?



Observe Lent with One Great Hour of Sharing

Each year through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, we are given the opportunity to live out the call to become the beloved community of Jesus Christ. Traditionally, the weeks of Lent between Ash Wednesday and Easter are a period of prayer and sacrifice for Christians. You can join believers around the world at this sacred time by remembering our sisters and brothers who are in need through gifts to the annual One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.

OGHS reaches out with projects that share God's love by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. Many programs have a long-term focus, partnering with communities to address root causes as well. Our donations will be dedicated to worship on Palm Sunday, April 2.

Deacons Dear Fund

The Deacon's DEAR Fund (Deacons Emergency Assistance Resource) is a program that will provide needed financial assistance to those struggling to pay their bills on a short term basis. Should you, or someone you know, need aid to get through a difficult financial situation, please contact one of the pastors and they will work with that person to determine any amount to be funded.

FPC Kids celebrated Inclusion Month

We are pleased to announce that the children of First Presbyterian exceeded their fundraising goal for Harper's Playground! They raised over \$1400 and we are so proud of their efforts as well as the generosity of this church. Together, we are helping to rebuild the playground at Marshall Park in Vancouver, Washington, so it will be a welcoming space for ALL BODIES!

February is "Inclusion Month" and we are so glad to be empowering the children of this church to become more welcoming to all people in the manner of Jesus, who was a friend to all. Margaret Maes gave a mission witness this month and among her many beautiful reflections, she said, "I've come to understand that a more accessible and inclusive world is not just better for my daughter Cami, but better for all my children - and all of us." Interested in becoming a more inclusive person right now? Consider following "disabled influencers" on social media. Check out books like "Just Ask" or watch the documentary "Crip Camp" (or films like it). Let's do what we can to eradicate the loneliness and isolation all of us can feel at times when we are excluded for any reason. Together we can make a difference.

