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Celebrate Earth Day! Restoring God’s Creation – All Hands on Deck

Thanks to the efforts of many church members and staff, First Presbyterian was recertified as an Earth Care Congregation by the PC(USA) for 2023! The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that commit to taking seriously God’s charge to “till and keep” the garden of creation. This status speaks to the serious commitment FPC has made to care for God’s earth. The Session affirmed an Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into our worship, education, facilities, and outreach.

To celebrate Earth Day, join us for our “Restoring God’s Creation – All Hands on Deck” event after church from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm on Sunday, April 23rd, in the Calvin Library. To join the Earth Care Team or volunteer for the event, contact Jenny Holmes.

“Beautiful Words: Reconnection” Gallery Exhibition April 2-May 28 The Portland Society for Calligraphy: Then and Today

The Portland Society for Calligraphy was founded in 1968 by Lloyd Reynolds, a Reed College professor, and a group of his students. We were first known as the Western American Branch of the Society for Italic Handwriting, a calligraphy society based in England, breaking off from that group to pursue our calligraphy scope and mission by 1981. The Portland Society for Calligraphy is the oldest calligraphy guild in the United States, and Oregon is the only state that has a gallery dedicated to calligraphy at its State Fair.

Our mission is to encourage, educate, learn, share and support calligraphy within our community. To this end, we hold exhibits to demonstrate the appreciation of calligraphy as art, we offer workshops, within the guild and to the community, we learn from each other, and support each other’s artistic endeavors - whether one is just beginning their love affair with letters or is a seasoned calligrapher. More than just “pretty writing” (the etymology of the word calligraphy) writers of this art form have found the power of expression, a means to speak up and speak out.

As editor and PSC member, Christine Colasurdo wrote in our 50th Anniversary publication, “Not only has our small society evolved in the last fifty years, but calligraphy itself as a creative act has deepened and broadened— if not exploded worldwide. Boundaries have been blurred. Once sidelined as only a “craft,” calligraphy is now viewed in the larger frame of the lettering arts, expressive mark-making, of text-based art, of fine art. This is as it should be.”

We come together this spring for an in-person exhibit for the first time in three years, not only to share our passion for calligraphy but also with hopes to delight and encourage others. Join in the Opening Reception on Sunday, April 2 from 11:30-1. Meet the artists and enjoy some refreshments with them.



Love God.
Love Our Neighbors.

SPIRE

April 2023

Pastor’s Pen

The writer Tony Campolo once told of a sermon he heard on Good Friday that encompassed both the darkness of our present world, but also the irrepressible hope of Easter. It included the powerful refrain: “It’s Friday...but Sunday’s coming!”

If we listen, we may hear echoes of this in our day as well:

·It’s Friday, and someone hears from the doctor that the future will hold further tests and treatments...
·It’s Friday, and the persistent presence in our community of those without a home shows all too clearly how far society has yet to go in following our Lord’s call to love one another...
·It’s Friday, and dear friends are having to walk the valley of the shadow, farewelling someone dear to their hearts, whom they long to see again...

In all these ways, the darkness of Good Friday echoes in our present world. Good Friday, a day when it seemed that the darkness had vanquished the light, that our Lord’s life of healing and teaching and love had come to an end with his death on the cross.

But the good news is that while it may still be Friday in our world, Sunday is coming. Beyond all expectations, God breaks into our darkness, and despite it all, the light shines out with hope.

·Sunday is coming, every time someone holds out a hand to help those whose burdens are hard and heavy...
·Sunday is coming, as we gather to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, who has gone ahead to prepare a place for all whom we have loved and lost, and look in hope to see again.

In this Holy Week, may you look for the signs that Sunday is coming, with the light of Christ to vanquish every darkness.

Wishing you a blessed and happy Easter -

1200 SW Alder, Portland
Free Underground Parking

CELEBRATE HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY: 4/2 @ 10:30 AM
MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4/6 @ 7 PM
GOOD FRIDAY: 4/7 @ 7PM

EASTER SUNDAY: 4/9 @ 10:30AM
EASTER EGG HUNT
AFTER WORSHIP

@FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PORTLAND

IN PERSON AND ONLINE

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Holy Week
(all services are
in person and
streamed online)

Palm Sunday: 4/2 @ 10:30 am
Maundy Thursday: 4/6 @ 7 pm
Good Friday: 4/7 @ 7pm
Easter Sunday: 4/9 @ 10:30 am
Easter Egg Hunt after Easter
Sunday Service on the plaza.

Showing Love through Our Valentines’ Tea

On Sunday, February 19, the FPC Valentine’s Tea allowed members to focus on God’s love and our expression of love for others. The event was a tremendous success thanks to combined loving efforts, with about 120 people enjoying the afternoon.

The food was visually appealing and delicious - so many goodies it was hard not to overeat! There were vintage teapots loaned by organizers and specially prepared tea bags made by a friend of FPC who is a certified tea specialist. The short program included magnificent recitations on love from Shakespeare and I Corinthians and a slide show of the FPC congregation engaged in worship, fellowship, and service.

After the meal, guests were encouraged to take a “love in action heart” from the love tree; write a note of appreciation to someone on our church staff; check out a book on love from our library; and decorate a cookie to take to someone. At a cheery photo booth, guests could “look at the world through the eyes of love” by wearing heart-shaped sunglasses. All in all, it was a memorable labor of love!



On the left: Jim Walsh
On the right: Steve Anderson

They provide leadership and help to take care of us every Sunday. And they have been doing it for a combined 70 years+!

Every Sunday we are fortunate to have one of our two FPC usher captains, Jim Walsh and Steve Anderson, working to provide leadership and safety to our members and guests. Together they have an amazing 70+ years of serving as ushers and usher captains at FPC! Some of their reflections on their time as ushers:

Jim Walsh: “I joined the church in 1977 after being married to Ann. I started ushering in 1978. I was happily ushering on my assigned weeks when my usher captain, John Purdy, asked me in around 1980 if I would take over as captain for one year. And I’ve been doing it ever since!”

Jim notes that over the years, the ushers have sought to balance their welcome to those who visit with security for all those attending worship in our downtown setting. “I enjoy ushering. Along with the greeters we are the first people that those who are attending the service see and talk with as they enter FPC.”

Steve Anderson: “When my wife MaryAnn and I joined the church in 1985, we maintained a low profile. Tom Withycomb was the driving force getting MaryAnn and I involved in ushering; I honestly believe we finally said yes so Tom would quit badgering the both of us, LOL! Jim and I have been at the helm now since 2013 in charge of organizing the four usher teams and alternating every other month as usher captains. We help with:

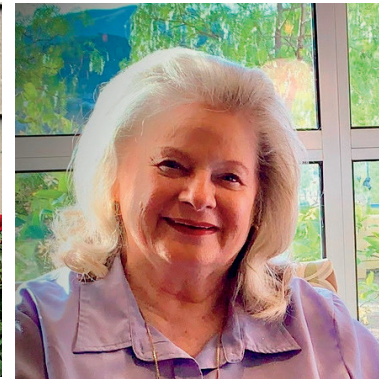
- Fire and Earthquake evacuation plans.
- Setting up Usher training seminars / luncheons
- Organizing Medical CPR and AED trainings
- Being aware of our houseless neighbors who may join us on any given Sunday.
- Helping develop a policy for service animals attending church.
- Assisting folks who have sudden medical issues during the service.

As a result, Jim and I have seen it all during our tenure as usher captains. Taking care of the congregation for as long we have is something we have done out of love and compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

New members we will be welcoming on April 23rd



Lauren and Michael Hojnacki



Rev. Christine Holcomb



Henry Holcomb



Phil Brooke

Not Pictured: Anna Lucas

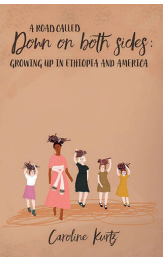
Stewardship for 2023—Showing a Heart of Compassion

As the Spire goes to press, the congregation has pledged \$770,000 toward the life and mission of the church this year, bringing us to 96% of our goal of \$800,000.

We’re grateful for those who have pledged and encourage everyone who calls FPC home to join in this commitment to Christ’s work through our church. Thank you so much for your generous giving to the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian!

Women's Book Club

We invite you to join us on Tuesday, April 4th, at noon in The Heritage Room (#207) or via Zoom to discuss the book “A Road Called Down on Both Sides: Growing up in Ethiopia and America” a memoir by Caroline Kurtz. Caroline, an Oregonian and child of Presbyterian Missionaries from the 50s, joins us to discuss her book. Join us at 11:30 am and bring a brown bag lunch. Beverages will be provided before the meeting.



Session Update

Our Session, made up of the 16 Elders elected by the congregation to guide the church, met at Menucha on March 10-11 (delayed from an earlier-planned date) on the theme of “Growing in our Vision to Love God & Love Our Neighbors.” The Rev. Jan Reynolds, new to our Presbytery, who has a background in strategic planning, led the retreat. Several mission initiatives were identified to be our core focus for the year ahead as we reach out to near neighbors in the city, and these will be shared in the coming weeks.

Other Session updates include the election of a new Clerk of Session, Doug Blomgren, and closer connection with the Deacons, through the attendance at Session meetings of James Brunner, our new Chair of Deacons.

FPC Kids celebrated Inclusion Month

The Children and Family Ministry at FPC culminated “Inclusion Month” by welcoming Cody Goldberg from Harper’s Playground to share his vision for building a more welcoming world in an educational event offered after worship. In 2010, Cody and his wife April created the non-profit organization Harper’s Playground to help communities develop playgrounds intended for people of all ages and all abilities. Through the generosity of many FPC visitors and church members, the children of our church raised over \$1500 to support Harper’s Playground’s latest project in Vancouver, Washington. We plan to attend the ribbon-cutting event at the park when it opens and FPC children will be invited to find their very own paver in the park. Together, we’ll celebrate the good news that every one of us has a part to play in God’s story, and we have gifts, prayers, and love to share with the world.

