

Annual Report 2023



Faith Presbyterian Church

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Meeting of the Congregation

Faith Presbyterian Church of Sacramento

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Agenda

Opening Prayer and Remarks

Jeff Chapman, Moderator

Approval of Agenda

Report of the 2023 Nominating Committee

Lori Rapier,
Nominating Committee Chair

Review of the Distribution of Gifts

Karen Chan, Finance Elder

Celebration of God's Work at Faith in 2023

Church Triumphant

Faith in Pictures

Closing Prayer

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Clerk of Session

Renee Larsen, Clerk (June 2023 through June 2026)
Claire Pisor, Assistant Clerk (June 2023 through June 2024)

The Book of Order is the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It declares that “the session is the council for the congregation” with the “responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness” (G-3.0201). “[The session] shall elect a clerk who shall record the transactions of the council, keep its rolls of membership and attendance, maintain any required registers, preserve its records, and furnish extracts from them when required by any other council of the church. The clerk of the session shall be a ruling elder elected by the session for such term as it may determine” (G-3.0104). RE Renee Larsen was elected to a full three-year term in May 2023; RE Claire Pisor was elected for a one-year term as Assistant Clerk to serve from June 2023 to June 2024.

Annually, there is a review of the session minutes by our presbytery, the North Central California Presbytery (NCCP), whose boundaries reach from Burney to Tracy and from Yolo County to El Dorado County. Per the directive of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, MWS Jeri Viera Dahlke, our session minutes will be reviewed by the Clerk of Session for Westminster Presbyterian Church. The next review will be scheduled for early 2024.

On January 1, 2023, Faith’s membership stood at 353; as of December 31, 2023, the membership count is 346. In 2023, five members requested to end their membership at Faith for various reasons. In addition, the following members and friends of Faith passed away last year: Nancy Aaberg, Robert Anderson, Mary Barber, Rev. Dwight Beattie, Kati Buehler, Ruth Burkinshaw, Jolila Clark, Ken Eikermann, James Falltrick, Noreen Freund, Pete Laudi, Mary Patterson, Glenda Virden, and Rev. Jim Zazzera. We remember these brothers and sisters in Christ with love and give thanks to the Lord for the ongoing impact of their faith in our midst.

During 2023, God blessed our community with nine new members: Art and Cheryl Chan, Madelyn Chand, Bill Edgar, David and Sarah Espinoza, Jim and Kara Houston, and Jerome Wilson. There are many who attend Faith who have not yet made the decision to join, and we warmly welcome their participation, too, as we all continue to learn together what it means to seek and follow Christ more deeply.

Pastor & Head of Staff

Jeff Chapman

In 2023 I began my 20th year as one of your pastors here at Faith. That's remarkable to me. What a gift it has been for me to worship, grow, and serve alongside all of you for these two decades! While there can certainly be excitement found when a person constantly moves from place to place, always looking for new adventures, there is also something unique that happens when the Lord allows you to stick in one place and sink deep roots. I have known, and am coming to know, that blessing here among you in this place.

One of the times when I am most profoundly reminded of this blessing is when we celebrate the Lord's Supper together. As I offer the bread and cup, or the anointing of oil, to one person at a time, I am struck by the history passing by me. Over these years I have come to know and share in so many of your stories – the joys and the sorrows – as you have come to share in mine. In a day and age when so many are transient, often for good reasons, I'm grateful that I've been allowed to stay in one place long enough to come to know the stories of this place. In these stories I see the faithfulness of Christ.

This past year I've been trying to remind us each week in worship of our mission statement: *a community loving Christ, building disciples, serving all*. I love that these words are not just decorations on letterhead, but a vision the Lord has given to guide Faith Church. I am surrounded here by people who truly do love Jesus and want to learn to live life as his disciples, not just knowing what he knows but becoming like him. You inspire me to do the same. I also love that there are so many here at Faith so willing to serve beyond ourselves. The tremendous response to our *Reaching Out* ministry this past year at Bethany Church has been a brilliant example of this. Love. Build. Serve. May we continue to realize this vision!

I want to use this space to once again thank you for the support and encouragement you offered to me

and my family to launch the Angaza ministry in Kenya with Torchbearers International. I believe that this was the Lord's vision, and I have been humbled to be invited to be a part of its inception. Not many congregations would be generous and trusting enough to allow their pastor the freedom to engage beyond the "walls" of the congregation in this sort of way. You not only gave me the freedom, but joined in as partners. I look forward to seeing how this ministry will grow in the years to come, and I hope that many more of you will have opportunities to journey to Africa with us to see how the Lord is at work in that part of the world in mighty ways.

Just this morning I gathered with a small group of you to pray in the New Year. One of the lines of the prayer we used will stick with me:

I launch my ship on the unknown waters of this year, with You, O Father, as my harbor, You, O Son, at my helm, You, O Holy Spirit, filling my sails.

What a beautiful image to consider, and to pray. As I look back over 2023, there was so much that happened which I could never have anticipated. I have plans and guesses for 2024 but am humbled to realize that mostly there is much mystery surrounding the year ahead. Still, I know that with the Lord as our harbor, helm and wind, we can together lean into the mystery without fear or anxiety.

Know that I am grateful for each of you. I look back with gratitude for all the ways I have seen the Lord work in and amongst you this past year. I look forward with anticipation for more of the same in the year to come.

Grace & Peace,

Associate Pastor

Brett Shoemaker

Two are better than one... (the beginning of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

At our recent youth Christmas party on the road, a mom that does not attend Faith mentioned that she was surprised when her daughter decided to join our youth group. This youth chose to invest in our group that she later said “felt like family,” and she has rarely missed a minute with us this past season. Just when the world seemed immersed in a trend *away* from commitment to any kind of social or religious group, the longing to be *together*, to know each other and share life seems to be making a hopeful return.

This past year has provided a renewed foundation of cohesiveness for those that I have had the privilege to work with, especially in the areas of families, youth, and mission. Regular youth group gatherings in person at the church, new mission endeavors in our community with groups committing to serve together, as well as many new families seeking a faith home have breathed some new life into what God is doing here.

As we look ahead to 2024, I am hopeful that we can build on our sense of togetherness from this past year and lean once again into some of our practices of walking deeper with Christ that had become dormant. For example, *Confirmation* for high-school students, *Life in Community* for junior-high students (discovering ways to connect with the larger church), and opportunities to study God’s Word for those ready for a deeper dive will help young people see it is *Christ* who binds us together in life-giving ways.

...a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (the end of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Some of the markers of 2023 were:

- **Summer Mission Trip** – Our trip with Sierra Service Project to Crescent City with 30 people of many ages was the first regular, organized, short-term, group mission

experience in a number of years.

- **Renewal of Consistent Youth Gatherings** – For the first time in a number of years, we gained consistency and momentum in gathering our youth midweek for worship and group building.
- **New Ministry Presence in Area Schools** – We have built solid relationships with Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary through their after-school program and with Kennedy High School as we gain traction toward starting a Young Life program here in the Pocket.
- **New Ministries to Our Community** – We are slowly figuring out “new normal” ways of connecting with and supporting familiar ministry partners like the Moral Values Program, SSIP, and Family Promise. It has also been encouraging through ministries like *Reaching Out* to see how our congregation is responding to God’s call to serve in some new and creative ways.

I am so grateful for the volunteers, staff, and members of our youth program and church leadership who have made this season re-invigorating for me as I continue to serve alongside you all!

Peace in Christ,

Brett

Director of Congregational Care

Ron Beams

“Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” – Philippians 2:12-13

For me, the ministry of congregational care continues to be a most rewarding effort because it results in many individuals receiving assistance and experiencing renewed hope and encouragement. Collaborating with the deacons at Faith has been very productive and positive.

The weekly online gathering, *Thursdays with Ron and Friends*, continues to be an important place for our seniors to talk, share, have fun, and look at a myriad of issues. It has also developed into occasional in-person social gatherings, including lunches, stage shows, movies, bird watching, and more. This weekly meeting started in the spring of 2020 and is entering its fourth year.

Community Relations: I continue to hold weekly meetings at Revere Court and Greenhaven Place that offer positive connections, ministry opportunities, encouragement, and positive staff relationships. There are currently four individuals from Faith who are residents at Greenhaven Place. Many of the Greenhaven residents join these meetings on a regular basis.

Spring Workshop: Back in April 2023, almost 100 senior adults gathered in Link Hall for a workshop focusing on end-of-life decisions and considerations. The course was presented by Susan Taylor from Dignity Health, and the response was very positive. The staff of Greenhaven Place provided a full breakfast. Looking forward to 2024, my goal is present one or two such workshops for our seniors.

Meeting the Need for Caregivers: Again in 2023, we continued to see a significant need for caregiving

resources. A number of seniors of Faith were hospitalized, placed in nursing care and rehab centers, or needed long- or short-term care while at home. The results from my accumulated resources have been very positive and the Faith seniors know that these resources are available. This applies to the deacons as well.

Candlelight Memorial Service: 2023 was the fourth year this event took place. It has become an important part of Faith’s Advent season because it offers an element of emotional healing and hope for those who come to remember and grieve their deceased loved ones. It was also my privilege to officiate many of the memorial services for our Faith community.

In conclusion, I continue to enjoy this ministry of congregational care and see that the need will only continue to grow as the Faith senior adult contingent needs are increasing. I sincerely appreciate Pastor Jeff’s full support of this ministry.

Director of Music Ministry

Mark Tootle

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
— 1 Peter 2:9

“Declare his praises” — this is the essence of what the Music Ministry at Faith Presbyterian is all about. The reasons are obvious. We are out of darkness and in His light. We are chosen, royal, a priesthood, and holy. And we are a community that belongs to God.

The Music Ministry community, numbering over thirty-five individuals and comprised of the Faith Chancel Choir, the contemporary Worship Band, the Faith Brass Ensemble and various instrumental soloists, has declared God’s praises throughout the year. This was through about two dozen anthems, over fifty different contemporary worship choruses, over fifty hymns, and over eleven hours of instrumental music.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. — Hebrews 13:15

The fruit of our declaration, our confession — through voice or instrument — is a sacrifice of praise not only of our talent but of our time as well. And a sacrifice requires proper preparation as well as execution.

The number of performance hours does not take into account the time it takes to prepare those performances. On average, every minute of performed music takes an hour of preparation. The year’s instrumental music alone took a total of a little over twenty-eight days of behind-the-scenes preparation. The worship band vocalists worked two rehearsals a week. The Chancel Choir puts in two hours of rehearsal a week, and the Faith Brass Ensemble faithfully rehearses every Saturday before their Sunday’s

performance. Everyone puts in extra time for Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas, and the various retreats during the year.

It is with a grateful heart that I am honored to declare and offer the sacrifice of praise to Jesus, through music, with the many volunteers who comprise the music ministry community. They are the royal priesthood who put in the time, at home or at church, to prepare their sacrifice, their declaration, of praise.

I look forward to worshiping with them in 2024.

Director of Family Ministry

Jacob Zvolanek

“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” – Colossians 2:6-7

Having “deep roots” is a common yet powerful analogy for the Christian faith. Deep-rooted trees or crops have a greater capacity to access water and withstand great seasons of drought. In other words, they can stand strong and endure because of their increasing ability to draw from their source. When I think about the last year of Family Ministry, I am convinced that this analogy best captures our journey together. As a community of families, we have developed some meaningful rhythms and momentum in our commitment to put Jesus at the center of conversations, schedules, and routines. Our roots have grown deeper into the love of God, one another, and our desire to see God glorified in our lives.

This past year I have been deeply moved by seeing our family programs become more than just an opportunity for parents and children to connect. It seems they have become a series of moments that have formed us and our community; they are the roots that reach for water, nourishment, perspective shifts, and conversations that impart grace and truth. We may not always realize the significance of meeting someone for coffee, dropping off the children at Kids Club, or volunteering on Sundays, but they are, indeed, forming and strengthening us in Christ. I am honored to be a part of a community that stirs one another up to faith, hope, and good works. Please allow me to share one brief example.

Without fail, Mexican food, great company, and meaningful conversation always make for an amazing evening. One of my favorite memories from this past year, particularly representing the ministry to families, was sharing just such a meal and conversation at a Family Discipleship gathering. It was such a special moment because as we moved through our curriculum and content, which detailed the “four stages of parenting,” we all looked around the table and realized that parents from each of the four stages were represented and engaged in this rich

discussion about how to put God first in each season of parenting. Each parent shared the highlights and challenges of parenting and prioritizing faith amidst the pressures and busyness of our culture. Additionally, it was such a great encouragement to know our children were also connecting with one another in the next room and being cared for by loving volunteers from our Faith community. It has been remarkable to gather around this purpose, with such a wide range of ages and seasons of life represented.

Board of Deacons

Randy Smith, Moderator

The year 2023 was an active one for Faith's deacons. Here are some of the highlights for us:

- Faith's deacons served at 11 memorial services, assisting with setting up, welcoming, serving, and cleaning up. Many of the family members we served were either from other churches or do not attend any church. We received many warm, appreciative responses from the families we served, as in some cases we seemed to have exceeded family members' expectations.
- About eight deacons served at the annual candlelight memorial service that our church offers each year in December during Advent.
- We hosted "Meet Your Deacon Sunday" in May.
- We thanked and blessed those deacons whose terms expired – Glenda Arellano, John Brophy, Kay Lum, and April Reichert – and welcomed incoming deacons Sherry Beams, Roy Chastain, Winnie Ling, and Anthony Shelton, with Randy Smith continuing for a second term.
- In worship on the last Sunday in August, one of our new deacons, Anthony Shelton, shared his testimony with the congregation as part of "Bless the Ways We Serve."
- Each month, we served Communion to folks in their homes and in assisted-living facilities who, at this season of life, are unable to join us in person to partake of this meal.
- We finished up the year on a fun note with a Christmas potluck and white-elephant gift exchange.
- We finished reading Jerry Sittser's book, *A Grace Disguised*, and began reading and discussing *A Grace Revealed*, written by the

same author. The author articulates the grief of losing someone dear in such a way that it helps anyone who hasn't lost anyone close to understand the pain of such losses.

- Sue Kim continued as our supply coordinator, Audrey Newport continued as our treasurer, Pat Witzens and Cathy Healow served as our co-secretaries, Roy Chastain was our Communion coordinator, and Randy Smith was our moderator.

Adult Christian Formation Ministry

Claire Pisor, Elder

Adult Christian Formation offers opportunities for members of our community to follow a discipleship path that will transform them to be ever more Christ-like. We equip our community by the study of Scripture and experiences of learning, sharing, and service so our lives as a community of faith reflect the love of Christ to the world.

Ministry Team Members: Laura Anderson, Rev. Ron Beams, Pastor Jeff Chapman, Anita Falltrick, Barbara Hull, Rev. Rick Hull, Ann Johnson, Rev. Dennis Montzingo, Alice Parente, and Linda Whitney

Teachers: Laura Anderson, Rev. Ron Beams, Pastor Jeff Chapman, Rev. Rick Hull, Rev. Dennis Montzingo, and Alice Parente

Retreat Speakers: Rev. Dr. Steve Wise, Rev. Amanda Nevin and Patrick Thompson

Over the past year, we were able to offer in-person and online classes that touched on each area of our ministry's vision statement. These included studying I and II Samuel in depth; recognizing the heart of God in some of the most unlikely persons; addressing a pressing issue in our culture today through the study of justice as it relates to racism; studying the words of hope every believer should know; and providing personal spiritual growth opportunities in small groups that focused on prayer, healing and hope in the transitions of our lives. We recognize and give thanks to the faithful teachers who brought these opportunities for spiritual formation and learning to us.

And then there were the retreats...a favorite time to gather together to learn, be challenged and rest. We give thanks to the Rev. Amanda Nevins ("Always Perfectly Loved"), Patrick Thompson ("James: Faith and Work"), and the Rev. Dr. Steve Wise ("Living in the Reality of God's Kingdom of Goodness and Love"), who were, respectively, the speakers at our Women's, Men's and All-Church Fall Retreats. In 2023 we introduced a Reflective Retreat that was held as we were entering Lent in February. This new

retreat provided an opportunity for each person to spend time reflecting on Scripture and song to "Deepen Our Awareness of God."

Discipleship Pathways continued in 2023. This gathering focused on in-depth learning of ways discipleship, with each person seeking to deepen personal relationships with Christ and, in doing so, listening for God's call to follow Jesus more faithfully. As foundational practices of discipleship were examined and practiced, there were regular times to meet in smaller groups (cohorts) to share growth in each one's desire for and awareness of God. Look for new opportunities to join in this pathway in 2024.

At the end of 2023, we welcomed Anita Falltrick to our committee. Anita serves as our librarian, and she is now beginning the process of organizing, categorizing, and preparing our extensive library to make it more user-friendly and accessible to our Faith community. Look for a "grand opening" of the library late in 2024.

Thanks to each of you who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure our classes, retreats, and opportunities to grow in Christ were accomplished. And thanks to each of you who made time to take part in these offerings and to partake of the Christian formation opportunities they offered. One and all, you are appreciated!

Communications Ministry

Chong Choe-Smith, Elder

The mission of Faith's Communications Ministry Team is to provide leadership and support on the content, methods, and modalities to deliver clear, accurate, and timely communications about our church and its activities, events, and educational and ministry opportunities, always seeking to edify the church and build disciples, serve others, and ultimately reflect the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Communications Team is responsible for the following ministry areas: media, website, PresbyNews newsletter, Constant Contact all-church emails, online photo gallery, and social media. We also support other ministries with their communications needs.

Most of the work of the Communications Team is seamless and goes unnoticed. It is only noticed on the rare occasion when something goes wrong. For example, many of us noticed the problems with projection during Rev. Dr. Steve Wise's talks at the All-Church Fall Retreat. On that occasion, our media team checked their laptop, connections, and everything else. The problem ultimately concerned Zephyr Point's equipment, and our media team was able to bring this to their attention. Almost every other time during a regular worship service or special event, our media team works unnoticed behind the scenes. Week after week, everything runs smoothly.

This brings to mind a passage in Exodus about those who prepared the tabernacle of God: "Bezalel and Oholiab, along with everyone whom God has given the skill and know-how for making everything involved in the worship of the sanctuary as commanded by God, are to start to work" (*The Message*, Exodus 36:1).

Worship today involves not just a physical place like a tabernacle, but various methods and modalities, often involving technology. We are so blessed to have on our team those with the skill and know-how to use technology effectively to assist with worship and attend to our various communications needs on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. We are able to worship together in part because of the behind-the-scenes work of our media team. We are also able to stay connected and get involved in the life of our Faith community through the information we receive by email, on the website, and in the bulletin and newsletter.

While my first year as elder was busy with helping to complete the website migration project, this second year has flowed so seamlessly because of the skill and know-how of others. The Communications Team leaders include David Nash (media team), Suzy Hughes (PresbyNews), and Laura Anderson (Constant Contact). We are always looking for skilled volunteers who can help in other ministry areas.

*"A person has joy in an apt answer,
and how delightful is a timely word!"*
– Proverbs 15:23

Family Ministry

Vicky Chastain, Elder

“Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths.”
– Psalm 25:4

Guided by the above Scripture verse from last summer’s Vacation Bible School, your Family Ministry (FM) Team has been busily at work all year long helping families discover how to follow the Lord’s paths. And, oh, the stories we could tell – too many to count! But if you’ll “gather ’round,” we’ll share just a few.

Consider first the story of a young family who was invited to follow the path to VBS by a neighbor and longtime member of Faith. This family began attending Faith shortly thereafter and now participates in worship and Godly Play, as well as bringing amazing energy and experience to other activities. What a blessing that invitation turned out to be!

Or how about the story of one of our Youth Group advisors, who offered to host Youth Group meetings in her home during Advent? This path provided an opportunity for our teenagers to bond together with friends over fellowship, lessons, S’mores, and the knowledge that the path to Jesus and His love can lead outside of the church building.

During this past year, other overgrown pathways were uncovered by two FM angels – one a busy wife and mom, and the other a beloved grandparent – who “magically” began to show up and clear out the clutter of the supplies, trays, and cupboards in the classrooms used by our children. This allows our amazing group of OVER 25 VOLUNTEERS in the Sunday morning RISE programs to plan lessons and to care for and teach Faith’s children more effectively.

There were lots of families, including grandparents and grandchildren, who followed Christ’s path to last November’s Operation Christmas Child activity, where at least 50 shoeboxes were filled with toys, school supplies, and cheerful notes to be sent to children who might not otherwise receive a gift or hear about Jesus. The travelers along this path

include ANY of you who donated items to be packed or contributed towards postage costs. You might not know you were part of the Family Ministry Team, but you ARE and we thank you!

None of these pathways to Christ would be possible without the guidance of our Faith FM staff members, who, along with the volunteer members of the FM Team, meet monthly to plan, discuss, and implement ways to encourage and support families as they seek to make Christ known in their homes. Currently we are blessed with the following members:

Brett Shoemaker, Associate Pastor of Family and Youth Ministry
Jacob Zvolanek, Director of Family Ministry
Madelyn Chand, Family Ministry Assistant
Cathy Healow
Janet Leader
Lillian Thurston
Barbara Tracy
Vicky Chastain

Paraphrasing a favorite song, the Family Ministry sign on the path to the blessings of 2024 reads, “Once you’ve experienced God’s love, you want to pass it on!”

Fellowship Ministry

Kitty Tatro, Elder

The Fellowship Ministry's purpose is to provide Christian social opportunities to come and break bread together and to develop closer personal and church ties.

It is a privilege to provide ways for our community to come together. One of the ways we saw God's blessing this past year was the Harvest Dinner and Auction. We had many generous people who donated items for the auction and many people who bid on them. We were able to contribute \$6,300 to Faith's Pat Tatro Memorial Campership/Scholarship Fund. This fund allows the church to offer financial assistance to attend Faith's many retreat, camp, and mission opportunities to those who might not otherwise be able to take part due to financial constraints.

Our Advent dinner and desserts were well received, and we are looking forward to offering more fellowship opportunities in 2024. Our team will prepare the lunch for the Annual Congregational Celebration on Sunday, January 21. And watch for information about our Supper Club, which will run from March to June. Each monthly Supper Club gathering is a more intimate dinner for eight guests, which allows the chance to talk more in depth and to get to know several Faith folks better over the course of these four months.

Most anything that involves food comes through the Fellowship Ministry, including coffee hosting and First Sunday Sabbath celebrations. We have a great team of very energetic, giving, and fun people!

In the coming months, our team will be brainstorming new and meaningful ways to fellowship together. If you have an idea to share or would like to join our team, please reach out to me.

Many thanks to the folks who make up the Fellowship Ministry Team. They are Debbie Grabowski, Tanya Anderson, Mike Hankey, Paul and Betty Keller, Karen Chan, Janet Leader, Betty McClure, Jeff Simington, Chelle Ellis, Teri Williamson, Melodi Andersen, Emily Oren, Mary Ann Chapman, Rich Hendricks, and Gail Bagby.

Finance Ministry

Karen Chan, Elder

The Finance Committee is trusted with your financial gifts to be used in our ministry and mission here at Faith Presbyterian Church. As the Finance elder, it is a privilege to see how we support our community and beyond because of the generosity of this congregation. I am honored to work with such a dedicated group of elders who thoughtfully and prayerfully consider how we use these gifts.

(Note: for this online version of the finance elder's report, "the numbers" have been eliminated. Members of the congregation may reach out to Laura at landerson@faithpresby.org for a copy of the full report.)

2023 Finance Team:

Treasurer – Jeff May

Head Teller – Kitty Tatro

Pledge Secretaries – Jennifer Smith and John Rodriguez

Staff Advisory – Jeff Chapman, Marlys Emery

Memorial Fund – Roy Chastain

Tellers/Teller Escorts – Jennifer Anders, Jarvis

Arellano, Erwina Bush, Roy Chastain, Bob

DeYoung, Bill Edgar, Paul Heaton, Linda Olsen

-Egar, Kitty Tatro, and Jim Tracy

Lay Ministry

Linda Olsen-Edgar, Elder

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. – 1 Peter 4:10

God has blessed us all with gifts in one form or another. The mission of Lay Ministry is to encourage and support new ministries and/or activities within the congregation of Faith to serve Christ by sharing our gifts and talents. In this report, I want to share some of the opportunities Lay Ministry oversees that allow the people of Faith to minister to our community through the use of their God-given gifts and talents.

The Heart to Heart program is a gift to Faith Church. Through it, we are connecting not only with our treasured seniors but with anyone in our congregation who is in need. In 2023, Heart to Heart volunteers were able to fulfill requests for rides to and from church, rides to medical appointments, home repairs, moving assistance, meals as needed, and so much more! There are currently over 90 brothers and sisters within Faith who gratefully give of their time to answer these requests within a very short timeframe. What a blessing to have so many who are eager to show Christ's love by their response of service when a need arises!

Lay Ministry participates in the monthly Look @ Faith receptions for those newer to the Faith community, hosts the annual fall Ministry Faire, and updates the annual *Pathways* guide. On the last Sunday of each month, we arrange for the speakers who share their testimony as part of Bless the Ways We Serve, and we coordinate the Time and Talent offerings, which present opportunities to volunteer within and beyond the walls of Faith. We also have a ministry to welcome new members to the church. Our team is available to speak with anyone who would like to serve in some capacity and/or start a new ministry.

The wonderfully creative team members who make up Lay Ministry are Sherry Beams, Kerrilee Blunt, Kathy Ellis, Helen Frisch, Marianne Jenkins, and Renee Larsen.

Mission Ministry

Lilian Wanjau, Elder

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." – Mark 16:15

The Mission Ministry, through its local and global partnerships, strives to promote the love of Christ, discipleship, and service. In the past year, we managed to participate in a hands-on summer mission experience, established new mission partners like The Seed group and Reaching Out, supported new missionaries, held a fireworks sale, and joined other ministries in the annual Ministry Faire. We continued to financially support our mission partners like SSIP, MVP, Family Promise, and current missionaries, among others.

Here are some of the missional activities the team helped oversee in 2023:

- Moral Values Program (MVP) – One of our goals as a team was to reconnect with some of our mission partners with whom our connection felt a little more distant due to the strains of the pandemic. The Lord graciously opened doors for us to reconnect with MVP, and we even had the opportunity to host some of their kids on a field trip to the Museum of Science.
- Mission Partners Focus – We started a monthly focus on Faith Mission partners during worship to help the congregation get to know a little better some of the global and local partners we work with. As a result, we have seen increased awareness on the part of the congregation about how they can come alongside and support these mission partners.
- Reaching Out – God provided an extraordinary opportunity for Faith Church, under the leadership of Cathy and Paul Philleo, to partner with Bethany Presbyterian Church and serve the wider Sacramento community through the Reaching Out program, held monthly at Bethany. We have witnessed lives blessed through this ministry, and the congregation has stepped up in so many ways to make this ministry event a success.

- Summer Mission Experience – About 20 members from Faith participated in the Sierra Service Project summer mission trip, which was an intergenerational experience with meaningful work, self-enrichment, and fellowship.

We are looking forward to another great year in 2024, serving in mission with the Faith community and with our local and global partners. If you have a heart for mission and would like to join the Mission Team, or if you have any questions about what the Mission Team does, please contact Pastor Brett (bshoemaker@faithpresby.org).

This ministry is overseen by the Mission Team of: Paul Philleo, Jarvis Arellano, Paul Keller, Jane Owen, Norma McKay, Nancy Henrickson, and Pastor Brett Shoemaker.

Outreach Ministry

Janeil Hogue, Elder

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? – Romans 10:14

The mission of the Outreach Ministry is to equip the people of Faith Presbyterian Church to be more intentional in sharing the love of Jesus Christ with others and to provide opportunities to do so. Here is an overview of just a few of the outreach efforts and activities that happened in 2023 and are upcoming in early 2024:

Look @ Faith is an informal gathering held each month to welcome people who are interested in finding out more about the church. A pastor along with members of the Outreach and Lay Ministry teams meet with interested guests over coffee and tea. We talk about how we came to Faith, offer ways to connect with the congregation, and answer any questions they may have. Guests are invited to fill out a questionnaire on areas of interest and ways they might like to connect through Life Groups, as well as through various missions and service opportunities.

The Marriage Course will be offered this spring, starting on April 2, 2024. This seven-week course hosts up to twenty couples for a date night dinner and private conversations designed to strengthen them in their marriage. Couples gain skills in communicating, resolving conflict, learning to forgive, and expressing love in different ways.

The Marriage Course is a team effort, with more than forty volunteers required to make this time special for participating couples. Past attendees often return as volunteers, eager to extend the blessing they received through this course to other couples. Volunteers assist with cooking, serving, setting up, folding napkins, washing and folding laundry, washing dishes, hosting, and helping with audio-visual needs. The Outreach

Team will continue to evaluate interest in this course and will consider offering this course twice a year, in spring and fall.

Sharing Our Christian Faith with Confidence.

Summer and fall 2023 were a time of prayerful discernment for the Outreach Team as we considered the direction our ministry should take. Instead of answers, more questions came to light: What is outreach? Are members of Faith comfortable sharing our faith with non-believers? Do we know how to answer with confidence common questions such as, “Isn’t the Bible a Myth?” and “Why Does God allow suffering and evil?” If we cannot answer these questions with confidence, how can we go out boldly and share the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ?

In light of these questions, the Outreach Team has proposed, and Session has approved, the offering of a six-week, in-person video series during Lent. The series is *Questioning Christianity* by Tim Keller. This course aims to help us learn how to engage others in dialogue around six common objections to Christianity. Everyone in the congregation is encouraged to attend and to invite a friend or two. This course will start Wednesday, February 21, 2024.

Personnel Ministry

Stan Keasling, Elder

The Personnel Committee spent considerable time exploring options to the health benefits offered to lay staff. In the past the church enrolled all staff in the Board of Pensions medical plan, as we are required to do for the pastors. This plan is very expensive, and the committee wanted to find a plan that would offer comparable benefits at a lower cost. In the end we settled on a strategy of providing lay staff with a stipend that would allow them to buy insurance from the California Health Exchange, Covered California, or any other provider. As a result, staff is getting quality insurance, and we were able to keep the personnel budget to just a 1% increase from last year, while giving staff a 3.2% cost-of-living increase.

Pastor and Head of Staff Jeff Chapman is planning to return to Kenya to help lead the Angaza Torchbearer's School this spring and summer. The Personnel Committee recommended that Session give him up to four weeks of ministry leave. Last year the members approved this change in Jeff's terms of call, and Jeff requested that we reduce his salary to pay for the additional time away. Jeff's cost-of-living increase last year was sufficient to offset the costs we incurred by granting the time away, and as a result it did not look like his salary was reduced. He simply did not receive a cost-of-living increase. That reduced salary is the base from which we calculated this year's cost-of-living increase for Jeff, so the salary reduction remains in place this year.

The State of California continues to pass new laws that affect the employer-employee relationship. We have updated the Employee Handbook to respond to these changes in law, and have tried to take advantage of the flexibility some new laws provide to enhance the benefits we offer staff.

Personnel Committee members sit in on all the annual staff reviews. We spend time at the end of each review session talking to staff about their work and the support they receive from their supervisor or the church in general. It is particularly satisfying to

hear how happy our staff members are working at Faith, and how supported they feel both from the pastors and from the volunteer groups with whom they interact.

Property Maintenance Ministry

Mark Laybourn, Elder

Each year the Property Maintenance Committee works to ensure that the Faith campus is safe, secure and in good working order. Our house of worship normally maintains a busy schedule as it provides a base of operations for the Lord's work in our congregation, community and beyond.

The Property Team has completed a number projects this year, both inside the buildings and on the grounds. There are always a number of small repair tasks that are handled by members of the committee.

Inside we completed improvements and maintenance tasks. We replaced the air conditioning system in the sanctuary. There was major thinning and pruning of the trees on the perimeter of the property. A large portion of the sidewalk along Florin Road was replaced for safety reasons.

We always appreciate the input that we receive from the congregation for suggested improvements. Always feel free to contact one of our committee members with any concerns or ideas you have for the campus.

In the coming year there will be some repainting done around the campus. In addition, a portion of the roof will be replaced.

We are blessed with a dedicated group of people on our committee, and I am thankful for each one of them: David Ainsworth, Bob Bagby, John Brophy, Lee Bush, Doc DaCastello, Tim Davidson, Dave Williamson and, our guiding light for many years, Wally Smith.

Stewardship Ministry

Lucy DaCastello, Elder

Stewardship is defined as taking care of something. God has given each of us talents, time, and treasures. As believers in Christ, we desire to be good stewards of all He has given us.

September 2023 began our 2024 annual Stewardship Campaign, when we consider how we may pledge our finances to further the work of God here at Faith Presbyterian Church, in our community, and in our world. Pledge Sunday was held on October 1st in conjunction with our Ministry Fair. The Ministry Fair provides an opportunity for the congregation to meet Faith's Elders and to learn more about each one's area of ministry. Elders were able to share with those at the Ministry Fair ways to use our time and talents in service to our church family and our community.

As 2024 begins, we celebrate all that God has planned for us in service to His work here at Faith Church. If you are interested in information about opportunities for bequests, tax-deferred transfers, or stock transfers please do not hesitate to contact me. Our team is well equipped to assist.

My deepest appreciation goes to Stewardship Team members Jon Coupal, Julia King, and John Rodriguez, supported by Pledge Secretary Jennifer Anders and Pastor Jeff Chapman.

Worship Ministry

Lori Rapier, Elder

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. – I Chronicles 16:29

What should be done then, my brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. – I Corinthians 14:126

The Worship Ministry Team coordinates many aspects of Faith's worship services to ensure that all is ready on Sunday morning to guide the people of Faith into wholehearted worship of our Lord, knowing that this glorifies God, strengthens the gathered Body of Christ, and nourishes the spiritual life of individual worshippers.

Many folks participate in our worship services, serving Christ and Faith Presbyterian through their service as acolytes, Communion preparers, Communion servers, greeters/Welcome Center hosts, sanctuary decorators, tenders of the sanctuary (aka "The Pew Crew"), ushers, and worship assistants. These particular areas of worship are coordinated through the Worship Ministry.

Each month as the call goes out for volunteers to serve in these various capacities, we are grateful and moved by the dedication and joy of those who volunteer. We have witnessed numerous ways we see our brothers and sisters in Christ experience the joy of serving Christ and each other, to love and be loved.

Additionally, we are grateful for Mark Tootle and all the members of the Chancel Choir, the Worship Band, and the Brass Ensemble for their beautiful music, which brings glory to God and is so central to our worship.

We are blessed in many, many ways by Pastors Jeff Chapman and Brett Shoemaker, who lead us in God's way, teach us the Word, and administer the sacraments. We thank them for their ministry, guidance, wisdom, commitment, compassion, strength, encouragement, courage, and perseverance. Thanks be to God!

We experience God's hand at work in the joy experienced through worshiping and serving. Greeters and ushers have mentioned that serving in this way warms the heart – the hearts of those coming through the doors as well as those of the ushers and greeters. Pew Crew members have mentioned the peace and special time alone in the sanctuary that they experience while tending the pews. Others mention the special time for reflection and service while preparing for Holy Communion, the honor of serving the Lord's Supper, the warmth of the children bringing in and carrying out the light of Christ, and the blessing of serving as a worship assistant. A visitor to the sanctuary was moved by the energy and joy of the decorators as they prepared the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. These are also great ways to get to know someone better and to meet folks you have not yet met.

Thanks go out to Janet Leader and others who arrange the beautiful sanctuary flowers.

Our goals for 2024 include encouraging more folks to bring something to offer in worship and experience the joy brought by serving Christ and our congregation in this way.

I am grateful for our Worship Ministry Team and all the people of Faith who serve in numerous capacities during our worship services.

Our dedicated Worship Ministry Team includes:

Barbara Beattie, Sanctuary Decorations Coordinator
Barbara Hull, Communion Preparation Coordinator
Julia King, Usher Coordinator
Karena Van Duyn, Acolyte Coordinator
Jeff Chapman, Pastor
Mark Tootle, Director of Music Ministry
Lori Rapier, Elder

If you would like to serve on this exciting team, please contact me, Lori Rapier, through Laura in the church office (landerson@faithpresby.org).

