

## Discussions in Doorways

by Darryl McCollum, CLP

Happy New Year – I know by the time this is read the baby New Year will have learned to walk, talk, and is probably eligible to be enrolled in Beginnings and Beyond. But, since this is the initial First Press newsletter of the year, I believe I am culturally safe to open with a New Year's salutation.

Our family here on this corner of God's Kingdom closed out 2018 strong due to the dedication of many of you. It would have been easy to church-hop or just stay home with the departure of Pastor Toby from his very productive time here with us at FPCC, but you have all be faithful.

Many things are either new or have been revitalized in the ministries that we are doing.

1. Restarted Sunday morning Children's Messages.
2. The Youth Group has been revitalized and has a new name, "The Crew"
3. Our Come and See program that introduces people to our family here and the larger family of the Presbyterian Church USA has become a quarterly event.
4. Pancakes were prepared and served through Advent.
5. Our Christmas Eve service time was changed to 7pm be more family friendly.
6. The Deacon corps grew as people felt the call of God to serve.
7. We welcomed nine new



covenant family members in December.

8. God's children are showing up! Over 100 people worshiped God with us every Sunday in December on this corner of His kingdom.
9. The Christmas concert was amazing and was live-streamed on Facebook for the first time.
10. World Communion Sunday was well attended and had over 800 views on Facebook.

There are so many more blessings in 2018 that could be listed, but this is just a taste of them since August to let you know how much God is doing for and through our FPCC family. The best part is that the first five on this list are directly attributed to fellowship time discussions among our family. Somebody raising a question, suggesting, brain storming, how we can better live into the mission of "Love God, Love People, and Serve".

These discussions literally took place in doorways, at fellowship

tables, in the aisles of the church, on the patio. They happened before and after church, small groups, choir, and ministry team meetings. Elders, Deacons, long-time attendees, visitors, and other churches on the campus all contributed. They happened over coffee, tea, cookies, and sometimes (to my chagrin) with no goodies at all. The point is that they happened. People coming together in service of God, prepared to give of their time, talents, and treasure to fulfill our mission.

The Session, Deacons, and Staff all love serving this family, and we appreciate everyone's input to better reflect God in everything our family does. I would encourage each of you to join the conversations and be part of the discussions. Your ideas to make our Corner for God a reflection of God's love to our community are so important. I'll see you in a doorway.

*Blessings – Darryl †*

## Worship & Music

*by Andrew Cardiasmenos – Director of Worship & Music*

We have recently enjoyed some remarkable musical events at FPCC in the past couple months.

The choir concert was dedicated to making Jesus a priority during the Christmas season, and it was clear that the Holy Spirit conveyed this message brilliantly through the choir. I was truly proud of the choir's hard work and dedication that led up to a very well-sung program.

A few weeks later, we also were honored and blessed to host the African Children's Choir as a part of their "Just As I Am" tour! It truly was a pleasure working with the staff, meeting the kids and hearing their stories. Everyone who attended the concert was instantly inspired by the choir's enthusiastic spirituality in song and dance! It was also amazing to see our sanctuary full for their concert. Many thanks to everyone

involved in preparing for the choir's arrival, including host families, coordination of volunteers, publicity, finance, and providing meals.

As we approach the Lenten season, which begins on March 6<sup>th</sup> (Ash Wednesday), we are called to pray, reflect, and meditate as we devote our lives to God. We are reminded of God's grace and love as we anticipate Jesus's passion on the cross to save us and look forward to his glorious resurrection. Hymns, praise songs, and anthems play an important role in setting a contemplative tone throughout Lent and a mournful tone during Holy Week. I encourage you to attend our special services, such as Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, to participate and build a deeper relationship with the Lord. Finally, stay tuned for triumphant Easter music accompanied by guest brass musicians!

A couple months later, near Father's Day, the choir will select favorite anthems from the year and feature them in our annual "Pops Sunday," and there will also be a Spring Concert this year. The date will be announced very soon.

Goals for the upcoming months include updating our hymnals, new improvements in our lighting system, and a Sunday school class or series on contemporary music and meaningful worship. Of course, I continue to encourage anyone who has an interest in singing and glorifying God to join our choir and our worship band! We also welcome our recent addition to the FPCC Praise Band, **Josh Maitland** on guitar and bass!

I thoroughly enjoy working with everyone here at First Pres and look forward to many more years to come!

*Andrew †*

### FPCC Staff

Darryl McCollum	Certified Lay Pastor
Andrew Cardiasmenos	Director of Music & Worship
Rebecca Chase	Director of Community Care
Robin Stearns	Preschool Director
Judith Snider	Interim Admin Assist
Lisa Gonzalez	Administrative Coordinator
Susan Soehner	Organist
Harold Lund	Custodian & Night Watchman

African Children's Concert Bus in Front of FPCC



## *FPCC Leadership Retreat*

*by David Dowell*

Each year in January your Elders, Deacons and Staff attend a weekend leadership retreat. This year's retreat was held on January 18-20. As in the past several years, it was held at San Damiano Retreat, a beautiful hilltop retreat in the hills above Danville. The purpose of these retreats is to provide an opportunity for Elders and Deacons to celebrate the past year, encourage one another, and set goals for the upcoming year. This year the main objective was to focus on our personal roles as leaders in creating a Godly environment in our church in anticipation of getting a new pastor in 2019. The title of the retreat was "Servant Leadership".

Let me begin by saying every year it seems that we end our leadership retreats saying how great they were. This year is no different. I think this was the most spirited retreat we have ever had. The singing was louder, the enthusiasm seemed greater, and the sharing was more than I have ever seen at a retreat. Much of the credit for even having this retreat goes to Lay Pastor Darryl, who convinced us that we needed to have a retreat even if we did not have a permanent pastor on-board to direct it and participate.

Credit also goes to Rebecca Chase, who was key to making the retreat successful. She organized everyone into small groups seated at separate tables that worked together throughout the entire weekend regardless of

topic. A spokesperson for each group would summarize the group's ideas and share them with the big group. She also helped everyone gain a better biblical focus by showing two videos in the "Follow" series by Pastor Andy Stanley.

Another important contributor to the success of the weekend was Ann Johnson, who developed a set of several very thought-provoking and challenging devotionals and led the group sharing that followed. Marilyn Wollenweber and Jim Whitfield also helped throughout.

In planning the retreat, my small contribution was to suggest a topic that focused on what we want our church to be like when the new pastor comes, in particular, what each person's commitment should be to make that happen. Well, you know how things go at FPCC. If you suggest something you generally end up having to take charge of it. It was indeed my pleasure to do that. I got a lot of value from it.

For my topic each person was asked to read in advance of the retreat an article titled "What Can I do to be of Help to My Pastor and Church" to get biblical framework for our discussions. Throughout the weekend people gathered their thoughts while referencing the reading assignment. Then, the small groups deliberated and consolidated all their thoughts for presentation to the larger group. Everything was written

on a chart by our scribe, Jeremy Martin, while Darryl officiated. Finally, each person was asked to write a letter addressed to our new pastor (whoever that might turn out to be) and tell what they will do to help him or her and the church. This was to be a homework assignment, and I have just distributed to everyone a list of all of the ideas the group developed as a reference for their own commitments.

One of the fun but amazingly informative highlights of the weekend was an exercise led by Jon Myers called the "Quadrant Game". It was a game that had each person move to a series of different locations in the room based on Jon's questions, eventually revealing what type of leader they were. This fascinating exercise revealed to each of us not only what type of leader we were, but who else represented your leadership tendencies. Importantly, it also revealed what types of leaders other people were.

In addition to these activities plus officer training and other activities, there was time for fellowship, games, and really getting to know the new Elders and Deacons taking office in 2019.

Last, but not least, thanks goes to Beth Byrne and her amazing energy communicated through her music and musical direction. Her contribution was priceless. She played the piano and led the singing before each and every session. Beth, you are such a blessing! †



## From the Desk of Rebecca Chase

Director of Community Care

### Small Groups

“Living into our calling to follow Jesus by gathering into small groups to love, pray, and care for each other, disciple each other on our spiritual journeys, and serve our community together.”

See the schedule of current weekly Small Groups at right:

- *Remembering the Forgotten God: Reversing our Tragic Neglect of The Holy Spirit*, by Francis Chan. 6-7 week DVD curriculum examining the “true source of the church’s power.” This course is “designed to help us move beyond our habits of neglect and pursue a life defined by the Holy Spirit.”
- Lent starts on Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday Small Groups will be starting weekly devotions or studies the following week.

We are currently keeping our subscription to “The Wired Word,” a curriculum which takes the latest news stories and uses supporting Bible passages to work through current issues. It is “ready to-go” for someone who has wanted to get together with folks and talk about the news with a Biblical lens. Your house or ours!

### Children’s Worship & Education

In December, we invited families to a Parents’ Night Out. We had fun with five children, as we scavenger hunted, obstacle-coursed, beaded, glued, cut jello shapes, sang some carols, and told the story of Jesus’ birth. I am so grateful for our dedicated adult helpers who contributed in so many ways.

Our Nursery is starting to grow! Lynn Justice needs another helper! Find me or Lynn on a Sunday morning and we’ll give you a ministry of the greatest joy! Thank you to Kristin Harvey for giving Lynn a Sunday off once a month.

For February, Children’s Worship theme is learning ways that Jesus shows he loves us. From the story of

### Small Groups Meeting Schedule

Wednesdays <i>Forgotten God/Lent</i>	6:30 pm	Fireside Rm	Rebecca Chase
Wednesday bi-wk <i>Ephesians/Lent</i>	7:00 pm	Clayton	Jim & Marilyn W
<b>Other Bible Study Groups</b>			
Tuesdays (men)	6:45 am	Digger’s Diner	David Dowell
Wednesdays <i>“Ephesians”</i>	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Fireside Rm	LaVerne Herren
1 <sup>st</sup> Thursdays (women Circle IV)	11:00 am - 2:00 pm	Varies	Anna Belle Horgan & Joanne Myers
2 <sup>nd</sup> Mondays <i>“Daniel”</i>	10:00 am - 1:00 pm	Fireside Rm	Catherine Longoria
<b>Life Groups (monthly)</b>			
First Fridays (Under 40s) <i>Theol./Art/Culture</i>	6:00 pm	Harvey House	Eric & Kristin Harvey
Merry Macs <i>Fellowship &amp; Service</i>	Varies	Varies	Bill Selb
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sundays The Crew	11:00 am	Room 205	Ann Johnson & Jeremy Martin

the Good Shepherd, to hearing the Psalms, the children will feel great joy to know that he knows us by name! We will be developing the Sunday morning Worship time curriculum for March (and beyond) to include the elementary students more fully. Keep your eyes peeled!

The Youth group, called “The Crew”, is official! With three youth so far, an amazing curriculum (“Dares from Jesus”), loving adults, and a fabulous youth room, more will follow. They meet on the second Sundays for fun and study, and on the forth Sundays to “hang with Pastor D” at Peet’s or Starbucks. Your prayers and encouragement are welcome!

### Prayer and Healing

Continue to pray for:

- Pastor Nominating Committee! 6pm Mondays
- Sunday morning Prayer Team in Prayer Room – needed.
- A NEW Prayer Walk schedule: now Quarterly third Saturday – next one is March 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Join the walk to bless our neighborhood

Please get in touch with your Deacon if you are heading to the hospital, need prayer, need communion, or want to keep your church family updated on anything. Your Deacon is such a wonderful resource! If you don’t know who your Deacon is, please call the office, or **Carrie Smith**, our new Deacon Moderator. Please note – there have been a few changes: we have a whole new Parish and many new Deacons! Jim Allardice has been INVALUABLE to the office and the Deacons in getting new organizational frameworks started. And he is a terrific form-creator.

### Outreach Activities

**Advent Breakfasts:** from December 2-23, were well attended by a mix of residents of The Heritage Plaza Towers, FPCC, and hungry folks in the area. We had an average of 38 people sign in each week, with about 13 on average from the Heritage Towers. We are researching interest in another breakfast for Lent.

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**Activity Calendars:** created for the visitor mugs, have been highly popular. Presently gathering information for February/March calendars. What is your ministry team doing?

**Welcome Notes:** which had been a solo outreach by Ann Keirns using the attendance and Welcome cards,

is something anyone can do. If visitors are writing their address, we need to be reaching out! Please contact me to help!

#### **CLP Training**

I have started my Commissioned Lay Pastor classes as of January 11-12. I will be in class at the Presbytery office in El Cerrito on the second

Friday night and Saturday of each month through this year, and a couple of classes next year. I am happy to tell you about them! My first class was called Missional Ecclesiology: how to be "church" through mission.

*Rebecca* †

## **Updates on Mission Activities**

### **Giving Tree**

The Giving Tree was a blessing to five families in our community. Thank you to all who brought gifts or Safeway certificates to help the families celebrate Christmas. Fifteen children and nine adults enjoyed the fruits of your generosity. Most live in Interfaith Housing complexes. Seventeen members and friends of the church gave Safeway certificates and twenty provided gifts (some took two names), which were delivered by David Dowell. The families and Mission team are grateful for your participation.

### **BARM Toy Drive**

Bay Area Rescue Mission holds a Christmas party each year for homeless and needy children. As usual, FPCC served as a drop-off point for other churches and individuals in the Concord area, leaving their gifts in collection barrels during the Christmas season. A hearty thank you to everyone who contributed toys. The children truly enjoyed the gifts, and for some this may have been the best part of their Christmas. We thank the Lord for BARM's willingness to help needy people and particularly for reaching out to hundreds of children and families at Christmastime. We pray that BARM will continue to receive the support needed to continue their great work.

### **2018 Christmas Offering**

FPCC collected \$1,488.00 for Medical Benevolence Foundation for the Darbonne Maternal Child Health Clinic they support in Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. Many mothers and children in Haiti live in poverty and have very limited access to health care. As a result of this lack of access to health care mothers and children are at great risk. For every 100 births in Haiti, 25 newborns will die before they are one month old. These deaths can be prevented through access to maternal health care. The Darbonne Clinic will greatly benefit from our contributions by providing more antenatal care, in-patient delivery services, immunizations, nutritional therapy, pediatric care and family planning services. Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas offering! Please continue to pray for this valuable ministry.

### **December Homeless Dinner**

Great thanks to all those who helped with the December homeless dinner. We served ham, potatoes, vegetables and salad to more than one hundred people at the Concord homeless shelter. This was a very popular meal, not often received by these folks. Special thanks go to those who helped with the cooking. Some stepped up at the last moment to pitch in when we needed help!

Keep your eyes open to volunteer for the next Homeless Dinner on March 30. Help is always needed!

### **Winter Nights Homeless Shelter**

This year's Parking Lot Program has been open for 4 weeks, and is more successful than last year. We hope to raise funds to have it available through April. People living in their cars can park overnight in a security-guarded parking lot with access to bathrooms and light breakfast provided, as well as the facilities (laundry, showers, and support services) at the Oasis Center in Bay Point. Folks living in their cars (not just those with children) can sign up by contacting Bill Shaw, program manager for Winter Nights, at 925-435-2074. If you are interested in donating money, breakfast bars or individual fruit juices, you can send or take donations to the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County at the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church at 1543 Sunnyside Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA, 94597.

The Executive Council has just announced plans to extend the season again for 2019-2020.

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## News Briefs

### The Crew

We have a new small group at FPCC called The Crew. They have been meeting for the last few months.

The Crew meets at 11:15am the second Sunday of every month in room 205. Second Sunday is for talking, crazy games, some crazy food and some time for the Word.

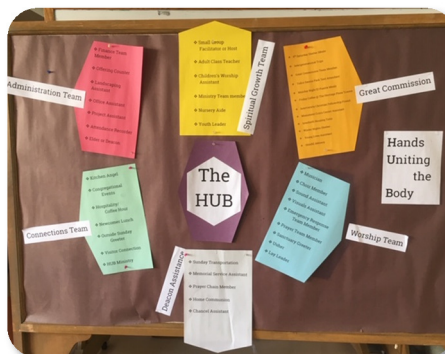
The fourth Sunday of the month is "hang out with Pastor Darryl" time. The group goes to a local coffee shop and spends time with The Crew and Pastor Darryl for casual talking and having a hot beverage.

There will be some special activities occasionally on Friday nights. This group is specifically for middle school and high school students.

Anyone who wants to join or knows of someone who wants to join, call **Ann Johnson** 676-4330 or **Jeremy Martin**. †

### The HUB

Directors *Marilyn Wollenweber and Jim Whitfield*



You may have seen the big bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall that sports the visual representation of "The HUB". This position was created to provide a resource for inviting, recruiting, and asking church members to become fully devoted followers of Christ specifically through serving. We work with the Church staff, Ministry teams, Elders, Deacons, ministry partners, and the congregation.

We will be asking for volunteers periodically as needs arise, so

please see where you can serve. We hope that everyone in our church will serve in some role during the year. It can be for just one hour, or whatever time you have available. This is your chance to serve our Lord and show your love for Him, our campus families, and our community. †



### Musicians Wanted

.It's a fresh year, and the praise team is looking to begin a rotation of musicians to help us worship our Lord in song. If you play an instrument and/or sing, enjoy contemporary worship music or adding flare to traditional hymns, then we want you! Praise team rehearsals are at 6pm on Thursdays. For more information ask **Andrew** or **Darryl**. †



Our corner for God took another step in December. Three churches, Casa de Dios Roca de Jacob (CDRJ), Iglesia Bautista, and First Pres combined for a Friday family night with Christian DJ 'Joaquin'. Music was played, games ensued, pizza was eaten, and fun was had by all. There were a dozen people aged 4 to 56 that really enjoyed each other's fellowship. We hope to do another family night soon and get even more people and additional churches to attend.





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
C O N C O R D

1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

**Change Service Requested**

## ***First Press***

**Deadline for Apr. 2019 Issue:  
Friday March 22**

*Thank you for your contribution.  
Submit all news in writing. Digital  
photos are also welcome as long as  
we may use them on our website.  
Please contact the church office  
with address changes!*

### ***Office Hours!***

Monday, Wed. & Thursday  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Tuesday  
11:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Closed Friday

### ***Mission Vision & Values***

#### **Our Mission:**

*Love God, Love People ... Serve*

#### **Vision:**

*As a community hub, connect  
with the needs of people, joyfully  
sharing Jesus and serving where  
God calls.*

#### **Values:**

*Guided by Scripture and prayer,  
we are a welcoming place  
where people, service,  
and God's love meet.*

*Focused on hospitality,  
inclusiveness, and spiritual gifts,  
we worship God with delight.*

*Unified in Jesus Christ,  
we are led by the Holy Spirit  
to invite, engage, and share  
God's Truth with each other,  
our community and the world.*

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## Annual Meeting of the Congregation – Feb. 17

Join us for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, after church on Sunday February 17<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall. A light lunch will be served. All members and regular supporters of FPCC are urged to attend. This will be an opportunity to review the 2018 Annual Report, hear about the current "State of the Church" and explore the future of FPCC. We hope to see you there!

### ***First Press Distribution***

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