

Pastor Johanna is Here!



We made it! Dogs and all! And we are so happy to be here.

First off – because it has been five straight days of the most beautiful clear blue summer skies.

Secondly, because our dogs turned out to be relatively good travelers, only on occasion getting so frustrated that they felt the need to sit on one another. (See photo below.)

Thirdly, because people have been so good about lending us their homes during this first couple weeks as we wait for our more permanent housing to work itself out. (Susan Koester's washer and dryer almost brought tears to our eyes: clean clothes, yes!)

Fourth – all the people we've run into around town looking for office furniture or getting to know the local masters swim team with connections to First. We've felt known and appreciated because this place is known and appreciated.

Fifth – First's staff, who have been so very patient with my various poppings-in this week and quick to help me with scanning documents and just generally figuring things out.

Sixth – First's lay leaders, who have been absolutely wonderful, supporting Michael and myself as we make our way through the perils of home ownership in this area. We truly could not have done it without them.

And seventh – because we have had such a strong sense of God's care and Providence in this place and at this church this first week in Concord, and are so looking forward to the official start of our life with you!

God's peace and blessings,
Pastor Johanna

Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner comes to FPCC from Trinity Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, MO. For more information about Pastor Johanna and her family, visit our website at www.fpccconcord.org/2019/07/31/introducing-pastor-johanna/

Please join the PNC in welcoming Pastor Johanna and her husband, Michael Coyle, on September 8, 2019 after church service in the Fellowship Hall.



From the Desk of Rebecca Chase

Director of Community Care

Groups Gathering This Fall ~

Weekly

Small Groups

(Wed 6:30pm starts Sep 25th)

Fireside Room - *Christ in the Psalms* (3 wk) *Horizontal Jesus* by Tony Evans (6 wk)

Rebecca Chase (858 805-5874)

(2nd & 4th Wed 7pm starts Sep 11th)

Clayton - *Churches of the New Testament*

Jim W & Marilyn W (672-2250)

Men's Bible Study (Tues 6:45am)

Digger's Diner, 1895 Farm Bureau Rd. - studying *2 Samuel*

David Dowell (914-0429)

Adult Activities

(Tues 9:00am-12:30pm)

Fellowship Hall - Tai Chi, Knitting/Crocheting for NICU & Veterans. Copper Enameling, Dominoes & Mahjong, Singing 3rd Tues, low cost lunch 1st & 3rd Tues.

Susan Stanley (510-512-4032)

Bible Study

(Wed 1:00-2:30pm)

Fireside Room - *Book of Acts*
LaVerne Herren (682-3882)

Mission Sewing Group

(Thurs 10am-2pm starts Sep 12th)

Fellowship Hall - Bring a lunch! Ladies service seamstresses & quilting group. Beginning sewers welcome

Valerie Gardner (689-1455)

Al-Anon Group (Thurs 12:10pm

until 1:00pm) - Fireside Room

Family of Alcoholics support group

Community Bible Study (CBS) -

(Starts Sep 4th)

Joshua, Christian Leadership, Christian Living

(Wednesdays 9:15am-11:15am) -

Women, Children, Youth **Lynn**

Menegus lmenegus@comcast.net
(Thursdays 7:30pm - 9:30pm) -
Men, Women, Youth **Diana**
Riveness aumtdi5@comcast.net

Monthly

Circle IV

(1st Thurs 11am-2pm starts Sep 4th)
Women's Bible Study and Lunch,
Location Varies *Angels, Standing*
Guard

Anna Belle Horgan (685-5595) &
Joanne Myers (825-9684)

First Fridays

(1st Friday 6pm-10pm): Harvey's
House, Concord Young Adults
Art/Culture discussion

Eric & Kristin (617 584-8919)

Adult Fellowship & Bible Study

(2nd Monday 10am-1pm) - Fireside
Room *Daniel* - Bring a lunch!
Catherine Longoria (685-1577)

Merry Macs

(Saturdays or Sundays, Location
Varies) Christian fellowship
group, with ministries

Bill Selb (672-6393).

Children's Worship

New Curriculum!

Growing in Grace and Gratitude

We invite you to grow in grace and gratitude with your children this year! When your children are at church, they will gather to explore and respond to God's grace and be sent out to love and serve God by being: • rooted in the foundation of Presbyterian identity where God's grace and our gratitude are the heartbeat of our faith, life, and worship; • invited to discipleship that inspires them to learn and practice hospitality, generosity, and love; and • encouraged to reach beyond Sunday mornings

and church walls to live their lives as an expression of God's grace.

When your children are at home, use these tools to explore God's grace and gratitude each day:

- **Grace Sightings:** the weekly Bible story with age-appropriate activities for your family to do at home.
- **Audio Recordings:** the weekly Bible story brought to life by endearing readings and sound effects.
- **E-book:** the quarter's colorful illustrations, Bible stories, and Grace Sightings in iBook and Kindle formats. Find these tools at: www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads

Thank you for entrusting your children to us. With combined efforts of church and home, you and your children will enjoy growing in grace and gratitude together this year.

Leaders: September - **Rebecca Chase**, October - **Nanci Powers**, November - **Carrie Smith**

Assistants: **Ann Johnson, Hilda Rodriguez, Marie Asistin, Abby Ford, Sheila Frey**

Children who choose to stay in the worship service may enjoy a special bulletin just for them. They will find puzzles, games, and activities to do based on the theme of the Sunday reading.

FYI ~ I have now completed seven of my 12 required classes for my Lay Pastor training. This last one in August was very hard: We had to learn about the Old Testament in a 10 hour overview! DeVonn Powers, Ruth Mejia, Carlos Flores and I appreciate all your kind words of encouragement!

Rebecca



Helping Those in Crisis

by the Great Commission Team

Summer How do we at First Presbyterian Church, Concord help those in crisis?

We provide financial and some material support for the following **groups**:

SHARE Food Pantry is a local non-profit located at 3039 Willow Pass Road in Concord. SHARE is staffed and run totally by volunteers. Donations come from the local community. SHARE offers Emergency Food to those in need in the community. They are open 4 days a week from 10 am to 2pm. Closed on Thursdays and holidays.

Since 1965, **Bay Area Rescue Mission**, a large and effective Richmond-based organization has provided spiritual and physical help to thousands of individuals and families in need, emergency basic needs of food and a clean, safe place to sleep. It also offers discipleship programs, including drug and alcohol rehabilitation, Bible studies, job skills training, and mobile outreach with food, clothing, and furniture. Led by John and Debra Anderson, BARM reaches much of the Bay Area. We have supported them financially for many years.

Humanity Way, located at the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, aspires to restore humanity by providing for people's basic needs (i.e., housing, employment, food, clothing, mental health services, etc.), whether disadvantaged, in a crisis, or in need of emotional or psychological healing. Though located at a church, they are a non-religious organization.

For many years FPCC provided financial support for **Rev Charles Tinsley** in his role as Chaplain at the Juvenile Detention Center. Following Rev. Tinsley's retirement

we are now supporting his successor, **Rev. Julius Van Hook** in that role. Rev. Van Hook guides and counsels young people, bringing many to Christ, helping them to separate themselves from gang culture, and urging them to complete their education. He continues Tinsley's program of support for some attending college.

Both at home and abroad, **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** works through local churches to provide help and financial support in crisis situations. We have sent money in support of earthquakes in Haiti, fires, hurricanes and flooding in the United States the past two years. (Bridge Pastor Keith Geckeler spent some time in Ohio this year.)

We also support **Young Lives**, which works with pregnant teenagers and young mothers on the Olympic High School campus, providing counselling and encourages mutual support, introducing many of them to Christ.

Some of our help is more hands on. A number of us have worked on projects at the **Monument Crisis Center**, which provides food, counselling, special training, school year and summer programs for children and youth, an annual backpack giveaway, and a place where immigrants can get help and advice to work through the complexities of the process toward citizenship, among many other special programs, reaching thousands of people each year.

FPCC has worked over ten years, partnering with **Interfaith Housing**, to help homeless families reach a stable way to live. Starting by furnishing an apartment at **Garden Park**

Apartments, we have helped take kids bowling, hosted a bar-b-que, and provided a special Christmas for several families a year. Support activities include a full time social worker and a Homework Club, and a greatly helped by volunteers. The program has expanded to include other apartment complexes in Concord and Bay Point.

Winter Nights, also affiliated with the Interfaith Council, provides temporary housing for homeless families through 2 week stays at central and east county churches. We pitch in as co-hosts at other churches, as well as contributing financially. The organization has managed to expand their program, originally only from October to May to now begin in September and close in June, and has also started a Parking Program during the coldest months for those living in their cars.

Many of the programs for homeless have joined together in the **211 Project**, where people calling that phone number can be connected with the program best able to help with their individual situation.

Lastly, we provide food at the local **Homeless Shelters**. For years folks from FPCC have prepared and served dinner every month on which there is a fifth Saturday at the Concord Shelter for Adults on Arnold Industrial Way. The last several years, we have prepared and served meals at the **Mountain View Shelter for Families** in Martinez several times a year.

The Great Commission Team relies on volunteers who do the hands on portion of the work and thanks any who have lent a hand or provided donations over the years. Thank you! †

Gifts for Our Missionaries

October 27th and November 3rd

You can purchase gifts from \$5 to \$40 that can be used by the missionaries we partner with. For two Sundays, you can buy a gift card for someone on your Christmas list. From \$40 to send a child to Christian camp for a week, to a \$ 20 lantern for a household in Northern Ethiopia

that doesn't have electricity to a \$5 SIM card explaining who Jesus is. Every gift will help.

This is how it works: You purchase the gift card (by check only please), and we give you a card picturing the gift and a Christmas card for sending

which will say "In (your) name, (gift) has been sent to...".

For more information, contact **Susan Lawson** at 285-4430.



A Sort of Farewell

Rev. Dr. Keith Geckeler

When I started working with the PNC two years ago, I had no inkling that my relationship with First Concord would grow into a friendship and affection that would catch me off guard.

It's been 25 years since I was involved in the day to day life of a minister's relationship with a congregation and had no plans to ever again do so. While I had 20 wonderful years in the parish, I really loved being a Stated Clerk and working with congregations in a multitude of supportive capacities. So when it became obvious last winter that with Toby gone, you needed someone who could step in and calm anxieties and be the person "where the buck stops" and be of support to the staff—I figured "I can do that". And after being loved on and welcomed by the

PNC for 18 months, it was a delight to find the whole congregation was like that. Hence, I want to thank all of you for making the past 5 months such a joy for me. You have hospitality down pat and have truly become a "lay led congregation". I shall cherish my time here as among the most enjoyable of my ministry.

And now, a charge to the congregation with a new pastor coming. Don't change anything. Just be yourselves. Welcome her into your hearts and lives. Invite her to "splash in your little puddles of joy." Let her be your pastor. Grant her the freedom to make mistakes—and forgive and forget them. Cherish her wisdom—and share your wisdom with her. Remember she has a home life. Send her personal



cards. (You have no idea how pastors' cherish written words of support, encouragement, affection – finding out how they've touched your life!) Pray for her. Tell her to go home when she's working too many hours. Let her know what you need. (They don't teach mindreading in seminary.) Bring dog treats for her dogs. And remember, even a pastor sometimes feels like a frog and needs a kiss!



Clayton Valley Village

Clayton Valley Village has expanded their boundaries for membership and services. It is a virtual village run by members and volunteers to assist older adults to stay in their homes longer. The boundaries now include the Concord voting districts 1 and 5. The Village is run by a 9-member Board of Directors, of which Jim Whitfield is president. Marilyn Wollenweber is the chair of its Member Services committee. At present there are 36 members and 37 volunteers, some of whom are both members and volunteers.

The Village is one of many throughout the United States. There are over 40 villages operating in California alone! Clayton Valley Village is active nationally, locally, regionally, and in the state.

The Village offers Circles of interest, both educational and social, that meet monthly or quarterly. There are mixers held at various local restaurants monthly as well. Volunteers are ready to help with simple house maintenance, yard work, and transportation.

There will be an information gathering at our church on September 25 from 6:30-8:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Come see what the Village is all about and meet some of the members and volunteers. Coffee and snacks will be offered during the information presentation.

If you have any questions, feel free to talk with **Jim Whitfield** or **Marilyn Wollenweber** at church or call us at 672-2250.



The Choir is Back!

Andrew Cardiasmenos, Director of Music & Worship

The choir kicked off our season this past Sunday with a beautiful communion anthem on Darryl McCollum's last regular Sunday preaching, and is planning a powerful anthem to welcome and celebrate the arrival of Pastor Johanna next week. We are excited to be singing in worship once again but also anticipating

our annual October retreat in Bodega Bay, which is always a valuable experience as we look ahead at Christmas music and share lots of fellowship together.

As for worship, I am excited to collaborate with Pastor Johanna and look forward to new inspiration for the congregation as

a result, both with music and prayer.

If you are interested in joining the choir, or are just curious, contact me. We would love to have you!

Andrew



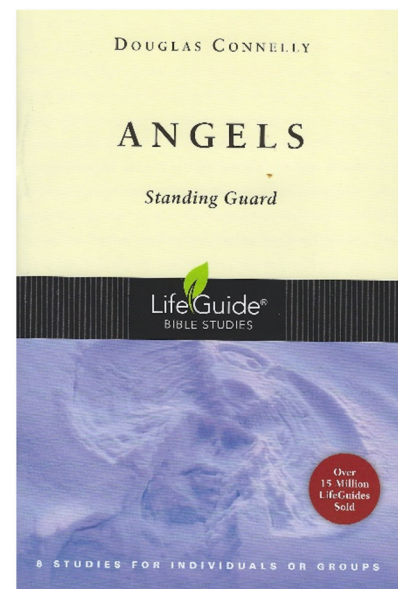
Circle IV Bible Study "Angels, Standing Guard"

Circle IV resumes on September 5th with a new LifeGuide Bible Study, "Angels, Standing Guard".

There is much misinformation about angels in popular thinking and stories. Learn what the Bible says about these marvelous beings, both the holy kind of angels and the evil kind, and understand the wonderful ministry that God's angels have in our lives.

Circle IV meets at 11am on the first Thursday of months September-May for Bible study and lunch at members' homes. **Diana Stearns** hosts the first meeting of the 2019-2020 season. For more information, women may contact **Anna Belle Horgan** at 685-5595 or **Joanne Myers** at 825-9684.

New members welcome!



Keep Safe from Email Scams

Excerpt from "Church Law & Tax" Article

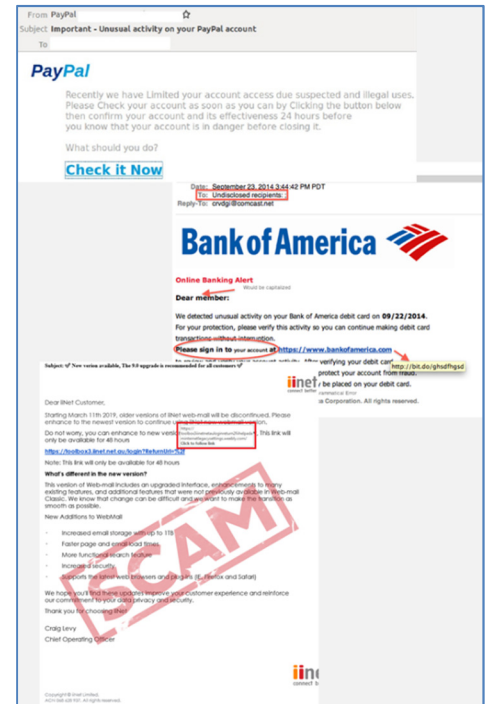
Scammers are now targeting worshipers in a gift card scam, warns the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Posing as a pastor or other church leaders (through an email that looks familiar and legitimate), these scammers ask worshipers for gift-card contributions to a good cause. The FTC explains:

The imposter asks you to buy a popular gift card—frequently, iTunes, Google Play, or Amazon—and then asks for the gift card number and PIN on the back of the card. Those numbers let the scammer immediately get the money you loaded onto the card. And once that's done, the scammer and your money are gone, usually without a trace.

Encourage congregants to closely evaluate emails that appear to come from a church leader by carefully looking for some typical warning signs. "For example, the email address isn't the one normally used by the church, and the service provider is different, too. The message may begin with a simple 'Hi,' but doesn't include a recipient's name. There also may be spelling errors, including the pastor's name," says the FTC.

Note: We have already experienced a few of these scam emails pretending to be from different people here at FPCC requesting we purchase Game Stop gift cards. Please know that you will never receive anything like this from our church or any of our leaders.



Thinking about Commitment Sunday – November 3rd

Vern Hance – Stewardship Team

Some of you may be relieved that we changed our Stewardship Emphasis Sunday "name" from CONSECRATION to COMMITMENT.

Consecration is a good word, meaning a Sacred activity, but it sounds like so many similar words that I'm paranoid every time I type it that it may turn out to be a different word. COMMITMENT is also a good

word because it means "Dedicated to a Cause".

As we approach Commitment Sunday this year we will be emphasizing how being dedicated to the work of FPCC in God's Kingdom can change things in the world - sometimes small, but sometimes big as we follow our Mission: Love God, Love People, Serve!

This is an important time for FPCC as we welcome Pastor Johanna as our new Pastor and embark on new goals. Please pray for guidance in how you support FPCC's Mission in 2020. And keep the meaning of Consecration (Sacred) and Commitment (Dedicated to a Cause) in your mind as you do so.





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
C O N C O R D

1965 Colfax St., Concord, CA 94520

Change Service Requested

First Press

Deadline for Nov/Dec/Jan Issue:

Monday, October 28, 2019

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!

Open Weekdays

10:00 am to 4:00 pm

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.

Praise in the Park

Saturday September 7th Starting at Noon in Todos Santos Plaza

Featured artists include Justin McRoberts, Sherri Youngward and Miles Minnick, along with 12 of the best local Christian artists, including our own FLOCK scheduled to perform at 12:43pm. Praise in the Park (PITP) is a FREE Christian Music Festival and a hub for community services. Through our collective Faith, Love and Service of churches of many denominations; PITP partners with local charities in our community and pair those in need with valuable services. Come and join us as we witness for Christ in the public square.

First Press Distribution

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