

FIRST PRESS

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

Autumn 2021



"They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes." (Mk. 5:1)

This resource's title, *Crossing the Sea*, is drawn from Mark's story of the Gerasene demoniac, a man

whose condition resembles what we might call Severe Mental Illness. In Mark's version of the story, the man is living among the tombs. No one can control his wild behavior, though the scripture relates that many people have tried: "He had often been restrained with shackles and chains" (Mk. 5:4). Night and day the man howls and bruises himself with stones. When Jesus asks his name, the man answers, "Legion, for we are many" (Mk. 5:9).

For pastors today in urban churches, this troubled man who "lives among the tombs" is no stranger. Not infrequently, people like him show up on the church doorstep during the weekdays or on Sunday at worship time. They seek help with the burdens of having no permanent home (being unhoused or

unsheltered) and also living with Severe Mental Illness (SMI)...

So begins the resource 2MIpeople has created for East Bay pastors interested in learning more about how to support people who are both unsheltered and living with Serious Mental Illness. Covering topics such as why there are so many people with Serious Mental Illness in the unsheltered community, how to come alongside members of this community as they seek to set goals and make changes in their lives, and where to go to help them find the practical resources they may need to support these changes, *Crossing the Sea* came about through a partnership with the Presbytery of San Francisco and academics serving in U.C. Berkeley's Department of Psychology and School of Social Welfare.

Michael and I hope that our East Bay colleagues will find it helpful in their work with this community. We also invite interested members and friends of FPCC to check out the resource at

2mipeople.org/resources/.

-- Pastor Johanna

2MIPeople Inc. is a mental health education and advocacy nonprofit Michael Coyle and Pastor Johanna established in 2016 in Saint Louis. Current projects include 2MIPeople Clinic, slated to open soon and offering low cost, high quality psychiatric medication management services, and a program designed to train pastors in the basics of Motivational Interviewing, a conversational technique proven to help people seek out and sustain healthy life changes.

Staying in Touch with FPCC:

2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Average Sunday Attendance	n/a	n/a	n/a	53.75	65.4	66	77	69.2
Average Online Service Views	111	126	131.5	91	78.6	65	67	59

2020	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Average Sunday Attendance	109	110	98	Closed - SIP	Closed - SIP	Closed - SIP	Closed - SIP	Closed - SIP
Average Online Service Views	n/a	n/a	174	175	130	145	126	140





**Dear FPCC
Family,**

It's wonderful seeing so many faces in church every Sunday! We continue to offer our online

worship services for those unable to attend, and no matter where you are worshipping, I know the Lord brings us all together as a family in Christ.

For the time being I have decided to postpone the return of the full choir, to be extra cautious about the Delta variant with so many singers in close proximity. We appreciate your patience during this time. Currently we are featuring a quartet but if all goes well in the next month or so, an octet or even a small choir might be possible again. Stay tuned for more updates soon.

In the summer we did consider bringing back the Sing-Along Messiah in December, and we were eager to do it, but without the choir in session now, unfortunately timing is limited. Instead, we will make plans for a Messiah in December of 2022, and hope for a simple but effective choir concert this Christmas, featuring our singers in a variety of settings and honoring the hard work they have accomplished this Fall. Once again, thank you for understanding and being flexible during these times.

Evelyn McCollum, our sound engineer and production engineer for the past year or so decided to step down recently, due to new time commitments in her work life. She truly did an

amazing job with the sound, excelled at post-production during lockdown, and helped us bridge the gap between online and hybrid services.

As we move forward, Pastor Johanna's husband Michael is now mixing our services in person and online, and so we welcome him in! We are excited to have him on board. Ashley McCollum also might fill in as backup from time to time, and we welcome her as well! Please be patient as we navigate this transition.

Earlier this month we also brought in Rob Schweizer, a professional sound engineer in Concord, to help recalibrate our sound board and repair a few issues we were having, and he did an amazing job! We are grateful for a clearer audio experience as we worship the Lord.

In other news, Darryl McCollum is putting together an exciting special worship service on September 26, a tribute to Show Tunes! The service will feature our praise band Grateful Heart and a few choir members singing songs from *Godspell*, *The Prince of Egypt* and a few other shows. It will be a wonderful opportunity to worship God with another style of music! Hope to see you there.

As the pandemic continues to progress in a positive direction, I foresee many more exciting changes in the world of Worship and Music in the near future.

In Christ,
Andrew Cardiasmenos

IHS In His Steps: Pathways of Peace



It was so good to be with you for several weeks and participate with you in person in beautiful worship together (although I'm very thankful for weekly YouTube connections too). I

travel a lot and it's hard to feel at home and connected across the miles.

My journey began while serving as an Elder of World Missions in a PC(USA) church. Our goal was to find ways to connect, grow, and serve around the world as we follow Jesus together. It was 21 years ago when I first visited Jerusalem and began to discover God's calling on my heart. When you find a place to serve it changes you and deepens your faith with daily dependence on God for guidance and provisions.

I began to facilitate short-term mission teams to take pilgrimage visiting Holy and historic sites. Our trip experiences were unique as we took time to meet local people, hear their stories and discover the greatest needs. Our purpose is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, quite literally on location, with daily reflections of how God would have us respond to what we encounter today.

This is how IHS, In His Steps: Pathways of Peace, was born and continues with your loving support. In 2005, members from FPCC came on our pilgrimage to the Holy Land to meet the people we are working with. We are hopeful that some

of you may decide to come for yourself and experience the richness of Scripture that comes alive with every step.

Now, it feels like we are finally coming out of a long slumber from Covid as we re-establish new plans for our cancelled and delayed projects, workshops and training. Please keep in your prayers my return this fall, to be on the ground as we launch the first phase of our pilot project for Breast Cancer Patient Navigation in the Hebron district.

I would like to introduce you to our IHS Palestine Director, Mahmoud Badawi who I have worked with for more than a

decade. He would love to come and meet you, but he has not been able to travel outside of Bethlehem and surrounding area, not even 5 miles away to Jerusalem in more than 20 years.

So, he waits for you to come and see him while he waits for permission to visit here.



Mahmoud is with a new medical student, Saif, who was a high school exchange student in my hometown of Lennox, SD a couple of years ago. Saif is now a first-year medical student at Polytechnic University in Hebron and is ready to help with our Patient Navigation program as we develop the cultural translation. As our project manager, Mahmoud recently met with Saif to introduce our BCPN program to the Dean of Polytechnic University, Dr. Fawzi Razem for collaboration in developing the needs assessment, metrics criteria and process for our pilot project.

Our prayer is that you will join us as the hands and feet of Jesus, either in person or virtually, to bear witness and share the experience of discovering God's truth through action.

With much Love and many Blessings,
Christy Reiners
Executive Director
In His Steps: Pathways of Peace

FPCC Small Groups

1 Corinthians 14:26

What then, brothers? 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.

FPCC, as do most Christian churches, has a long history of offering group bible study and person-to-person interaction to share and interact with each other. Here's a sampling of those that are currently active and contact information for those who might wish to join one:

Circle 4

Women's book study and lunch group. Meets first Thursdays September through June at 11 AM-1 PM. Meeting on Zoom. Contact Anna Belle Horgan (925) 685-5595) or Joanne Myers (925) 825-9684

This month Circle 4 added a note from Joanne Myers:

Circle 4 Bible Study on The Ten Commandments

Circle 4 resumed for the 2021-2022 season on Thursday, September 9, at 11 AM. We will start a new Presbyterian Women/*Horizons* Bible study: *Love Carved in Stone, A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*, by Eugenia Gamble. Plans to meet in person at FPCC's Fireside Room are subject to change back to virtual meetings on Zoom if made necessary by concerns about COVID-19 variants. New members welcome. We meet on the first Thursday of the month with leadership shared by the group.

Clayton Small Group

Adult Education book/Bible study group. Meets Mondays at 7 PM on Zoom
Contact Jim Whitfield (925) 672-2250 or Marilyn Wollenweber (925) 672-2250

Friday Morning Prayer Circle

Corporate and individual prayer time. Meets Fridays at 10 AM on Zoom. Contact David Dowell (707) 751-0738

Merry Mac's

Fellowship and social events. Meets periodically throughout the year. Contact Bill Selb (925) 672-6393

Theology on Tap

Adult Education multimedia study group focused on topics at the nexus of theology and social issues. Meets Sundays at 7:15 PM on Zoom with occasional in-person events in the Fireside Room or local restaurants. Contact the church office (925) 676-7177

Quilters' Group

Making quilts and blankets for charity, all skill levels welcome. Meets Thursdays at 10 AM-2 PM in the Fellowship Hall, bring a brown bag lunch. Contact Carrie Smith (925) 676-7761

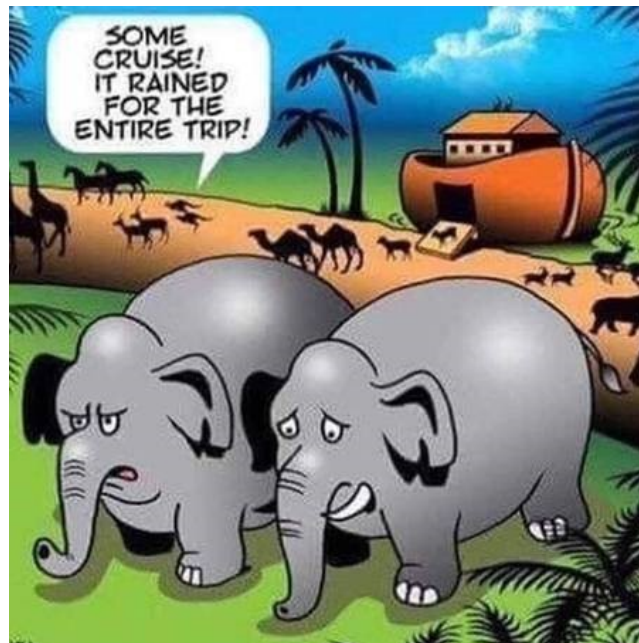
Tuesday Morning Men's Group

Men's Bible study group. Meets Tuesdays on Zoom. Contact David Dowell (707) 751-0738

Wednesday Small Group

Adult Education book/Bible study group. Meets Wednesdays at 7:30 PM on Zoom. Contact Judith Snider (925) 695-5736

We are so looking forward to having rain this season. But maybe not too much . . .





September

Daryl McCollum	3	Carla Thompson	15	Wayne Matzen	23
Carol Young	4	Gary Beck	19	Rebecca Chase	23
Josh Maitland	6	Jim King	19	Casey Fribley	24
Sue Hooy	11	Ramona Watson	20	Diane Innocent	24
Susan Koester	12	Laurie Gomez	21	Ruth Mejia	25
Linda Fribley	14	Karl Stanczak	22	Paul Baretta	28

October

Bill Selb	1	Carrie Smith	6	Kimi Dowell	21
Pamela Hester	1	Kime Smith III	8	Jim Wagner	29
Frank Fribley	1	Lisa Gonzalez	9	Abby Foster	30
Hilda Rodriguez	3	David Dowell	15	Larry Wright	31
Maren Stanczak	4	Ayako Rose	15		

November

Jean Yeager	2	Lee Borden	12	Lew Thompson	19
Bill King	5	Glen Arnold	12	Carlos Flores	22
Cecil Kaffy	6	Jerry Johnson	15	Lorraine Coleman	24
Pat Olsson	7	Mark Siddall	16	John Hartwick	26
Karen Ulrich	7	Ruth Stevenson	18	Jim Whitfield	26
Brian Mickelwait	10	Erik Johnson	19		



“God walks with you every day, guiding you, and supporting you. All you have to do is to open your heart and let him in! May this birthday bring you more blessings from God.”

From the Archives . . . In the beginning

Our Church has a long and inspiring history here in Concord. Here is a blast from our past . . .

In 1882, the desire to establish a Protestant Church in Concord was expressed. The Congregationalists, who had conducted a Sunday School in the local schoolhouse, felt they could not assume the responsibility at that time, and waived their rights when the Presbyterian denomination offered to organize and care for a church. The Reverend Duncan Monroe came to Concord, and on October 14, 1882, a church was formed. John Brawand, William Caven, and E. J. Jaquith were elected trustees, and Mr. Monroe, pastor.

On November 22, 1882, the trustees organized with Mr. Caven, President, Mr. Brawand, Treasurer, and Mr. Monroe, Secretary, and on December 30, 1882, the church was incorporated. The first important business was the erection of a church. M. Beebe, John Sherman, and Duncan Monroe were appointed a Building Committee. At a meeting on November 27, the following motion was carried: "The building committee is instructed to see builders and consult with them as to the erection and cost of a plain and commodious place of worship."

On December 8, the committee reported favorably, and the trustees entered into a contract with Ludden and Marsh of Martinez to build a church, according to specifications, to cost \$1,250. This church was built on Galindo Street on a lot donated by Samuel Bacon, merchant and Concord's first postmaster. It was dedicated on March 18, 1883. It seems wonderful to us now, that in less than six months a church was organized and a building erected and dedicated.

FPCC Staff

Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner
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Lisa Gonzalez
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Director, Children and Family Ministries
Director, Outreach
Director, Music & Worship
Director, Special Musical Services
Preschool Director
Director, Adult Education & Church Administrator
Financial and Human Resources Specialist
Custodian & Night Watchman



Editor's Note: First Press is a quarterly publication of the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California, printing in Early Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Members of the Congregation and others may submit articles for publication no later than the month prior to a publication date. FPCC reserves the right

to review all articles for content and value prior to publication. Comments or questions may be directed to Allen Nickerson at allen_nickerson@comcast.net.