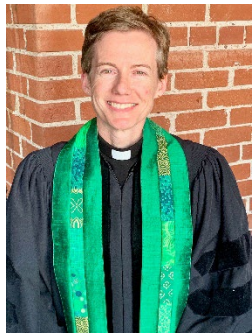




# FIRST PRESS

The Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

February 2022



think it is!

No one knows what you mean when you do this. You are like a bugle whose sounds are so indistinct no one hearing them realizes they're supposed to be getting ready for battle. Or a flute whose song no one can recognize. You may be building yourself up, but you aren't doing anyone else in the church any favors.

According to Paul, it would be far better for the church if everyone were to focus on prophesying, as those who prophesy speak intelligibly, again according to Paul, and for the benefit of other people: to build them up, encourage and console them.

At our February session meeting, we did a Bible study on 1 Corinthians 14:1-12, the section of the letter in which Paul basically says, speaking in tongues is not as great a thing as you Corinthians seem to

Now, I want to assure you – my purpose in having session talk about this passage was not to emphasize to them the importance of speaking intelligibly, as if this were a problem for them. We have a great session at this church, full of thoughtful, articulate people. Rather, I wanted us to consider some of the themes we might touch upon during a Leadership Retreat focused on Communication.

I wanted us to see that scripture has a lot to teach us about what it means to do communication well and also poorly. I also wanted us to consider whether it would be valuable for us a leadership team to do some skill building around communication, e.g., brushing up on things like active listening, while also learning new skills, like how we as leaders can amplify our church's social media messaging.

It was a great conversation with session – as always! – and the decision was made to go with Communication as this year's theme at the Leadership Retreat. I look forward to seeing FPCC's leaders there!



## Music and Worship Report

It was truly a memorable Christmas season for music, especially after recovering from

the virtual 2020 season. The choir worked tirelessly on their concert, and our guest soloists and instrumentalists helped create a spiritual and magical experience. The choir brightened up the season by singing Christmas carols to local families, and Grateful Heart livened services with upbeat songs. Finally, the Christmas Eve service was inspiring for all who came to worship, members and visitors alike.

Just when we thought things would continue to turn around, we began this calendar year with the Omicron wave of the pandemic, and for a short period of time, we reversed the cycle yet again. Unfortunately, to keep everyone comfortable and safe, the choir went on another break.

In the meantime, we have featured Grateful Heart in services more often. The band recently taught the congregation a new rock song Darryl wrote, *Courageous*, supporting Pastor's sermon series about stepping out into the faith no matter what the people say.

While we don't have a date set in stone yet, as numbers improve and restrictions are lifted, I know the choir will start up again soon. We will keep you posted for sure. Either way, we will feature some sort of special music for

Holy Week and Easter, and include a few guest instrumentalists and vocalists too.

As we approach the Lenten season, which begins on March 2<sup>nd</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 in 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!

Goals for the upcoming months include reincorporating the choir, teaching more songs to the congregation (traditional and contemporary), and fundraising for our next Christmas concert.

Of course, I continue to encourage anyone who has an interest in singing and glorifying God to join our choir and our worship band!

I thoroughly enjoy working with everyone here at First Pres!

In Christ,  
Andrew

## **News from the FPCC Session . . .**



### **Moderator's Report**

#### **Testimony/Devotional**

#### **Clerk's Report**

Darryl will be filling in for Nanci Powers as she recovers from her surgery. The annual statistical report that will be sent to the Presbytery was acknowledged.

#### **Moderator's Report**

Pastor Johanna provided an update on the LiveControl and Church Marketing projects described last month. These projects have been delayed due to Covid and will be started soon. In the meantime, the Sunday services will be pre-recorded for YouTube on Thursday nights. The part-time sound technician being utilized for Sunday has been dismissed because the members of the team for the Sunday service have been trained to handle sound.

Plans for the upcoming Annual Meeting were discussed and speaking assignment made. The Annual meeting will be conducted on YouTube on Sunday, February 20 at 1 PM.

The theme of an upcoming Leadership Retreat (date to be determined) will be "Communications."

The changes in the State and County Covid rules on the wearing of masks was discussed extensively. Since the meeting, a member of the church has come down with Covid, so masking will be mandatory for the Worship service until further notice, and extra caution is advised for everyone. Further information will be provided by email or by announcement at the service.

#### **Connections**

Jim Whitfield pointed out activities listed on the Church's event calendar for the year. The Committee's immediate focus is to prepare for the "reopening" of the church and the need to provide coffee and refreshments. Volunteers to help out are needed.

**Finance**

David Stearns reported that the offering for January was below what was anticipated, but pointed out that the January offering is usually lower than other months.

**Personnel**

Jon Myers shared his Annual Meeting presentation exhibits in support of a motion to approve the Pastor's compensation for 2022.

**Property**

David Stearns reported that the two inoperative furnaces in the Sanctuary have been replaced. He also reported that the solar system installation began February 15, and it is anticipated that it will become operational by May.

**Missions**

The Missions team recommended that the Easter offering be designated for Medical Benevolence Foundation. MBF provides medical services and trains healthcare workers in a number of underserved countries. Members of the Committee met with Patrick Coughlin, Vice President of Partner Engagement a week ago and were convinced that it is a worthy cause. FPCC has been supporting MBF for over 30 years.

**Worship and Music**

Sunday, March 6 is being targeted for special music at the church service. Choir practice remains suspended for the time being due to Covid, but things may change. At this time no plans have been made for a special Easter concert. There may, however, be outside musicians featured at the Easter service.

**Notice from the Association of  
Psychiatrists**

**Dear citizens,  
During the quarantine it is considered  
normal to talk to your plants and pets.  
Kindly contact us only if they reply.**

**Thank you**

Happy Birthday!



**MARCH**

Jason Stanczak	2	Helen Crowe	5	Ed Stevenson	5
Ganbaatar Dulamjav	18	Laurie Koester	18	Ronald Potts	21
Diana Stearns	23	Isobel Erickson	28	Ginny Schwab	30

**APRIL**

Marge Hull	1	Suren Auysh	6	Vern Hance	6
Lori Vickers	6	Grace Lenz	16	Chuck Rose	21
Michele Young	25	Jonathan Aanestad	30		

**MAY**

LaVerne Herren	1	Pat Mickelwait	1	David Stearns	6
George Roush	7	Evelyn McCollum	9	Lily Spencer	11
Don Colvin	15	Charlie Grant	21	Carly Ryerson	21
Harold Lund	24	Phyllis Graser	26	Mike Frey	27
Fran Wagner	27	Nanci Powers	30	Emily Selb	30

## 2021 Memorials

*One of the glories of our faith is confidence that those who end their time with us, are enabled to carry on with the next part of their existence as they take their places with Christ in a life everlasting. So, although we mourn the loss of friends and family members, we must simultaneously take joy as they enter into heaven. Here are our friends who left us this year to join others who have gone before them . . .*

**Kathy Brock**

03/03/1955 - 10/04/2021

**Lee Culemann**

05/03/1936 - 05/12/2021

**William DeWitt**

03/16/1937 - 08/18/2021

**John Hartwick**

11/26/1929 - 12/27/2021

**Don Ome**

11/09/1932 - 02/20/2021

**Linda Phillips**

02/06/1945 - 01/11/2021

**Gary Rowe**

06/05/1935 - 05/02/2021

**Howard Stutzman**

04/13/1933 - 04/30/2021

**Kathy Sundquist**

03/13/1947 - 05/19/2021



## Biographies

Beginning this year, *First Press* will be inaugurating biographies of church members in recognition of their time and service to the church. Beth Byrne has graciously accepted the opportunity to provide insight into the lives of our church family. The first edition of **Biographies** remembers **JOHN HARTWICK**, who left us this past December.

It is with great sadness we say "good-bye" to John Hartwick, a faithful, contributing member of this church for 50 years, joining our fellowship with wife Geri in 1971.

John was born November 26, 1929 in Illinois and passed away on December 27, 2021, at the age of 92. He was a Korean War veteran, settling in the East Bay, eventually ending up in Walnut Creek where they raised two children, Paul and Kathleen. Kathleen was born with cerebral palsy, but moved about with her walker and greeted all with her warm smile. Paul was active in the youth activities at the church.

John served our church as an elder for many years and, as a sheet metal worker, his skills were put to good use in chairing the Property and Management Committee. He and Gary Rowe began the inquiry into solar energy. His work evolved to being a union business agent, Local Union 104. He contributed to elder discussions, always attacking the problems head on.

Geri died in 2008 and John found another loving companion in Kami, a nurse. They married in October 2012 and moved to Antioch. Kami cared for him through a broken hip and a stroke and all the ensuing therapy, but she could not overcome the damage to his brain after a devastating fall early in December.

John was a Job-like character. God gave him many challenges and heartaches and he never complained. Kami was the blessing for his later years. They were married by Bill Azbell in our sanctuary. They loved to travel in their motor home, visiting sites in California and Oregon. Their honeymoon trip took them for one month in 2013 to Scotland and Ireland.

Following his stroke, although unable to attend church services regularly, he was able to visit a few times, to his delight. Deacons were able to take communion to him and Kami many times.

John was an honorable man and we celebrate his life!!! He had a heart of gold, responding to friends' concerns with phone calls and prayer. He wore his heart on his sleeve. His spirit lives on in the vibrant history of this church. Thank God for his life and commitment to this congregation that he loved with all his heart!



**Here's our latest on the solar from your Solar Team: David Stearns, Jon Myers, Frank Fribley, and Jim Whitfield**

Solar panel installation has finally begun for FPCC. Footings are installed, the rails are installed, and soon we will see 97 panels on our roof over the Fellowship Hall and the preschool. March will see the conduit piping and electrical connectivity and cabling gear installed. In April our contractor will begin testing and monitoring the system. Working with City of Concord and PGE, we will apply for contingent operation. We hope to have our final inspection and approval by the end of May in time for full solar for the summer and the next 30 years! We will have cut our electrical bill by over 50%.

**FPCC Staff**

Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner	Senior Pastor
Rebecca Chase, CLP	Director, Children and Family Ministries
DeVonn Powers, CLP	Director, Outreach
Andrew Cardiasmenos	Director, Music & Worship
Darryl McCollum, CLP	Director, Special Musical Services
Robin Stearns	Preschool Director
Lisa Justice, Student Pastor	Director, Adult Education & Church Administrator
Lisa Gonzalez	Financial and Human Resources Specialist
Harold Lund	Custodian & Night Watchman



**Editor's Note:** First Press is a quarterly publication of the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California, printing in 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](mailto:allen_nickerson@comcast.net).