



FIRST PRESS *EXPRESS*

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

March 2022



***Lord Have Mercy* by Michael W. Smith**

As we continue on our Lenten journey, we are called to pray, meditate, reflect, and forgive by emulating Jesus. One powerful way we can center ourselves on Jesus and follow these principles is by glorifying the Lord through music.

Every year we introduce a new theme song to teach the congregation during Lent. By repeating the Lenten song every week, not only does it become more confident and familiar, but also allows for a deeper meditation on the lyrics.

This year we have been focusing on Michael W. Smith's *Lord Have Mercy*.

Michael W. Smith is a very prolific Christian songwriter, selling over 18 million albums in his lifetime and producing many modern hymns that have become important fixtures in today's hymnals. *Breathe, Awesome God*, and *Here I am to Worship* are all Smith's contributions to the church.

His catchy melodies are often classically inspired, while his rhythms and lyrics are fresh and modern.

Lord Have Mercy chronicles some of the major ways we miss the mark of God's heart in our humanity. In the first verse, Smith talks about times we trust false idols, doubt God's presence, and lose faith. In the second verse, Smith talks about greed, worldly pleasures and indulgences and how they bring him further from the Lord.

Finally, in the last verse, Smith is eager and hopeful to receive the Lord's forgiveness for his transgressions. The chorus is a simple prayer for mercy from the Holy Trinity, repeated several times to strengthen its meditative qualities like a mantra. Together, the song *Lord Have Mercy* as a whole serves as a confession and assurance of pardon.

We are reminded of the power of Jesus's forgiveness if we truly believe.

Amen
Andrew



Parents' Night Out: Great Success

Kindness was everywhere! From games to stories to craft activities, the fifteen friends discovered multiple ways to express kindness.

Children from age 7 months to eight years gathered for fun on Saturday March 26th from 5 – 8 PM while their parents took some hard-earned time off. The children were primarily from the Beginnings and Beyond Preschool that resides on our campus, or were past students.

The older children (3 ½ to 8) were in the Fireside Room and Fellowship Hall, where they talked and colored pictures about people being kind. They also heard a story called The Kindness Quilt, and saw and touched many different kinds of quilts. They got to design their own square for a big paper quilt, drawing a picture of someone being kind. The other activities were about making something for someone else: beading them a bracelet, and decorating a cookie (one for them and one for a friend). Cooperative games like balloon toss and cornhole were a hit, as well as musical games and taking turns.

The littlest friends (infants to young 3's) met in the "old nursery" – room 101/102 – which is where the Toddler group from B&B meet right now. They got to add to the quilt with their hands traced, and make special bracelets with cereal "beads!"

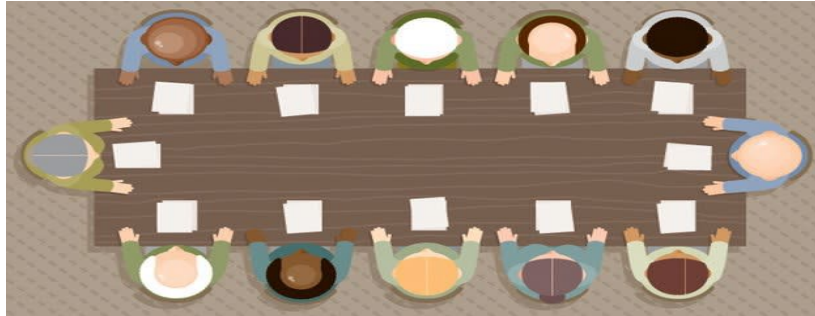
Special thanks to the volunteers: Marilyn W (for movement songs and organizing), Phyllis G (for the quilt story and making the quilt pieces), Jan S (for all the cookies and decorations), Darryl M (for the instant camera), Barbara M (for taking lots of pictures), Judith S (for being the administrator), Dave M (for muscle and food support), Jeanne (for cookie support), Ann (for infant support). Also, well done Paulina, for your first successful PNO with FPCC! Thanks for the "Be the I in KIND" idea!

Parents donated \$130 cash, plus at least \$140 contributions on Zelle. We are all very blessed.

Rebecca Chase,
Director Children and Family Ministries



News from the FPCC Session



Flag in sanctuary

Session reviewed the days it will be on display in the future. This information will be published in the Church email.

Covid Mask policy

A revised policy was presented, discussed, and passed to make mask wearing voluntary, but encouraged. Details will appear in the bulletin.

Children's Garden:

Beginnings and Beyond requested approval for the children to plant and maintain a garden. It was approved with the condition that it be properly maintained.

Connections Report

Jim Whitfield reporting. We need more volunteers to assist with serving coffee on Sundays. The Team is considering a large canopy to shade the courtyard for activities.

Finance and Personnel

Elders David Stearns and Jon Myers reporting. The Church offering continues to be below the amounts budgeted. The Finance Committee is considering what action to take.

Nominating Committee

Elder Darryl McCollum reporting. One Deacon and one Elder position need to be filled.

Property

Elder Josh Maitland reporting. The Solar Project team members have been meeting weekly during February and March. Work is continuing. The goal is to have all roof work completed this March for the Concord city engineers to inspect. Progress this past month:

- Footings and Railings installed,
- Electrical Work, Stringing, Electrical Gear Mounting, Wire, Conduit installed,
- Solar Panels partially installed.

Communications and Outreach

Elder David Dowell reporting. Current focus of the team is to promote small group participation. The team is planning promotion of our Easter program and activities.

Programs Report

Elder Ron Potts reporting. Mar 17 Choir resumes rehearsals. April 17 Easter Service, featuring the choir, 5 guest vocalists, 2 trumpets, and 2 trombones.

Outreach/Mission Report

Elder Carlos Flores reporting. The Easter Offering appeal is underway – Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF). Praying for the People, a Lenten sacrifice, has begun. David Dowell is seeking participants. Signups for 4 Spring Baskets for needy families with children have begun – See Susan Lawson.

Adult and Children Education

List of small groups and their topics:

- Monday night small group is reading and discussing Frederick Buechner's *Telling the Truth*. It is being led by Pastor Keith Geckeler.
- Tuesday Men's Bible Study is studying the book of 1st and 2nd Corinthians.
- Theology on Tap is commencing *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* and *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began*.
- Adult Sunday school will be reviewing the Book of Mark.
- SP Children Sunday School continues with Godly Play.

FPCC Staff



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