



FIRST PRESS EXPRESS

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

April 2022



Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

We just finished a joyous, triumphant Easter service at FPCC, complete with brass, a full choir with guest singers, and two songs from Grateful Heart! The church pews were quite full as the congregation exuberantly spread the good news of the glorious Resurrection.

It's only appropriate during this season that we take a moment to reflect today on the most celebratory hymn of our church calendar, *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*.

Christ the Lord is Risen Today is one of the most recognizable melodies in the Western church. For many, it simply would not feel like Easter without a rendition of this hymn as a triumphant opener. Almost all Christian denominations share the use of this hymn each year, making it one of the most widely accepted hymns in the Christian church. (The Orthodox would be one notable exception, with a different ancient melody for *Christ is Risen*).

The melody is extremely memorable and catchy, and the lyrics are joyous and celebratory, including its characteristic *Alleluias*.

All this said, this traditional Easter hymn has an interesting history that may not be super familiar to everyone.

When Charles Wesley first wrote the hymn in 1754, it didn't have any *Alleluias* at all! The original poem was eleven verses of four lines each, and the melody was quite different. It wasn't until the early 19th Century that the lines were reduced to six, and the *Alleluias* were added to conform the meter to fit the melody *Easter Hymn* that we all now know and love.

The *Alleluias* were initially not very well received by congregations, some complaining that 24 *Alleluias* were simply too many and unnecessary. Yet with time, people adjusted to the new hymn meter and melody, and it soon became the Easter classic as we know it today.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge all the amazing contributions from Pastor Johanna to Worship and Music during her leadership at FPCC.

Pastor Johanna improved our service live stream in so many ways, including sound engineering, video and camera quality, and post-production. With a strong musical ear and a keen visual perception, she dedicated hours of her time to make sure certain instruments came through in the stream and camera transitions were handled smoothly.

In addition, through her leadership, we now run slides using Proclaim software rather than a traditional Power-point, saving time, money, and resources.

Whenever she did have extra time, she sang in Grateful Heart and led praise songs beautifully. Thank you, Pastor Johanna, for all your tireless contributions to make worship and music an inspirational experience. We will all miss you greatly!

In Christ,
Andrew Cardiasmenos,
Worship and Music Director

IMPORTANT INFORMATION UPDATE: Look for information about the pastoral transition in the mail soon.

**Focus on the
Church Family**
ANN JOHNSON

Ann is our church's "Hostess with the Mostest"; you will find her wherever food is being served!! But she doesn't hide in the kitchen. There are so many reasons she is so very important to our church family.

Ann is the chair of the Connections Team. Her special focus is with the Congregational Care Committee, whose members plan and execute all the social activities of the church. She plans, shops, and cooks our meals with her sous chefs appearing unflappable in her executive chef position. Her crowning accomplishment was feeding 75 Presbytery guests a delicious beef dinner a few years back! Ann always gives generous praise to her committee: Margaret Bachman, Judith Snider, and Joanne Myers; Jim Whitfield is the elder representative. Carrie Smith, Kaffy Cecil, and Bev McHale can also be seen wearing aprons.

But that's not all you need to know about Ann. She joined the church in 1974 and has been an elder four times. In past years she loved being very involved in working with the high school youth, including 10 trips to Mexico. She was a member of the Pastor Nominating Committee that brought Pastor Johanna to us. She loves Bible study and always participates in the adult class on Sunday mornings, as well as midweek programs. She has been a member of Community Bible Study that has met here at church every Wednesday morning

for decades. As a Bible scholar, her questions and observations in group discussions are valued.

Ann grew up in Santa Cruz County and graduated from Sacramento State University with a major in wildlife biology. She married Jerry (PacBell engineer) in 1974 and moved to Concord. Going back to school at Los Medanos, she earned her nursing degree and worked as a pediatric nurse at the county hospital in Martinez for 35 years. Being a mother to Erik and Melanie was her favorite job until the grandchildren arrived! Jack, Leah and Brent Brinckerhoff live in Washington State and Charlie, for whom she babysits one day a week, lives in San Rafael. FYI, Melanie is married to Chad Brinckerhoff and Eric wed Jennie. Husband Jerry is a valued member of Beginnings and Beyond Preschool Board.

Ann is one of our church angels. Her devotion to God and her faithful service to each of us is commendable! Thank her for her unselfish hours of loving care and be aware of the gifts she shares with a warm smile week after week. Ann, you are God's blessing to each of us!

Beth Byrne
First Press Biographer

Summary of Session Meeting of April 19

Guest Attending. Rev. InHo Kim, Executive Partner for Congregational Vitality and Clergy Support at Presbytery of San Francisco, was in attendance.

Moderator's Report. Pastor Johanna led a discussion of the next steps in the transition towards a new pastor, which begins with a Mission Study. FPCC's existing Mission Study is fairly current and should only need to be reviewed and updated. Jon Myers, David Stearns, and Darryl McCollum volunteered to serve on the Mission Study Team, and one or two others will be asked to serve. The Mission Study is a required step before moving forward, and what we learn from updating the Mission Study will guide how we proceed. Accordingly, we are beginning that work now.

Discussion of interim pastoral leadership. Rev. InHo Kim assured our Session that the Presbytery of San Francisco will support FPCC during the transition period. He indicated that FPCC may want to consider retaining a part-time pastor or consultant to work with the church leadership through the transition period.

A motion was passed to authorize the Personnel Committee to initiate a search for a part-time consultant or pastor while CLP Darryl McCollum, CLP Rebecca Chase, CLP DeVonn Powers, and seminary student Lisa Justice work as a transition leadership team.

Deacon Report. Darryl McCollum reported that some changes in the Deacon organization are being contemplated. These will be discussed at next Deacon meeting.

Connections Report. Jim Whitfield reported on the pancake breakfast on Easter Eve. Over 70 residents of the Heritage and Towers attended. The Session expressed its appreciation to Ruth Stevenson and to Jim for helping make this a success.

Finance Committee. Elder David Stearns reported that the transfer of the church's accounting from Lisa Gonzalez to Linde Weber was nearly complete. He also presented a motion for the 2020 Financial Review prepared by David Dowell to be approved. He reported on plans for these reviews to be based more on the internal control aspect than on the numbers in the future.

Personnel. Elder Jon Myers moved that the pastoral relationship between First Presbyterian Church of Concord and the Rev. Dr. Johanna McCune Wagner be dissolved, effective April 30, 2022.

Communications. Elder David Dowell reported that Darryl McCollum will be joining the Communications Team as a replacement for Pastor Johanna. He further discussed the Leadership Retreat, which is scheduled for May 13-14, revised communications priorities, and the success of using new approaches for publicizing our Easter Sunday service.

Missions. Carlos Flores reported that the Easter Offering benefitting Medical Benevolence Foundation raised \$1648. He also reported that Spring baskets were put together and delivered to needy families. He also mentioned that the congregation gave enough groceries to provide several baskets of food for SHARE to distribute.

Nominating Committee. Darryl McCollum reported that, with the resignation of Nanci Powers from Session as the result of her heart surgery, the Nominations Committee now has 2 Elder positions to fill.

FPCC Staff

Darryl McCollum, CLP

Rebecca Chase, CLP

DeVonn Powers, CLP

Lisa Justice, Student Pastor

Andrew Cardiasmenos

Robin Stearns

Lisa Gonzalez

Harold Lund

Allen Nickerson

Director, Special Musical Services

Director, Children and Family Ministries

Director, Outreach

Director, Adult Education & Church Administrator

Director, Music & Worship

Preschool Director

Financial and Human Resources Specialist

Custodian & Night Watchman

Editor, First Press and *Express*



Editor's Note: *First Press Express* is a publication of the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California, printing several times each year.