



# FIRST PRESS EXPRESS

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

May 2023

## Parish Luncheon on May 21



By now you should have received from your Deacon a personal invitation to the annual Parish Luncheon that is scheduled for Sunday, May 21 following the church service. With the newly realigned parishes, this is a great opportunity to find out who is in your parish and fellowship with them. Four delicious salads and a dessert will be served, and there will be group activities for each table.

## Highlight on Missions – *Reaching Out to Our Community*



This is the first of a series on our Missions ministry. Future articles will focus on the individual ministries that our church supports.

Here are some of ways the church supports the needs of our community in addition to supporting our overseas ministries:

- Provide dinners for the financially insecure through several local community agencies
- Provide food items to SHARE for distribution to people living on low incomes
- Provide quilts to the Monument Crisis Center for distribution
- Conduct an annual winter blanket drive for those living in the cold
- Support local causes through Christmas or Easter offerings
- Provide Christmas gifts for families served by Hope Solutions through our “Christmas Giving Tree” project
- Support the community-wide “Winter Nights” program for the unsheltered
- Help fund the salary of the chaplain at the Juvenile Detention Center
- Partner with Monument Crisis Center
- Support “Clean Start Concord” with three other churches

## Featured Biography – Ayako Higuchi Rose



Ayako was born on October 15, 1929, in Anebetsu, Hokkaido, Japan to parents Kisaburo (father) and Teruyo Higuchi. All ten children were delivered by her father at home. She lived in Anebetsu through high school and completed two years of junior college before moving to Fujimicho in Southern Japan to work at her uncle's tailoring business.

## **Ayako (Cont'd)**

It was in Fujimicho that she met her future husband, Charlie Rose (whom most of us knew as “Chuck”), a career American naval chief (US Navy). The pair dated for three years before getting married on February 27, 1959.

Later that year the couple moved to their first home in Long Beach, California; future homes were in Seattle, WA, and Bremerton, WA. They also lived in Springfield, Ohio for five years, where Ayako worked as a seamstress and interior decorator, learned to drive, and became an American citizen on August 31, 1968. For seven years, Ayako had her own interior decorating business in Neptune, New Jersey making and selling drapery, canopies, and upholstery. She says that she has never forgotten her love of sewing.

In 1975 the couple moved to Concord, California, and Charlie was assigned to the Naval Weapons Station as safety director. (Ayako would often collect walnuts from the trees near the Weapons Station until it became prohibited). Ayako and Charlie then joined the First Presbyterian Church, and Ayako served the congregation in the kitchen, organizing kitchen cleaning days, preparing and serving snacks during Vacation Bible School (21 years), organizing memorial service receptions, and serving food and drinks after the Sunday service. She also served as a Deacon for three terms. She and Charlie made home visits to shut-ins and Charlie was a great pancake flipper! Ayako attended Community Bible Study for fourteen years and spent many hours tending her roses and helping neighbors with their gardening.

After 66 years of marriage, Charlie died in 2022. Ayako continues to greet us each Sunday morning with a big smile and warm words. Thank you, Ayako, for embracing our church with all your heart and for so generously sharing your love and energy. We will never forget you, Ayako!!

**By Beth Byrne**

## **Highlights of the April Session Meeting on April 18, 2023**



### **Consent Motion approved:**

Session reaffirmed March 31, 2023 e-Vote approving serving Communion on Maundy Thursday, April 6, 2023.

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

#### **Approvals**

Session approved the Session Minutes for March 21, 2023, and the March 31, 2023, Clerk's Report.

**Correspondence:** None

#### **Appointments**

Session appointed the following Elders to represent FPCC as Commissioners to the May 9, 2023, Presbytery online meeting: Jon Myers and David Stearns.

## Moderator's Report - CLP DeVonn Powers

1. Review of April 9, 2023, Easter Sunday worship service. Everyone gave high marks for the service and Easter activities. The registered attendance at the service was 121 people.
2. Mission Study Team Update – CLP Darryl McCollum. The Team is completing its final review of the report by carefully examining every slide in the slideshow. The final report should be ready for the May Session meeting.
3. Report on Adult Activity Center restart – CLP Rebecca Chase  
The Adult Activity group, which had suspended its Tuesday meetings during Covid restarted in the Fellowship Hall on April 18, 2023.
4. Report on “The Gathering” – CLP DeVonn Powers. “The Gathering” is a concept considered before Covid to initiate a Saturday night “gathering”, a worship service that appeals to young people and people whose jobs or activities conflict with the Sunday service. The project has been on hold because of Covid, and DeVonn announced her plan to resume work on this idea.
5. Update on new Internet Connection – CLP DeVonn Powers reported that she continues to negotiate and work with Comcast regarding installing a wired Internet connection to the Fireside Room/Fellowship Hall building. This will improve the speed and quality of email, downloads, and live streaming. She expects the discussions to be completed by next week.

## Reports

**Deacons** – CLP Rebecca Chase announced that the All-Parish Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, May 21. RSVPs need to be expected by May 15.

**Trustees** – The Session discussed the idea of including one of the Trustees as a part of the Session. This idea will be considered by the Nominating Committee next Fall.

**Finance** – Elder David Stearns presented a graph showing the pattern of giving month by month. Giving continues to lag behind last year. On another subject, he reported on problems with the account coding for expenses relating to church events. Often, either the expense request is not coded or is coded incorrectly. He asked that leaders and others submitting payment requests consult with him or Linde Weber about how the expenses are to be coded so that they are charged to the correct account.

**Property Management** – Elder David Stearns reported on the increasing cost of natural gas that may cause us to be over budget in our utility budget this year.

**Communications** – Elder David Dowell reported that work is being done on an updated membership directory. Darryl and Anna Belle Horgan are working together on this project. He also reported in the minutes, the First Press is in progress and should be out by the first week of May.

**Connections Team** – Elder Jim Whitfield indicated that we need to come up with a way to coordinate with the other churches on the use of the kitchen and also on cleaning responsibilities for the shared use. This issue will be addressed by the Connections Team and brought back to Session at a subsequent meeting. He also reported that he will be on vacation from April 19 to May 19 and has taken steps to ensure that there is coverage for the Sunday coffee times and that there are adequate kitchen supplies.

**Personnel** – Elder Jon Myers reported that the Interim Pastor Search Team is preparing the job description for the interim pastor position. When it is approved by Session and Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, the search team will conduct interviews with candidates. **(Editor's note:** Session approved the job description by e-Vote on May 1, and the first interview will be held this week).

**Program Committee** – In the absence of Elder Ron Potts, Elder Jim Whitfield reported that our office assistant, Jasmyn, has been asked to update the church’s music library information. This may involve retyping the information on all the church’s music files and would be a major long-term project. However, Elder Darryl indicated that he had seen the electronic files containing music on one of the office computers. He will locate them so that unnecessary work can be avoided.

Elder Darryl McCollum reported that the name tags that the ushers have begun making available on Sundays will be replaced by ones with the church logo on them next Sunday. The discussion led to the consideration of discontinuing the ushers maintaining attendance records and going back to the system of using the pads placed in each row to record attendance.

**Children’s Ministry** – CLP Rebecca Chase reported that it is becoming more challenging to find people to work with children, and because of the requirement for them to undergo background checks. Alternatives are being considered, and a few ideas were discussed.

**Outreach** – Elder David Dowell briefly reported on steps taken to promote the Easter Service. Attendance was about double our regular attendance. Three ads were placed in the Concord Transcript page in the East Bay Times and a continuous posting appeared in the Concord Patch. In addition, the FaceBook page interface managed by Darryl McCollum and the “NextDoor” neighborhood social communication site, brought in several new visitors.

**By David Dowell and Jon Myers**

**Merry Macs – Oakland A’s Baseball Game Outing, April 15, 2023**

The Merry Mac Ship is a fellowship group within our church that has social activities on a monthly basis from September to June. Everyone is welcome to join. Contact Bill Selb if you are interested.



**FPCC Staff**

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|------------------------------|--|
| Rebecca Chase, CLP           | Ministry Partner                         |
| Lisa Justice, Student Pastor | Ministry Partner                         |
| Darryl McCollum, CLP         | Ministry Partner                         |
| DeVonn Powers, CLP           | Ministry Partner                         |
| Andrew Cardiasmenos          | Director, Music & Worship                |
| Robin Stearns                | Preschool Director                       |
| Linde Weber                  | Financial and Human Resources Specialist |
| Harold Lund                  | Custodian & Night Watchman               |
| David Dowell                 | Editor, First Press and <i>Express</i>   |



**Editor’s Note:**

*First Press Express* is a publication of the First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California, printed several times each year.