



FIRST PRESS EXPRESS

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

October 2023

Harvest Festival – October 21



Mark your calendar for October 21 at 5 PM and plan to join your fellow church members for a time of great fellowship, fun, good food, and games. There will be pumpkin decorating for families and a pie-making contest, with delicious pies for everyone to enjoy afterward. Sign up at the reservations desk during the Sunday coffee hour or contact the office.



Many members joined us for a special brunch on Sunday the 17th of September for a day of welcoming people back to church from the summer, including the choir. Following the service, we gathered for delicious food that included egg dishes, fruit, pastries, and much more. The celebration included songs by the choir. It was also a day of welcoming new members into the church family.



New members, pictured from left to right, are Anthony “Santino” Delnero, Angela Salinas, Maria Salinas, Yaa Dabanka, Paula Wilkins, Duwana LeFaver, and Paul Roberds. Not pictured is Dawn Fiacco.

FPCC Choir singing at the Homecoming Sunday Brunch



Featured Members – Bill and Emily Selb



Emily Seib has been a member of FPCC for 60 years, having joined in 1963. Bill joined in 1967, just after their marriage. What a blessing they have been all these years! Bill is certain that it was God's plan that brought them together, and God truly works in mysterious ways.

The Selbs became members of the “Icebreakers”, an active single adult group at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. At a social gathering, Bill joined Emily who was sitting by herself, and after tasting his dessert he commented that he didn't like cheesecake. He says that when Emily replied that she didn't like cheesecake either, he knew he had found his mate. The rest is history, and their friends will attest that they still don't like cheesecake.

One week later they enjoyed their first date, a dinner and movie in San Francisco. It was December 3, 1966 (a date they, of course, celebrate each year). Three weeks later they were engaged, and on June 16 were married here at FPCC. Emily's daughter, Gina, became "Bill's daughter" and they now enjoy two great-grandsons, Weston (7) and Walker (4). In addition, Emily's mother was welcomed into their home for many years.

Bill grew up in Toledo, Ohio. Leaving Toledo University after three years, he joined his family in the Bay Area and earned a BS in 1959 from San Jose State. In 1972 he graduated from John F. Kennedy University with an MBA, receiving the Wall Street Journal Award for graduating at the top of his class. He worked for several companies as an accountant and then had a rewarding real estate career for 35 years.

Emily was born in Pittsburg, CA. She attended DVC and worked as an Escrow Officer for Western Title Company before serving as a secretary for a major accounting firm that served the medical profession.

As a team, they have been feeding the needy through Loaves and Fishes for over ten years, and they love to travel. They have enjoyed six cruises plus three luxury bus tours throughout the United States.

By Beth Byrne

Robin Stearns – Missionary Trip to Uganda



Robin Stearns is a devoted supporter of the “Raise the Roof Academy”, as are many members of our church. In July she returned from yet another 2-week trip to the Academy in Uganda, where she provided valuable training and assistance to 18 teachers. She utilized her extensive experience gained in part from managing and teaching at our own

preschool, “Beginnings and Beyond” and the Teacher Education Program she directs. “Raise the Roof Academy” was founded by our former church member, Marlene Mattoon Ssebulime, and her husband, David. Marlene serves as its Executive Director.

Robin gave an interesting slide presentation at FPCC on Sunday, October 1 that showed the current state of the Academy, which has grown immensely since its founding in 2011. She pointed out that the academy is known in Uganda for the quality of its teaching. She does plan on returning next year and asks for prayer as she begins planning. If you are interested in finding out more about “Raise the Roof” or its summer mission week, please check out www.raisetherooftacademy.org



Meeting Summary - September 19, 2023

Moderator’s Report – Rev. Carol Miles

1. Carol reported that she is doing a sermon series on worship this fall and making a couple of changes to the order of the Sunday service to clarify the focus on worship at the beginning of the service. The changes include moving the Call to Worship to after the prelude, moving the Passing of the Peace to after the Assurance of Pardon, where it goes liturgically since we pass the peace because as Christ has forgiven us, we forgive one another and show signs of grace and peace to one another. The announcements will move to near the end of the service. She plans to experiment to see what works best. Before making each change, Carol will deliver Sunday messages to teach about the importance of liturgy in the church.
2. Carol plans to call a gathering of all the tenants that use our facilities, so we can share information, including what our expectations are and how we can help each other. This will improve relationships with the other churches and organizations meeting on our campus.
3. The staff has met to brainstorm how to follow up on the recent retreat and utilize the information developed and lessons learned at the retreat. There will be additional reports about the progress of this effort.

Reports

Deacons – CLP Rebecca Chase reported that the Deacons have been discussing operational issues and concerns given the large sizes of the parishes. The Deacons are also considering how to balance what different deacons have been doing with what new 2024 deacons may do next year.

Carol added that this will include reviewing the Deacon model to facilitate members of their parishes caring for each other, rather than relying on the Deacons to do everything. Individual parishes will be encouraged to get together regularly to get to know each other better, to understand each other's needs, and to learn how they can help one another as a community.

Programs – Ron Potts reminded everyone of some of the upcoming events and announced that the choir has a new accompanist, Adrienne Johnson. He also announced that the choir will have a one-day retreat on October 14. In addition, training is being planned for lay leaders, technicians, and everyone involved in the Sunday service. Finally, Andrew is beginning his search for musicians for the Christmas concert in December. A discussion ensued on how to improve the coordination of the various church events so that they don't conflict with the calendar.

Connections Team – Elder Jim Whitfield shared that the Connections Team is improving cooperation with the other churches meeting on our campus and how the Connections Team tries to plan activities and events to benefit the congregation and to coordinate scheduling with other church activities. He reported on the recent events and announced those that are upcoming.

Finance – Elder David Stearns reported that committee chairs have been asked to submit their 2024 budgets by the October Session meeting. He stated that we are currently experiencing a monthly deficit. Carol added that she is very conscious of the need to take saving actions and has been making suggestions to the Finance Committee

Property – Elder David Stearns reported that the wiring project to improve Wi-Fi in the Fellowship Hall and Fireside Room has been completed and that performance is much better. He also reported on the updating of the phone system, and plans for the 5-year inspection of our sprinkler systems required by the Fire Marshall, on September 22.

By David Dowell and Jon Myers



FPCC Staff

Rev. Dr. Carol Antablin Miles
Rebecca Chase, CLP
Lisa Justice, Student Pastor
Darryl McCollum, CLP
DeVonn Powers, CLP
Andrew Cardiasmenos
Robin Stearns
Linde Weber
Harold Lund

Senior Pastor
Commissioned Pastor for Community Care
Seminarian in Residence & Church Administrator
Commissioned Pastor for Outreach
Commissioned Pastor for Urban Ministries
Director, Music & Worship
Preschool Director
Financial and Human Resources Specialist
Custodian & Night Watchman

David Dowell

Editor, First Press and Express

Editor's Note:

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