

FIRST PRESS

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

March 2024



... for a very special **Worship service on Easter Sunday**. We look forward to seeing you. Invite your friends and neighbors. We trust and pray that this day will be very special to you, your family, and your friends as you celebrate with all of us the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! The celebration will include special music featuring our choir and an all-brass orchestra.

Why is Easter the most important day in the Church year? The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the core of the Christian gospel. Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and hope are in vain (1 Cor. 15:14). Without the resurrection, there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The resurrection affirms Jesus of Nazareth as the prophesied Messiah and the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth. **Truly, this is a reason to celebrate.**



Palm Sunday Service & Reception of New Members	March 24	Sunday	10:00 AM
Maundy Thursday Soup Supper	March 28	Thursday	5:30 PM
Worship with Communion	March 29	Thursday	7:00 PM
Good Friday Prayer (Chapel)	March 29	Friday	12:00 Noon
Easter Sunday Worship	March 31	Sunday	10:00 AM
Children's Easter Egg Hunt	March 31	Sunday	11:15 AM



This year's Easter offering is designated to help cover the travel costs of two of our own missionaries who are planning to travel to Uganda this Summer and serve with "Raise the Roof Academy."

Robin Stearns and Chandra Collins will join a group of other volunteers to teach and help with the "2024 Summer Mission", which is expected to serve hundreds of students. They leave in late June.

The Easter offering this year is our way of helping them finance the trip. Each of them will need to raise about \$4,500, so our Easter offering will be a major fundraising effort in helping them reach their fundraising goals.

As most of you know, Robin serves our church by directing our preschool, "Beginnings and Beyond." Chandra partners with us in the area of food preparation and also operates a food ministry out of our church kitchen. She helps us with our food-serving events like our recent Annual Meeting and Lunch.

Robin has been going on mission trips to Uganda since 2015 to help and teach in this very large summer program that is held annually. Overall, 1,500 children are attending the school, so you can imagine how large the summer school program is. Many students are sponsored by supporters like us, but the summer school reaches many who are unsponsored and are the most needy. This year Robin will be teaching and helping to train teachers.

Chandra will offer her valuable culinary expertise by helping in the food services area by utilizing her extensive experience as an integrated nutrition coach, chef, and nutrition instructor. She should be able to contribute towards making positive changes in the health, life, and overall well-being of students and leaders alike.

"Raise the Roof Academy" was founded by David and Marlene Ssebulime, former members of our church. RTRA traces its history back to February 1985 when at the age of 6, David Ssebulime, co-founder of RTRA, was sent away from school for failure to pay tuition fees. Months earlier, David's father had died leaving the responsibility of caring for 11 children with David's mother. David's father was the sole income earner. Without the ability to pay, David, and his siblings, were turned away from school. At age 6, David started working menial jobs to earn tuition fees. David worked in a brick factory which was where the African Children's Choir found him and took him and his sister, Sarah, into their orphanage and child sponsorship program. David's other siblings did not have the same opportunity, so this inspired David, and his wife, Marlene, to start the "Raise the Roof" ministry.

Raise the Roof Academy students are living proof that education opens doors out of poverty, child labor, disease, and chaos. Its students come from families who often live on less than \$1 a day. It provides a free, high-quality education to children born in the most

remote communities of Uganda who, due to poverty and social pressures, would otherwise be cut off from the promise of education. (continued)

In making your offering, please give above and beyond your regular pledge. You may contribute by cash, check, or through Zelle. You may use the special Easter offering envelope in the pews. Indicate “Easter Offering” in the memo line on your check or in the comment space on your Zelle submission. We would like to have your Easter gifts by Sunday, April 7, but we will continue to accept contributions beyond that date.



January Meeting

Moderator's Report: Rev. Carol handed out a revised model for the ministry at FPCC. She also shared an updated church “master” calendar of activities for the ensuing new year. That calendar will be available online to everyone in the church to access using a link in the Friday email.

Routine business: Numerous end-of-the-year actions were taken to address budgetary issues, approve routine appointments, and other actions relating to starting the new year.

Property Management: Approved purchase and installation of a new air conditioner for the church office.

February Meeting

Moderator's Report: Rev Carol reported on the implementation of the master calendar and encouraged leadership to be sure to add activities to avoid conflicts and to ensure that they are anticipated and publicized in a timely way.

Nominating Committee Composition: Members for the 2024 Nominating Committee are Josh Maitland, Margaret Bachman, and DeVonn Powers, each of whom was elected by the congregation, and Elders Jim Whitfield and Jon Myers, who were appointed by Session. The sixth member will be appointed by the Deacons at their next meeting.

Session Appointed Trustee: At its February 27 meeting, Session appointed Jim Whitfield to serve a second one-year term on the Board of Trustees. Jim's appointment completes the four-member Board of Trustees for 2024.



Have you noticed the beautiful flower arrangements at the Sunday service over the past few months? A debt of gratitude is owed to **Elly Lopez King**, who has been creating these arrangements on certain Sundays in the absence of Linda Fribley and Kimi Dowell, both of whom have been unavailable for health reasons. Elly has not only created the arrangements requested by members but has made numerous additional ones on her own. Now you know who to acknowledge when you see these beautiful works of art in the form of flowers. Thank you, Elly. We appreciate you so much.

And do not forget. You can sign up to sponsor flowers to honor a loved one by signing up on the sheet in the Narthex and paying a small fee to help cover the cost of the flowers.



The Annual Meeting of FPCC was held on Sunday, February 25 following the Sunday Service. It was an incredibly special event this year and featured a delicious catered dinner provided by Chef Chandra. Almost ninety people attended.

Rev. Carol opened the meeting and Elder Jon Myers made a motion for the congregation to accept the Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting. CLP Rebecca Chase presented a summary of the major activities and accomplishments and referred everyone to the 2023 Annual Report containing reports of church committees. Elder David Stearns presented the annual financial report, a copy of which was in the booklet. There being no further questions, the congregation then voted to accept the Annual Report.

On behalf of the outgoing Trustee Chair, Frank Fribley, Rev. Carol opened the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. She then expressed appreciation for the service of retiring Trustees, Frank Fribley and Bill Selb and Session appointee, Jim Whitfield. An election of new Trustees was held, and the following were elected by the congregation: Elder Jon Myers (3-year term) and Deacon Anna Belle Horgan (2-year term). Continuing Trustee, Clayton Worsdell, was endorsed as President of the Board of Trustees. The fourth Trustee is appointed by Session for a one-year term. Session appointed Jim Whitfield

For your information, the Annual Meeting is actually two meetings, one is a meeting of the congregational body, and the other is a meeting of the non-profit corporation, consisting of the church Trustees. The separate corporation is a legal requirement and a requirement of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The Board of Trustees manages the property of the church, including accepting and executing deeds of title, leases and rental agreements, and related matters.

By David Dowell and Jon Myers

FPCC Staff

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

David Dowell

Interim Pastor and Head of Staff
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

Communications Chair and Editor of First Press

Editor's Note:

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