

FIRST PRESS

The newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Concord, California

July-August 2025



**We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed
“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by
their Creator with certain unalienable Rights...”**

—The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

Every Independence Day, Americans celebrate the gift of freedom—hard-won, handed down, and honored through tradition. But as followers of Jesus, we also reflect on a greater freedom: the one we have in Christ. Just as the founders declared liberty in the midst of conflict, so too can we declare our spiritual freedom, even in life’s battles.

1. Freedom Is a Gift

We didn’t earn national freedom; we inherited it. It was a gift. Likewise, our spiritual freedom was won by Christ. It was also a gift. Galatians 5:1 reminds us, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” His sacrifice makes it possible for us to live without fear, shame, or condemnation—and to extend that freedom to others. That was Christ’s gift to us.

2. Freedom Is Declared Amid a Struggle

The Declaration of Independence was signed during war, not after it. In the same way, we can declare our freedom in Christ even while life feels uncertain. Whether in hardship, doubt, or conflict, our freedom is secure because of what Jesus has done—not how we feel in the moment.

3. Freedom Is Celebrated with Joy

Just as fireworks and food mark our nation’s freedom, heaven rejoices when a soul finds freedom in Christ. Jesus tells us in Luke 15 that when the lost are found, there is celebration in heaven. We honor God when we celebrate salvation with gratitude and joy.

4. Freedom Is Lived in Unity

The Declaration begins with “We the people,” not “I.” Our faith is personal, but never private. We are one body in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27), called to live out our freedom in community—encouraging, forgiving, and serving one another in love.

This Fourth of July, let us remember that true freedom is more than a national value—it’s a spiritual reality. Christ has set us free. Let’s live that freedom with boldness, humility, and joy.

Amen.

By David Dowell



Sarah Cha is a missionary that our church supports. She will visit our church on July 20 to participate in our “Moment for Missions” and address the Sunday School class. This will be followed by a salad potluck lunch in the Fireside Room.

You are all invited to sign up for lunch at the registration desk during coffee time on Sundays. Please do so by Sunday, July 13, so that we can make the necessary food arrangements.

CRU is a major international Christian organization formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ. It focuses on evangelism and discipleship worldwide. Founded in 1951, CRU works to fulfill the Great Commission by spreading the Gospel and making disciples. She has been serving in a Middle Eastern country that she will identify in her presentations.

The core mission of CRU is to help fulfill the Great Commission, which means winning people to faith in Jesus Christ, building them in their faith, and sending them out in turn to win and build others. They aim to achieve this through various ministries, including campus ministries, city outreaches, partnerships with churches, and specific ministries like the Jesus Film Project.



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

COGNITIVE
BEHAVIORAL
THERAPY

“How to be Your Own Therapist.” The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy class continues each Monday evening at 7 PM in the Fireside Room. It is being taught by our own Michelle Badejo and Adam McDonald. Adam is a retired marriage and family counselor. This class will help to identify and change negative or destructive thought patterns and behaviors.

The class is not the same as going to therapy, but you may be able to put some of what you learn into practice in your own life. If you’re interested, please sign up at the table during Sunday coffee time or talk to Adam.

Adult Activities



On Tuesdays we have copper enameling, knitting and crocheting, and various table games. Doors will open at 9 AM. Please use the side gate entrance on Salvio Street. Coffee, tea, and snacks will be available.

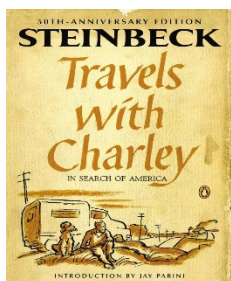
Men's Bible Study on Zoom



The Tuesday Men's Bible Study group is studying the Gospel of John. It meets at 8:00 AM on Zoom.

Contact David Dowell. Drdowell99@gmail.com

Wednesday Small Group



The Wednesday Small Group is on break until August. Members are encouraged to read "Travels with Charley in Search of America" by John Steinbeck and discuss the book when resuming in August. At that time the group will resume meeting in the Fireside Room. There is also a Zoom option. The focus will then be on what has not changed in America and what stands out to each person in the group. Contact Judith Snider.

Join the Choir or Band



If you're a music lover, we'd love to have your voice (or guitar, banjo, or whatever instrument you play) join us in worship! Both the choir and the Grateful Heart Praise Band are seeking new members. Contact Andrew Cardiasmenos for more details or visit a rehearsal to check it out. The band rehearses on Thursdays at 6 PM in the sanctuary, and the choir rehearses at 7:30 PM. Note that the choir is on break until September. Hope to see you there!

Mission Quilters



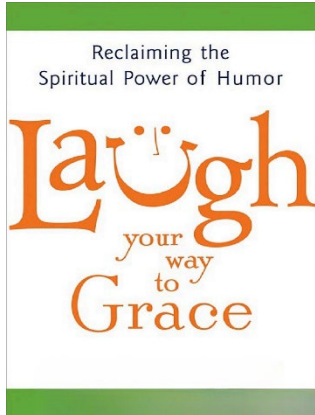
Join our Mission Quilters at 10 AM in the Fellowship Hall on Thursdays to make quilts for good causes. Bring a sack lunch. Contact Margaret Bachman.

Clean Start



On the fourth Saturday of the month, FPCC partners with other local churches to provide free laundry services for the unhoused at a local laundromat. This is a great volunteer opportunity for individuals seeking to make a positive impact in the community. See Judith Snider or Margaret Bachman for more information.

Book Review – Get Well, Concord



This summer, join Darryl and Judith as we read and discuss and laugh our way through this summer book club selection. We will be meeting on Sunday evenings in the church office from 7 to 8:30 PM, July 13th - August 24th.

You can sign up online at <https://bit.ly/getwellconcord> or with Judith during the coffee fellowship time after the service at the end of June and beginning of July.

Friday Prayer Circle



Join us Friday mornings at 10 AM on Zoom to lift up the needs of the Church, our congregation, families, friends, country, and the world. Contact David Dowell.



Utilize your talents by volunteering for various roles around the church, including greeting people, ushering, childcare, food service, gardening, repairs, teaching, event setup, administrative support, and more. Stop by the registration table during Sunday coffee and see where help is needed.



FPCC Staff

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

David Dowell

Interim Pastor
Commissioned Pastor for Community Care
Seminarian in Residence & Church Administrator
Commissioned Pastor for Urban Ministries
Director, Music & Worship
Preschool Director
Bookkeeper
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, printed several times each year.

Snapshots

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS
BIG BAND
DANCE PARTY



First Presbyterian Church - Concord
Coming Activities
July to October

JUL

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

7:00 PM Fireside Room. Regular weekly classes are being held on Mondays. Identifying negative thought patterns and behaviors.

JUL

MOVIE NIGHTS

7:30 PM in the Sanctuary on Thursdays, July 10,17,24 and 31. Movie is "The Chosen", Season 5. Discussion follows.

9
AUG

BINGO NIGHT

4:00 PM - 7:00 PM in Fireside Room. Public, including Heritage/Tower residents, are invited. Refreshments provided. Sign up in advance.

21
SEP

PANCAKE BRUNCH

11:30 AM in Fellowship Hall following the church service. Pancakes and much more.

18
OCT

HARVEST FESTIVAL

5:00 PM - 8 PM in Fellowship Hall. Themed party with decorations and dinner. Heritage/Towers residents invited.

JUN-
OCT

ADULT ACTIVITIES

Tuesdays at 9:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Crafting and games. Lunch provided on the 4th Tuesday.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Refer to the Friday email