

Golden Nugget

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Update From Your Session

Our Session at the Church of the 49ers has been very busy. There are additional Session responsibilities when Pastors move on in their career.

Foremost of the added responsibilities is all the activity associated with bringing in a new pastor. A Pastor Nominating Committee has been formed and that committee includes all of Session plus some Covenant Partners. Large committees are a bit unusual, but the Session being part of the committee makes it easier to get things done and approved.

All the members of the Pastor Nominating Committee have been working hard preparing to put together the Church Information Packet (church profile) and job descriptions for both a Transitional Pastor as well as the job description for a Senior Pastor. This involved breaking into small teams to work on studies and recommendations for each of the areas of the Church Information Packet: Who we are, our Mission Statement, our values, what our worship is like, major ministries supported, a description of our area we live in, as well as a brief history of our church.

Our small groups met and developed each section of the packet, and the Pastor Nominating Committee working together as a team, put together the total packet. This also involved areas of Session such as the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee working separately to plan for the necessary legal side of hiring a new pastor.



*Pentecost Sunday is May 19.
Consider wearing red, orange or yellow to worship as we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. It was on that day, 50 days after the resurrection of Christ, that the church was born through the fire of the Holy Spirit.*

There have been many meetings and coordination by both Session teams and the Pastor Nominating Committee. It was done this way to speed up communications and working together more effectively. We simply got together with all our areas of interest quickly and effectively, saving months of scheduling meetings and extra meetings.

During this time, we also were communicating and met with the Chairperson of our Presbytery Ministerial Partnership Team. He came to our Pastor Nominating Committee meetings, and helped us through this process. This too involved travel and coordination from our local ECO Presbytery.

Sound like a lot? Yes, but acting like a team more than a long list of committees, we are now submitting a package to our ECO Presbytery for approval to start posting our pastor opening with our Church Information Packet and job descriptions for a Transitional Pastor, as well as a full time Pastor for our church.

May 2024

The work accomplished by our team normally requires several months of work, but we have done this in just one month.

A big thanks to Josh Ward and Gwen Harris, our Pastor Nominating Committee Co-Chairs who have been very responsive as the team leadership during this effort. Their efforts helped save us lots of time in getting ready to start looking at resumes and talking to candidates.

We have called on our own congregation's retired pastor, Rev. Chuck Westgate, to support a smooth transition through this whole process. He preaches a great sermon! We have also been privileged to have ECO Pastors preach from our pulpit. ECO has provided a list of pastors able to help with our Pulpit Supply while we look for an interim Pastor. This first month of transition the sermons have been very well received by our church members. It seems like all our ECO Pastors and friends are helping us through this time of growth and planning. Our May pulpit supply is already filled with ECO pastors.

So, what is next? Finding a Transitional Pastor and putting our Church Information Packet out to the pastors looking to come to our wonderful church. This church time should be seen as a time of opportunity to gain experience in outreach and awareness in our exciting community.

Jon Whited
Acting Co-Moderator of Session

First Presbyterian Church of Columbia † "Church of the 49ers"

GOLDEN NUGGET

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Tuesday through Friday
9:00 am—3:00 pm

Worship Services in Sanctuary:
Sundays at 10 am

STAFF

_____, Pastor
Deb Johnson, Office Administrator
_____, Dir. of Children's Ministries
Carolyn Sylva, Accompanist
Steve Engle-Borda, Sound Technician
Mariza Engle-Borda, Videographer
Charlee Pullen, Nursery

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are the Church of the 49ers,
where God is the gold. We serve
and worship God in spirit and in the
truth of the scriptures. We live by faith
and will be known by our love
for others and our voice of hope.



Since the Nominating Committee (formed to select new Deacons and Elders) has 2 Elders and an at-large member also participating on the Pastor Nominating Committee, Session voted to suspend activities to find new Deacons and Elders until a Transitional Pastor has been selected, at which time the Nominating Committee will reconvene. However, the Deacons wish to fill one current 2-year vacancy, and find another person to join the Deacon Board as of July 1 for a 3-year term. If you have a heart for serving and praying for our congregation, we invite you to contact your own Deacon, our Moderator Rosie McCarthy, or Deacon Secretary Doreen Bass for information about "Deacon Roles and Responsibilities." Pray about this decision and follow the Lord's leading. If you know someone who would make a wonderful Deacon, let us know, and we will contact them.

Three current Deacons, Sandy Brooks, Michelle Kidwell, and Victoria Dinesh-Balaraman, have agreed to another 3-year term starting July 1. A Congregational Meeting will be called on Sunday, May 26, for the Covenant Partners to accept their extended roles as Deacons. If we find the other two Deacons by then, they will be included. Additionally, the Covenant Partners will be asked to accept Doreen Bass as the sole Clerk of Session serving as an Elder in a non-voting status. This is in accord with the Church By-Laws.

In the meantime, Deacons continue praying for and contacting people on their Care Lists. We have recently lost several Covenant Partners:

- Jean Peters (memorial was May 1)
- Jacqueline "Jackie" Donges
- Harriet Durnall (services held April 25)
- Mary Chalmers (family is in MA)

Deacons will set up for Communion for the May 5th worship service. Four Deacons and an Elder will help serve the elements with Pastor Dave Kerr officiating. Home Communion will be offered on May 6th, so let us know of anyone who would like to participate.

The Deacon Fund Committee was able to grant two urgent requests last month. We also donate to Interfaith and the Church Life Committee for Fellowship Hour. Judy Nason's volunteers will be preparing a Mother's Day Luncheon after worship on May 12, so sign up with Judy.

Doreen Bass, Deacon Secretary

April 1 through April 30, 2024 (exclusive of other income/expenses)

	Budget	Actual	Difference Over/(Under)
Total Income	\$16,333.72	\$14,993.00	(\$1,340.72)
Expense	\$18,432.34	\$22,890.79	\$4,458.45

Mortgage Balance as of March 18:	\$64,022.61
Minimum Required Mortgage Payment:	\$245.00
Additional Principal paid April 1-30:	\$100.00

49er Family News

Grieving

Family and friends of **Harriet Durnall**, who died April 18th at the age of 88. A service for Harriet was held April 25th.

Family and friends of **Mary Chalmers**, who died April 25th at the age of 96 at her daughter's home in Massachusetts.

Ella Reid - Student of the Month

Ella received a "Student of the Month for March" award which appeared in the April 25th issue of the *Union Democrat*. Before leaving Twain Harte for her family's new adventure in North Carolina, Ella was in the second grade at Twain Harte Elementary. As printed in the newspaper: *Ella, the daughter of Keith and Karla Reid, of Twain Harte, "is a stand out student," said teacher Kelly McGraw. "She is a hard worker who always tries her best. She is an excellent role model to her classmates, modeling helpfulness and kindness daily. Ella radiates positivity with her sunny smile and great attitude. She truly deserves this award."*



Ella Reid



Parish Nursing

Ozell Gilmore and Valerie McCale, Parish Nurses, will provide free **Blood Pressure Checks** in Faith Hall on May 12 following the worship service.

The next first-Thursday monthly women's no-host luncheon is **June 6 at 11 am** at **Columbia Kate's Teahouse** on Columbia Street in Columbia State Historic Park. Call Denella Kimura at 209-532-6561 to sign up.



Men's Breakfast

All men are invited to a no-host Men's Breakfast each first Saturday of the month— 8:30 am at Papa's New Roost in East Sonora.

Line Dancing

Carolyn Sylva's free one-hour Line Dancing class meets every Thursday at 9:30 am in Faith Hall.



Send your articles and Family News items for the **June 2024** issue of the *Golden Nugget* by **May 26** to Leslie at davisgold@gmail.com or call 209-559-7723.

May Birthdays

*Happy birthday to you,
Happy birthday to you.
May the Lord bless you
And keep you,
Your whole life through.*

May 4	Jennie Moiso
May 14	Melissa Schulz
May 18	Lynn Stahl
May 19	Dinesh Balaraman
May 20	Margaret Fitzsimons
May 21	Cathy Crawford
May 23	Gary Davis
May 24	John Kolb
May 24	Judy Kolb
May 26	Tom Kimura

Happy Anniversary!

Ed and Debbie Clinite
43 years on May 16

Gary and Leslie Davis
39 years on May 18

John and Judy Kolb
39 years on May 25

The Hands and Feet

We are the
Hands and feet
The vessels chosen
To serve others
A calling
A gift
Perhaps something more!
We get far more
Than we receive
Through
The works
Of his Grace.

We all have
Something we can
Give
Big or small
A smile
A kind gesture
A word
To lighten
The darkest
Of hearts.

Prayer can
Move mountains
It only takes
Faith the size
Of a mustard seed
And that mountain
Will move
If only we believe.
Perhaps not always
In the direction we
Want

Because he knows
Far better than us
What we need.
There is evil
In this world
Forces of darkness
Fighting to take
Away the light
But we have the
Power
To say no
This isn't right!

So always
Remember
We are the
Hands and feet
The light in the darkness
And act accordingly!

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Our Lord has no body here but ours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. We are the eyes through which He looks with compassion on this world. We all have different functions. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Pulpit Supply in May

Rev. Dave Kerr - May 5

Rev. Chuck Westgate - May 12

Rev. Dave McGurk - May 19

Rev. Dave McGurk - May 26



The Spiritual Growth committee will meet on Sunday, May 26, in CE Room 3 at 11:30. If you are a current Sunday School teacher or are interested in working with the children one day a month, please come to this meeting.

Suzanne Williamson, Spiritual Growth Chair

Hello Church of the 49ers Friends and Family!

We just wanted to let you know that our journey across the country was a success. It was smooth sailing all the way across, with one exception: we got caught in a hail storm in Kansas! Thankfully, even though the hail was about the size of a golf ball, it wasn't very solid and didn't do any damage to our cars.

Other than that, the transition is going really well. We are so appreciative of all of the prayers you all have prayed on our behalf during this journey! The people at Franklin Presbyterian have been so gracious and helpful; they remind me so much of all of you and your kindness and generosity.

Hailey and Ella have both gotten started in school and Travis is still the same old ball of energy; he'll be starting kindergarten in the fall! Karla is in the middle of a job search, but has some prospects; and, of course, she is already thinking through ways she can help the children's ministry here!

There is much work to be done here, but we are excited about the opportunity that the Lord has given us; and this whole congregation is looking to the future with much hope and anticipation.

That being said, we are certainly missing all of you, and you are constantly in our thoughts and prayers. We know that God has great things in store for the Church of the 49ers as long as you continue to seek His face and follow His will.

With much love for you all,

The Reid Family

Session Highlights

All the Covenant Partners who have gone into the presence of the Lord need to be removed from the roll by Session. We fondly remember: Robert and Betty Sagaser, Colleen Finegan, Robert Fooshee, Kathy Suduth, Darrol Davis, Arleen Cunningham, Jean Peters, Harriot Durnall, Jackie Donges, and Mary Chalmers.

Following Church By-Laws, Session has called a Congregational Meeting after Worship Service on 5/26/24 to install me, Doreen Bass, as an Elder without voting status as Sole Clerk of Session now that Karla has turned her duties over to me.

The Congregation will also be asked to accept the new 3-year terms of service for the 3 returning Deacons starting on July 1: Sandy Brooks, Victoria Dinesh-Balaraman, and Michelle Kidwell. If we find two more Deacons willing to serve either a 2-year or 3-year term, they will be included. Please consider serving the Lord and our congregation with these wonderful ladies.

Tuesday Night Bible Study is suspended, but Judy's Women's Bible Study is still going on Wednesdays 3:00 pm in CE2.

The Men's Breakfast and Ladies Lunch Bunch will continue. (Denella Kimura has reserved Columbia Kate's on June 6 at 11 am for the Ladies).

Finance--Jon stated that the church is doing better than at this time last year. Our checking balance is \$15,673.33 up from last month.

- Due to the departure of Karla and Pastor Keith, expenses will be reduced by about \$12,000/month, but we still have to pay Pulpit Supply till the end of May. Hopefully, we'll

have a Transitional Pastor hired to work part-time until we get a full-time Pastor. (The difference between Pulpit Supply = no contract, paid each Sunday, and Transitional Pastor = given a contract for longer service).

- Compensation for the new pastor, Pulpit Supply, and Transitional Pastor will be formulated by the Finance Committee--everything is negotiable. The compensation package will then be presented to Session for approval. Afterward, it will be presented to the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Spiritual Growth--Suzanne wants to thank everyone who has volunteered to help 1-2 Sundays with Sunday School. Consider helping as an assistant or substitute.

- Worship songs will be selected by Ed Clinite and Ellen Bridges as they will continue to lead the singing with their guitars. The Pastor will select the material to be read by the Liturgist, who will also head up the announcements at the end of the service.

Church Life--Judy is working with Sandy Westgate to provide flowers and a Mother's Day luncheon after the worship service on May 12. Be certain to sign up.

Outreach--Gwen reported that the meeting will be changed to the 3rd Wednesday of each month due to schedule conflicts. They will start at 2:30 pm in CE3.

- Tony Pokorny has installed a bulletin board in the alcove leading to the Ramont Room in Faith Hall-- to post information about Missions.
- July 4th--Roger Haughton will bring his vintage fire truck for the Columbia parade and BBQ afterward.

- Oct 13--Patty Burchell will be here to report on her ministry in Alaska and provide a salmon luncheon after the worship service. Gwen will contact Teen Challenge to reschedule.

Buildings and Grounds-- Betty Egan reminded us that the Fire Inspection is due, so all storage rooms should be checked for compliance.

- The gutter/roof leak into the Ramont Room can be solved by removing the gutter. A contractor will do it for \$400. Jon and Tom as the Finance Committee approved.

History--Tom reported that Dick Dyer is posting articles in the Golden Nugget.

Personnel--Sharon shared two Job Descriptions 1 for Pastor and 1 for Transitional Pastor. After Session approved the changes, the documents will be sent to PNC.

**Doreen Bass,
Clerk of Session**



Women's Bible Study

Judy Nason teaches a Bible Study for women on Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. in Room 2 in the Christian Education building. The study is currently covering the book of *Deuteronomy* - having completed *Leviticus* in April, "The Book of Laws."

Our study will be a second look at God's commands addressed to a second generation. We will also summarize the first five books of our Bible. Remember the BIBLE is Basic Information Before Leaving Earth! Freely given in His Love.

The final class will be May 15.

Allen Graham, Missionary

Hello dear Church of the 49ers family! Greetings from Curitiba, Brazil. Thanks for your prayers last month.

Training is very much in the air! As I mentioned last month, my coworker and I are preparing for online workshops with the team from the Manantial FM network which has stations along the U.S. – Mexico border. I have also been invited to do fundraising workshops with a group of Trans World Radio stations in Kenya. These will also be done virtually. We are still seeking support for radio and fundraising training at two stations in northeastern Peru. Please pray for this.

On May 1, more than 160 current and former staff, volunteers, listeners, and ministry partners of HCJB Brazil came together to give God honor and praise for 60 years of service to the Portuguese speaking world. They also heard details and testimonies of the “new HCJB Brazil” that began in 2015 known as “Cartao do Céu” (Card from Heaven).

I was able to attend the celebration in representation of HCJB Ecuador. Many years ago, I worked closely with the Brazil team in the production of their shortwave programs and training among indigenous groups hoping to start community FM radio stations. After HCJB Ecuador ended shortwave broadcasts, God led the team in Brazil to distribute programs to listeners in remote areas on memory cards with follow-up by local Brazilian missionaries. They call these “Cards from Heaven”. Where one ministry door closed for them, God opened a new and wider door for their work. To date, they have distributed over 40,000 cards, with an average of 1,000 cards being distributed each month.

In mid-May, we will be holding our spring fundraiser (sharathon) at HCJB2. Please pray for God to move in the hearts of our listeners to provide

the operating funds for the second half of 2024 so the station can continue to be a strong voice of the hope that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Because of the current economic climate, compounded by the rationing of electrical power, donations this year are lower than we expected.

Thank you for your prayers and financial gifts. As God opened doors for ministry and outreach to the team at HCJB Brazil, may He do the same for each one of us this month.

Allen



In this photo by Myrta Kroeger, Pastor Victor Arndt shares during the 60th Anniversary Celebration of HCJB Brazil. Pastor Victor and his wife, Elena, were the founders of HCJB's Portuguese Language Service in 1964.

Community Dinner

Our third Community Dinner of 2024 was held on Wednesday, May 1st with approximately 45 in attendance. It is such a blessing for us to be able to reach out to the community and church family to provide an evening with food and friendship. Our next dinner will be on Wednesday, June 5th. If this mission appeals to you and you would like to volunteer, just come on June 5th or contact me. You won't be sorry...

Suzanne Williamson

Interfaith

We are always needing donations of some things each month, such as household items, personal needs (toothpaste, brushes, etc.). Additional volunteers to work at Interfaith are most welcome also.

Vi Morgado, Interfaith Liaison

Nancy's Hope Food Pantry

The food pantry is hosted by the Church of the 49ers and operated by Nancy's Hope with volunteers. It is located in the lower level of the Christian Education building and open to the public Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am to 2 pm, excluding holidays.

Our little corner of Nancy's Hope served 418 people and 168 families for the month of April! Needs include shelf stable milk, canned goods, eggs, and produce. Please, don't drop them off after hours, and no expired products or damaged clothing.

Michelle Kidwell, Food Pantry Liaison



Mr. Grace Goes to Church

By Leslie Davis

To mark the tenth anniversary of the appearance of Mr. Grace on the Church of the 49ers campus, let me tell you his story....

In May 2014 a young cat (about a year old), showed up on the campus of the church, and decided to stay... Pastor Janet Russell suggested we call the cat "Grace." I picked him up and turned him over, and declared his name should be "Mr. Grace," and the name stuck. Mr. Grace has been the official cat of the Church of the 49ers ever since.

To my knowledge, Mr. Grace has been on campus every day of the past ten years, except for one fateful week. He disappeared on a Monday night and reappeared exactly one week later. My theory is that one of our guests at the Community Dinner that evening "borrowed" Mr. Grace, as I heard that a woman had mentioned to others at the dinner that Mr. Grace would make a good therapy animal. I don't know why she decided to return him, but we're grateful he made it back.

On cold, or hot, weekdays he likes to hang out in the church office where he has a nice soft bed. Lately I've noticed he chooses to recline on top of the hard drive on Deb's desk, where warm air emanates to keep him toasty.

Mr. Grace is known around here for his penchant to be among people. Many Sundays he sneaks into the sanctuary at least once and we're forever trying to catch him to boot him out—as we know some in the congregation don't care for cats.

Mr. Grace's reputation as a "people cat" went viral when one of the community meetings for the "Keep Dollar General Out of Columbia Campaign" was held in Faith Hall in September 2016. It was a hot night with more than 200 people inside, and the doors were open. Mr. Grace strolled in and went from lap to lap garnering lots of attention.

Unfortunately, there have been many times when Mr. Grace found himself locked in overnight, sometimes in the sanctuary, other times in Faith Hall and a CE classroom. Fortunately, he is really good at "holding it" as he waits for someone to find and free him.



One cold winter day in February 2019, with snow on the ground and no electricity on campus, Pastor Janet conducted the worship service anyway. Mr. Grace joined the twelve of us and kept my husband Gary warm by curling up on his lap during the sermon.

Mr. Grace tried to hone in on the action at Pet Blessings too! Pastor Janet blessed many pets at an event held on a Saturday each May from 2011 through 2017. Mr. Grace would try to greet the dogs in attendance — we finally just locked him up somewhere because his presence caused chaos.

In April 2018, Mr. Grace became a celebrity in the county, as his picture appeared in the *Union Democrat* in the "Pic of the Week" column.



One bright spring day Mr. Grace discovered a big "bird" was strutting on "his" front lawn. It was a stray bantam rooster. He didn't seem to know what to do with this "bird," but then his instincts kicked in and he stalked the rooster—and I was able to get a picture, and send it in to the newspaper. I am happy to report no one was injured in this incident.

Mr. Grace had a tough time during the Covid shutdown in 2020, as very few of us were on campus and he was lonely. I made certain he was fed and watered and Mr. Grace frequently joined Gary and me as we worked to maintain and beautify the buildings and grounds.

**Continued on Page 8
See "Mr. Grace"**

Mr. Grace

Continued from Page 7

For years Mr. Grace slept outside somewhere, but now that he's a senior cat—at least eleven years old—he has a warm bed in the Sadie Nicholls Room where he bunks each night. Thank you, Mark, for feeding and tucking him in. Being a long-time “outdoor” cat, Mr. Grace didn't always appreciate being shut up for the night, but lately we've noticed he very willingly heads for his room, especially if it's been a cold day and the temperature is dropping even further. He does have a comfy “nest” he made for himself under a particular bush where he likes to hang out while waiting for his dinner and inside bed. Recently I discovered Mr. Grace also visits the church's next door neighbor occasionally, who will let him inside on a cold day.

One quirk Mr. Grace is known for is that he doesn't stay in one place very long. When he visits the church office or the neighbor, or stops to check on progress of a campus repair, or sits in someone's lap, he soon gets antsy and leaves.

When Pastor Keith and his family arrived in 2019, Mr. Grace learned about kids. Hailey and Ella and Travis and the other children frequently went looking for him and enjoyed carrying him around and giving him pets. He was not *always* happy with their attention, but usually.

In the early days, Mr. Grace was very protective of his new home. Whenever a stray cat wandered into his “territory,” he would chase it off. One time he was in a scary cat fight—the two were clinched together and rolling around on the pavement in front of Faith Hall and we unsuccessfully tried to break them up. Luckily he didn't get injured in that fight, and develop an abscess! I've noticed in later years, that Mr. Grace just eyes the stray cats, and



July 2022

lets them be. He also has to share his turf with all sorts of wild animals which come through the campus at night, especially deer, raccoon, skunks,...even a porcupine family was spotted. And Deb reported a large family of turkeys used to scrounge for food on the campus every day for awhile—Mr. Grace would just ignore them.

Mr. Grace was fortunate to have a couple of canine companions on campus and I would be remiss to not tell you about *Pebbles* and *Dexter* in this historical article. Pebbles, a sweet elderly pit bull, was our guard dog from February 2014 until her master Jeffrey died in June 2015. And Dexter, a beautiful 90-pound German shepherd, guarded the campus for a couple of years, arriving in 2017. Sometimes Mr. Grace and Dexter were spotted sleeping together.

We've been fortunate that our church cat has been quite healthy all these years—mainly only going to the vet for required vaccinations and physicals.



Gary and Mr. Grace
Feb 2019

And he takes his vet visits in stride (no histrionics at all). A year ago, however, he developed a fast-growing cyst on his back which had to be removed by the vet at Sonora Veterinary Hospital—we were so glad to be advised it was benign. Since he needed his teeth cleaned too, that was a mighty large bill, but we have some very generous people in this congregation who have an affinity for Mr. Grace so the bill was covered.

So there you have it—a biography of Mr. Grace, the official cat of the Church of the 49ers! May he continue to have a good life under God's protection here on our campus. Give him a pet the next time you see him — but be careful, he drools when he's happy!

Leslie Davis



Being warmed by the sun on the sanctuary porch at 8 am on a chilly Sunday in January 2021.

Our Shepherd Provider

A Vignette by Denella Kimura

I. Psalm 23 Adonai-ro-eh:

A Psalm of David (TLV)

*The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green
pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
For His Name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through
The valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me:
Your rod and Your staff comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
In the presence of my enemies.
You have anointed my head with oil,
My cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy
Will follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of Adonai
forever.*

II. THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD PROVIDER

The writer of Psalm 23 is David, warrior King of Israel, the king who God said was “A man after my own heart.” But, David was first a shepherd, one who understood sheep and the importance of the shepherd, one who loves his sheep, who called them by name. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd and follow him.

Jesus said in John 10, “I am the Good Shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me. . . And I lay down my life for the sheep.”

The good shepherd provides all the needs of his sheep from the time he counts them as they pass through the gate. He has already prepared the way

that will eventually lead to the high mesa plateau for summer forage. Moving a week at a time, he has prepared rich green pastures at each stop, and when there's no water, the sheep rely on the early morning dew sparkling like diamonds on clover. He has weeded out poison plants and insects. He gives the sheep their daily bread and cleans out quiet watering holes, because Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is also the Living Water as he claimed on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. All our needs are provided.

When Samuel came to Jesse's house to anoint one of his sons as the future king of Israel, the tallest, brightest and healthiest were lined up for Samuel's pronouncement. . . all eight of them. And God said, “No. Aren't there anymore?” So his father sent for David, who by now had travelled with his herd up into the high valleys among the rain, sleet and snow, and the wolves, bears and cougars who'd just love a lamb shank for dinner. When David arrived, his reddish hair was windblown, his arms bulked up from lifting sheep, and his skin ruddy from outdoor living, and he was probably short. Nothing like a kingly personality, except that he loved the Lord and wrote poetry.

When he returned to his task of restoring the souls of sheep driven crazy by black flies and “scab” which spreads through the flock when one infected sheep rubs heads with an uninfected sheep to say, “Hello!” He comforts them when he applies a concoction of oil, tar and other ingredients to calm them down. His rod and staff reassure weaker sheep, and discipline the bullies and head butters.

Much of my understanding of sheep comes from pastor and shepherd, Phillip Keller who wrote, a shepherd looks at PSALM 23. Did you know that “pastor” also means “shepherd?” He opened my eyes to further depths of meaning of the “feast,” or as some versions have it,

“table.” The summer forage is on a high plateau or mesa with its own set of predators and pests. But there's a double set of meanings here.

There was a feast after David was anointed king. David was honored as a special guest with oil poured over his head, and eight jealous brothers, yes, the same brothers who belittled and mocked him when he brought them extra bread and supplies. They had been “called up” to serve in Saul's army fighting against a Philistine army---and a giant! They still saw him as a shepherd boy, not a young man who killed lions and bears in the valley of shadows, the deep, dark ravines which are full of scary stuff. And he, also, would rather be with his beloved sheep, because he loved them.

At that dinner, he reflected over his life. How could he be a king---a shepherd king!---when all of his life he rescued sheep from pesky problems like a cast sheep who would die if the shepherd didn't roll him back onto his feet in time; like being with them when they feared predators, and relieving the torment of black flies, or nose flies and healing their sicknesses. The Lord, his Shepherd, has provided for his needs all along the way.

In Psalm 127, David wrote, “For He provides for His beloved ones, even in their sleep.”

No wonder his cup overflowed with blessings---the goodness and mercy came from his Shepherd Lord, the God who created the universe and all that's in it. And because David knew and loved the Lord who is his Shepherd, he also knew when he came to the end of all things, he would live in the house of the Lord forever, leading his flock over the hills and through the dark valleys up to the high mountain meadows.

Denella Kimura
May 1, 2024

May 2024 Calendar

Weekly Sunday worship service at 10 am, and:

May 1, 12 pm: Memorial Service for Jean Peters
May 1, 3 pm: Women's Bible Study in CE Room 2
May 1, 6 pm: Community Dinner in Faith Hall
May 2, 9:30 am: Line Dancing in Faith Hall
May 2, 11:00 am: Lunch Bunch at Pizza Plus
May 4, 8:30 am: Men's Breakfast at Papa's New Roost
May 5, 11:30 am: Buildings & Grounds in CE Room 3
May 7, 10 am: Prayer Group in CE Room 3
May 8, 3 pm: Women's Bible Study in CE Room 2
May 9, 9:30 am: Line Dancing in Faith Hall
May 12, 11 am: Mother's Day Luncheon in Faith Hall

May 14, 10 am: Prayer Group in CE Room 3
May 15, 2:30 pm: Outreach/Missions in CE Room 3
May 15, 3 pm: Women's Bible Study in CE Room 2
May 16, 9:30 am: Line Dancing in Faith Hall
May 19, 11:15 am: Birthday/Anniversary Celebration in FH
May 19, 11:30 am: Deacons Meeting in CE Room 3
May 19, 1 - 3:30 pm: Just Dance in Faith Hall
May 21, 10:00 am: Prayer Group in CE Room 3
May 21, 1:00 pm: Finance Committee in Office
May 22, 2 pm: Session Meeting in CE Room 3
May 23, 9:30 am: Line Dancing in Faith Hall
May 26, 11:30 am: Spiritual Growth in CE Room 3
May 29, 10:00 am: Prayer Group in CE Room 3



First Presbyterian Church
11155 Jackson Street
Columbia, CA 95310

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

Address Service Requested

Cost-cutting Measure: For those of you who receive this newsletter through the US mail, please consider a donation of \$15 per year to cover printing and postage costs. Thanks!