



Unbinding Your Heart

An FPC "Lent E-vent"

- Help us learn how to pray in different ways
- Help us grow as a Christian
- Teach us about evangelism and how sharing our faith can help us and others grow
- Promote fellowship and friendship in a small group setting
- Inspire and excite us about God's presence in our lives

Sharings from Sharon

Dear Church family,

Last Fall, several Elders and Deacons were part of a small-group leadership study based on a book entitled *Unbinding the Gospel*. Over the course of 8 weeks, we met regularly, discussed the book, prayed for each other, and talked about our faith experiences. In these few weeks, we became more confident in our Christianity!



This same small-group study experience is now being offered to our whole church during Lent. Please join us for this exciting adventure in Christianity. We'll all be discussing a companion book to *Unbinding the Gospel* entitled *Unbinding Your Heart*. The study, also called an "E-vent", will begin the week of February 22nd on Ash Wednesday and concludes the week of April 4th.

Please join us for a very special, all-church study. "This book is about untying the knots that keep us from living exciting lives ... with God and with each other." "It's about unbinding the Good News that God adores us and everyone else, that God has shown this to us through Jesus Christ."* It's also a prayer journal with many forms of classic Christian prayer included in the daily prayers that accompany the study.

We would love to have you take part of one of these rich group events. You can share in the group experience with no pressure to "do" anything other than read each week's chapter, do the daily prayer exercises and attend six meetings. Discussions at group meetings will be strictly confidential. At prayer times, we will be encouraged to pray in whatever way that is comfortable for each of us. These group meetings are intended to put us at ease with one another, our faith, and with God.

People in churches across the country are excited about what is happening in their congregations through their 'E-vents': deeper relationships with God, a rich, meaningful personal prayer life, and a new sense of God's activity in their lives. People are saying they can be more 'real' with others as their relationship with God grows ... and that this extends to relationships within their families and with people in every area of their lives.

Call the church at 408 297-7212 or stop by the table in the narthex on Sunday for group meeting days and times and to receive your copy of *Unbinding Your Heart*. We'd love to have you with us!

Joyfully, in Christ's Service,

Pastor Sharon

P.S.: If you have questions about this all-church study, please contact Pastor Sharon, Judy Lacoco, Pat Plant, or Charlotte Powers.
* Quotes are from the introduction to *Unbinding Your Heart*, page 3.

Kick off of our “Unbinding” Experience
and
Ash Wednesday Celebration

Wednesday, February 22

At 6:30 p.m.



Sign up in the Narthex to bring something to share.

We will begin our study of
“Unbinding Your Heart.”



followed by



Ash Wednesday Worship - 7:15 p.m.



Prayer for beginning:

God, you are the Holy One of Israel, Creator of the Universe, so majestic we cannot possibly understand you. And Jesus told us to call you Abba (“Daddy”) because you love us so much. Thank you for my life and for my family and friends and the people you can use me to help. Please let me know you better, as I go through these six weeks in “Unbinding Your Heart.” I offer you this time. Amen*

* From Week 1, Day One of *Unbinding Your Heart*

February Birthdays



- Peter Wendt** Feb. 3
- Spencer and Alexis Dibble** Feb. 5
- Tasmin Taylor** Feb. 8
- Kelly Hibbard** Feb. 9
- Caitlin Jacob** Feb. 10
- Madeline Davis** Feb. 22
- Carol Lathrop** Feb. 23

‘Ukulele Lessons



Are you interested in learning how to play the ‘ukulele? Dawn Imada is currently teaching ‘ukulele at Foothill Presbyterian Church, our sister church in the Alum Rock neighborhood.

Date & Time:

Every Tuesday @ 9:00 AM
Location: Foothill Presbyterian Church (Sanctuary)
5301 McKee Road
San Jose, CA 95127-2292

Do you prefer taking ‘ukulele lessons closer to home? Dawn is available to teach ‘ukulele lessons on Saturdays at First Presbyterian Church at 5:00 PM or later. When two or more people decide upon a time, Dawn can create a class.

If you are interested in taking these free lessons at Foothill or First Pres, please email Dawn at [ukulele-dawn@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn@yahoo.com). Dawn can also tell you where to purchase an ‘ukulele if you don’t already have one.

FPC Deacons and Elders



Church Leadership

Deacons:

- Deacon moderator: Greg Plant
- Antoinette DeBord
- Jo Fukasawa
- Susan Hyatt
- Sharon Johnson
- Luana Reveles
- Michelle Washington

Elders:

- Jim Lathrop, Clerk of Session
- John Fukasawa
- Judy Lococo
- Pat Plant
- Charlotte Powers
- Jim Steadman
- Rich Stewart



“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” ~ John 15:12

5th Service
Sunday Worship
Day
January 29, 2012

"Don't GO to church; BE the church!"



We made 200+ lunches for our own Front Door Ministry



We made hot soup, muffins, cookies and sandwiches for the Bill Wilson Drop In Center for homeless youth.



We played Bingo with 40 residents of Town Park Towers and treated them to yummy snacks and fun prizes.

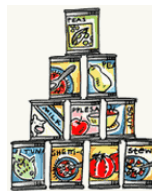


We wrapped up 200 sets of plastic dinnerware for homeless diners at EHC Life-builders winter shelter.



Front Door Ministry

In January, we gave out **608 bag lunches**, plus about 30 bags of soup and/or chili for multiple meals, to about 275 customers in our front-door ministry. We also had **Charlie Craig** from 1st Christian, and our own **Dawn Imada** and **Lori Tierney** joining **Greg Plant** as volunteers!



Monthly Food Drive for the Hungry People Served by Sacred Heart Community Services

FOOD DRIVE In January, we gave 50 lbs. of useful canned and packaged food to **Sacred Heart Community Services**. So far this year, we have donated 50 lbs. of food, and 3,490 lbs. of food since we began our monthly food drive in June, 2009.



If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

~ 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Finance Committee Report



The Finance Committee and Board of Trustees of our endowment fund met in January. The two topics discussed in this committee meeting included final approval of changes to the Investment Policy Statement (IPS), and review of the Budget Overview Report for the congregational meeting.

The changes to the IPS, which have been under consideration for the past several months, include replacing the 8% net of fees return objective to 4.5% and lowering the rate of inflation to 2.5%, to reflect the current economy and continued low interest rates and lower rates of return for typical asset groups. They also include changing the interest objective to “primarily income” rather than a blend of “capital growth with income” to reflect the current income and giving patterns and the need to rely on drawing from the funds to meet budget needs.

The 2011 actual profit and loss overview and 2012 budget was approved for presentation at the Congregational Meeting in January. The 2012 budget assumes an income of \$105,445 and total expenses of \$241,134, leaving a gap of \$135,689. Therefore, the church will continue to need to draw funds from the endowment on a monthly basis. More information on the 2011 and 2012 budgets is included in the Annual Report 2011 booklet; please ask Karleen in the church office for a copy if you did not receive one at the congregational meeting.

The Finance committee also presented a summary of the “blessings” and “promises,” from the financial perspective, at the congregational meeting.

The blessings:

- The sound system (funded by a Presbytery grant and gifts from two members)
- The parking lot repair and resurface (funded by Town Park Towers, a member gift, and the endowment fund)
- Presbytery Intern (welcome to Alan!)
- Your Session (whose members work with very lean budgets and creatively reduced costs, such as for the copier and newsletter)
- **YOU!** We are an active little church; with partnerships such as PACT and the Brown Bag program, and activities such as Soup Suppers and 5th Sundays, we do the most with what we have.

Your leadership promises to continue to practice good stewardship in both budgets and programs, pursue outside sources of income, and fine-tune procedures and communication.

Pledges and Per Capita

Part of the budgeting process includes making a prediction of income for the coming year. A letter was sent to all members of the congregation at the end of November to obtain the pledge estimates from the congregation to be used in planning. However, it was impossible to use pledging information this year, as only thirteen responses have been received. Therefore, your leadership set the expected regular giving income in the budget at the amount received last year (\$70,500) rather than the amount pledged (\$29,000). Admittedly, this is a guess, but is more accurate than extrapolating from such a low percentage of congregation information.

Therefore we ask again that you submit your pledge card for this year if you have not already. Let the church office know if you need another copy. Note that your pledge is kept completely confidential – the individual amounts are between each member and God (who holds all amounts as gold). But the amount total (the sum of all pledges) is needed for appropriate management of the church finances.

The second request from the Finance Committee is for each member to submit a contribution for his or her per capita dues. What is per capita? It is the amount our congregation pays per member. You can think of it as a tax, in the same way as we pay state and federal assessments. Where does it go?

(continued on page 5 ->)

Per Capita (continued from page 4)

Per capita is divided into three parts – for the operation of General Assembly, the Synod of the Pacific, and the Presbytery. It pays for rent, salary, benefits, mailings, publications, etc. at these levels. For example, in our Presbytery, per capita pays Pat Plant's salary for her work at the Presbytery and did for John Lococo for the 33 years he served as Stated Clerk. It is also important to reflect on all of the extra ways the Presbytery of San Jose has benefited our congregation – including grants, scholarships etc.

The per capita is \$29.00 per member this year, and is due to be paid by April 1st.

You can submit your per capita by check to FPC – write “per capita” in the subject line, or write your name and “per capita” on one of the special offering envelopes. For those who can afford to, the per capita should be above their regular pledge offering; members can also submit additional donation to cover those who cannot.

Shawn Thomas in Concert April 14th at 7 p.m.



Once again we will be honored by a visit by folk singer and composer Shawn Thomas. Shawn will perform on Saturday night (invite your friends!) and preach on Sunday morning. Shawn travels the country singing in churches - this makes sense since he's a “P.K.” (pastor's kid!)

To hear Shawn's music, go to: www.shawnthomasonline.com.

Here is Shawn last year doing the Children's sermon the Sunday after his concert for us.



FPC Book Club



Our **FPC Book Club** is participating in the **2012 Silicon Valley Reads** program. This is the 10th year for the SVR program, which sponsors a variety of author talks, book discussions, and other cultural events centered around a theme.

The theme for 2012 is “Muslim and American: Two Perspectives.” FPC will join other book clubs, community groups, and individuals in reading the featured books – “The Muslim Next Door” by Sumbul Ali-Karamali and “The Butterfly Mosque” by G. Willow Wilson.

You can choose to read one or both of the books along with us. We plan to attend some of the SVR programs this spring, including the interfaith discussion taking place on **Thursday March 8, 1:30 pm at First Congregational Church San Jose** (we'll meet at church and carpool).

We also encourage all to look through and take advantage of the many other free SVR events that you might be interested in – they will be posted on the Community Bulletin Board in the hallway outside the Fellowship Hall. The complete list of Silicon Valley Reads events is listed at:

<http://siliconvalleyreads.org/2012-13/>.

If you have any questions about the FPC book club participation in Silicon Valley Reads, would like to have an FPC-only discussion night for the books, or want to suggest a future read, please contact **Lori Tierney**.



Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

~ Matthew 22:37–39

More photos from 5th Sunday!



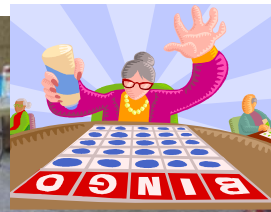
John and Trey Gray bag lunches for our Front Door Ministry.



Carol Lathrop, Brian Johanson and Judy Lococo make sandwiches for the Bill Wilson Drop-In Center.



Kirsten Kelly and Fred Griffith assemble bag lunches to give out at our front door.



John Fukasawa and Jim Lathrop call Bingo at Town Park Towers, our neighbors next door.



Our new friend Shahnaz Abbasi and her lovely daughters jumped right in to make cookies for the



“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails ... “

~ Corinthians 13:4-8a



Sunday School News

During Lent the Sunday School classes will be participating in a curriculum that will include them in the “Unbinding Your Heart” growth and study event that the adults will be participating in. Each Sunday during Lent, the children’s classes will parallel the adults’ journey as we grow together in prayer and sharing our faith stories.

Outside of Lent, the Sunday School classes are spending the rest of the time on a study of Psalms. The middle school and high school youth are studying the Psalms in general, and choosing specific Psalms to look at in a little more depth. The teachers have been working to provide interesting and relevant discussions, and the students respond to the challenge. The elementary school students will concentrate on the 23rd Psalm. The children use crafts, dress-up, games, and other bible stories as discovery tools as they journey line by line through the 23rd Psalm. Last year the Sunday School classes had participated in a similar study of the Lord’s Prayer – taking a very familiar and beloved “basic” of our faith and having all of the classes look at it closely and at prayer in general, each in an age-appropriate way.

The “Unbinding Your Heart” and Psalm studies will each help your children grow in their faith. You won’t want to miss a week! The teachers may learn even more from the students – funny how that can happen!

Palm Sunday Fellowship Time



People enjoying last year’s Palm Sunday feast

Mark the date - On **Palm Sunday (April 1)** we will share foods during fellowship time that remind us of the place/time that Jesus walked on the original Palm Sunday. **If you are interested in helping provide some “biblical food” please contact Lori Tierney.** It does not need to be complicated - you may have your own recipe, Lori can help you find one, or no recipe at all is needed (olives, etc).

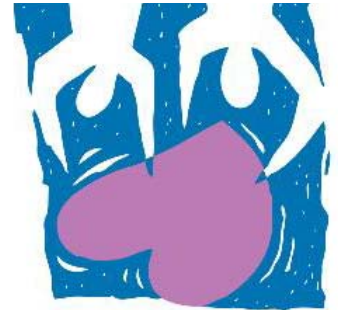
Why have a “biblical foods” fellowship? Because “Food Talk” is often “God Talk” in the biblical stories. The Hebrew language is very concrete, and therefore uses symbols, metaphors, or myths in order to talk about the indescribable. Food images were perfect for the biblical mind. For example, salt was used as a preservative in ancient times, and became a symbol of friendship and more. Additionally, the biblical view of community centered around the table – not surprising for a time where life was more nomadic and scarcity of food made sharing often critical for survival.

Jesus knew all of the preceding Hebrew traditions, including the rules of who to eat with, and he knew the food symbolism in the Old Testament scriptures. He used parables that included meals or feasts to teach, and used his own act of sharing time and food or water with those considered outside the Kingdom of God as powerful example.

So lets share some simple foods, both that which have been eaten by the those waving palms and shouting Hosanna, as well as those more typical of the tax collector or roman soldier, and think about Christ who invites all to the table.

Wednesday, February 22
Soup Supper: 6:30 p.m.
Worship: 7:15 p.m.

Ash Wednesday Celebration
and
Kick off of our "Unbinding"
Experience



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

San Jose, CA 95112
49 North Fourth St.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Church of San Jose

OUR MISSION:

At **First Presbyterian Church of San Jose**, we are a Spirit-led Community of Faith where the life and love of Jesus Christ is felt and shared.

For more information, please contact:

- The Reverend Sharon Hare, Pastor
- Karleen Duchscherer, Administrator
- Church office (408) 297-7212
- email: fpcsj@yahoo.com
- Website: www.fpcsj.org

FRIENDS, VISITORS, NEWCOMERS:

JOIN US THIS SUNDAY!

Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.

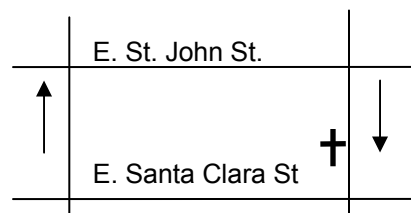
Fellowship Time: Following Worship

Children attend the first part of the worship service. Following the Children's Message, Sunday School is available for nursery through high school. High school – age children attend worship service on the first Sunday of the month, and a teen discussion other weeks.

First Presbyterian Church of San Jose, 49 N. Fourth St.

3rd St.

4th St.



Newsletter Submissions

Please submit items to **Greg or Pat Plant**. Any format works (in person, church mailbox, email gregplant@comcast.net).

Deadline for the **March, 2012** edition is **Monday, Feb. 27, 2011**.

