

# THE MESSENGER



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## SESSION MEMBERS

Current members of the Session are:

- Moses Bakhsh
- Mark Evans
- Sue Teele
- Marcia Fagan—  
Clerk of Session
- Harry Muaya
- Richard Frederick
- Luann Bangsund
- Jerri Rodewald
- Ann Platz
- Dick Jones
- Al Polchow
- Shirley Harry

## The Pastor's Corner



When you hear the word beauty, what images does your mind's eye envision? My mind immediately imagines the snowcapped mountains



visible from my new home office or the range of mountains visible from the top of Cornice in Mammoth on a clear day. Blankets of white against a crystal blue sky is breathtaking to me.

I also marvel at the beauty of a placid lake that holds the reflection of its surroundings, or the tiniest of colorful blossoms which catch my eye along a trail, or the dark of the night sky filled with twinkling starlight. The beauty of God's great outdoors often takes my breath away. What about you?

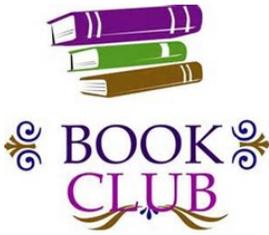
What images flood your thoughts though when I change the word to mourning? Maybe the image of a single tear stained face or the silhouette of a gathering on a hillside near a grave comes to mind. Most vivid in my memory happened three weeks into my first pastoral call, for a curious and precocious 2 1/2 year-old boy

drowned. I remember the tear stained faces of his teachers and his grandmother who asked me to assist in conducting the memorial service. What images move you to feel deeply connected with those who mourn?

As we begin our walk through the season of Lent on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, I invite you to use your imaginations each week to capture and share images with the whole church that will help us explore the Beatitudes beyond words. You can create an image using whatever medium you enjoy from watercolor to photography to crayons. You can cut out images from magazines or newspapers that speak to you about the weekly beatitude that we will be focusing on. There will be poster boards in the narthex for you to place your images. If you bring them to the office by Thursday of each week, Pastor Cheryl will make sure they are included by Sunday.

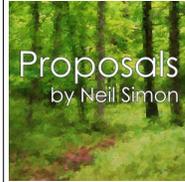
To prepare you for what is to come, here are the Beatitudes for each Sunday in March:

- ◆ March 5<sup>th</sup> - Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ◆ March 12<sup>th</sup> - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- ◆ March 19<sup>th</sup> - Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- ◆ March 26<sup>th</sup> - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.



## FPC-Redlands Monthly Book Club

The March book club meeting will be held on Thursday, the 2nd at the home of Luann Bangsund. The book of the month is *But What if We're Wrong?: Thinking about the present as if it were the past* by Chuck Klosterman.



Then in April, a Footlighters' production of Neil Simon's, *Proposals* is being substituted for a book. Performances are scheduled for Saturday, April 1st , 8 p.m. & Sunday, April 2nd, 2 p.m. at Footlighters Theater on Brookside Ave. <http://redlandsfootlighters.org/>

March 2017



<b>March 1</b> 11:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	<b>Ash Wednesday</b> Ed Hale Park (see p. 5) Lenten Service	<b>March 16</b> 7:00 a.m.	<b>Thursday</b> Sunrise
<b>March 2</b> 7:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	<b>Thursday</b> Sunrise Deacons Meeting FPC Book Club	<b>March 17</b> 11:00 a.m.	<b>Friday</b> Coffee Shop Circle
<b>March 3</b> 10:00 a.m.	<b>Friday</b> Knitting Companions	<b>March 19</b> 9:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	<b>Sunday</b> English Worship Service Indonesian Worship Svc. Youth Study/Activities
<b>March 5</b> 9:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m.	<b>Sunday *</b> English Worship Service Indonesian Worship Svc.	<b>March 20</b> 6:30 p.m.	<b>Monday</b> Session Meeting
<b>March 9</b> 7:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	<b>Thursday</b> Sunrise Christian Education	<b>March 23</b> 7:00 a.m.	<b>Thursday</b> Sunrise
<b>March 11</b> 6:00 p.m.	<b>Saturday</b> Indonesian Home Fellowship in JKH	<b>March 25</b> 11:00 a.m.	<b>Saturday</b> Installation Service & Luncheon
<b>March 12</b> 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	<b>Sunday</b> English Worship Service Choir Fund Raiser Brunch Indonesian Worship Svc. Youth Study/Activities	<b>March 26</b> 9:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	<b>Sunday</b> English Worship Service Indonesian Worship Svc. Youth Study/Activities
<b>March 13</b> 5:00 p.m.	<b>Monday</b> Worship & Congregational Life	<b>March 27</b> 12:00 p.m.	<b>Monday</b> Bridge Club
<b>March 14</b> 5:15 p.m.	<b>Tuesday</b> Property & Finance	<b>March 29</b> 6:00 p.m.	<b>Wednesday</b> Lenten Supper & Study
<b>March 15</b> 1:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	<b>Wednesday</b> Wenonah Circle Lenten Supper & Study	<b>March 30</b> 7:00 a.m.	<b>Thursday</b> Sunrise

**\*Please allow a little extra time to get to church due to the Annual Noon Kiwanis Club's Run Through Redlands—Use Clark St; avoid Fern & Olive. Course marshals will be directing traffic around/through the race course.**

## Session Highlights for

February 2017 & March 2017 will be in the April newsletter.



### Contemplative Corner

Reflecting on God's presence in our lives...

Blessed

*(Continued from page 1)*

Be on the lookout for images or even headlines that speak to you of these Beatitudes, knowing that as we worship and study together, you will be drawn to more images, which you are invited to share. Throughout the Lent we will build together a collage of images that speak to the way we are invited to walk through life by Christ, even though the way is not always easy and often perceived as counter cultural to those around us.

"Blessed are you," said Jesus to his disciples. Blessed are we when we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, thirsting and hungering for a reconciled relationship with God and with our neighbors.

Blessings,  
Pastor Cheryl

#### Good things to come:

<b>March 5, 2014</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent</b>
<b>"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."</b>	
First Reading	1 Kings 17:1-6
Second Reading	Matthew 5:3
Sermon Title	Less is More
<b>March 12, 2014</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent</b>
<b>"Blessed are those who mourn..."</b>	
First Reading	Isaiah 61:1-3
Second Reading	Matthew 5:4
Sermon Title	Sacred Space
<b>March 19, 2014</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent</b>
<b>"Blessed are the meek..."</b>	
First Reading	Psalms 37:7-11, 32-34
Second Reading	Matthew 5:5
Sermon Title	Power Reframed
<b>March 26, 2014</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent</b>
<b>"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst..."</b>	
First Reading	Psalms 63:1-8
Second Reading	Matthew 5:6
Sermon Title	Bon Appetite!

During the Lenten Season, we will focus in worship and through study on the Beatitudes. These eight sayings, which begin with the words, "Blessed are they," are found in the Gospel of Matthew. They begin what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount in this Gospel, which spans three chapters in Matthew's Gospel. Four of these eight blessings are also found in the Sermon on the Plain found in the Gospel of Luke. Yet, what does it mean to be blessed?

What first comes to your mind? The gift of a child or grandchild? A job promotion? The surprise visit of a dear friend? A secure retirement fund? The healing of a loved one? Blessings come in all shapes and sizes, even sometimes in disguise.

Merriam-Webster gives this primary definition of the word blessed: "held in reverence or honored in worship". Blessed can also mean enjoying happiness. Various biblical translations such as the Good News or Common English translations actually use the word "Happy" instead of "Blessed". Yet, the words happy and blessed hold a different weight of meaning for me. The word "Blessed" for me has something to do with the divine mystery we call God. Otherwise, how could those who mourn actually be blessed?

Macrina Weiderkehr, a Benedictine sister and author, has wonderful insights for us on this word for she writes, "To bless is to put a bit of yourself into something. It is to make holy, to change something or someone because of your presence." In the context of the Beatitudes, I hear her words as confirmation that these sayings speak of God's people as blessed, because God has put a bit of God's self into each one of us.

During this month of March, I invite you to reflect on the word, "Blessed." What does it mean for you? What does it mean to be blessed, especially in the context of the Beatitudes? Ask God to reveal a bit of God's self to you. Invite a friend to enjoy a cup of coffee and share with each other your insights. Let us put a bit of ourselves into something or someone this month and see what a blessing it is!

## The Order of Worship Expect Changes as Lent Begins

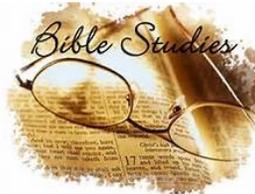
The Worship and Christian Life Committee approved a reordering of our worship service starting the first Sunday of Lent. So, be prepared to be unprepared, even though Pastor Cheryl and Lay Readers will guide us. Here are a few highlights of changes to expect:

- 1) The Passing of the Peace will occur after the Welcome and Congregational Life announcements as we gather around the Word.
- 2) The Choral Anthem will occur after the Prayer of Illumination, which will be before both scripture readings.
- 3) In response to the Assurance of Pardon and the Offering we will sing responses that will change occasionally throughout the year. That is, the one after the Offertory will not always be *The Doxology*.

Soren Kierkegaard reminds us that worship isn't God's show, but the congregation's show. He writes, "God is the audience. God's watching. The congregation, they are the actors in this drama. And the minister is just reminding the people of their forgotten lines."

As worshippers, worship is not passive, but active. Through worship we have the opportunity to move our communal heart ever closer to the heart of God. May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts, as we worship, be acceptable to God

The **Coffee Shop Bible Study Group** meets the third Friday of the month at 11:00 a.m. Luann Bangsund will be hosting the March meeting on the 17th.



The **Wenonah Circle** meets on the third Wednesday of the month, at 1:30 p.m. Grace Baldwin will host the meeting this month on the 15th.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Lenten Opportunities Sunrise and Suppers

During Lent there will be opportunities to gather, study, fellowship and listen more deeply to the God whom we worship and serve.

The first weekly opportunity is known as **Sunrise**, which takes place at 7:00 a.m. each Thursday in Lent from March 2<sup>nd</sup> through April 13<sup>th</sup>. **Sunrise** participants gather in the narthex of the sanctuary and participate in a spiritual practice called Lectio Divina, which simply translated means divine reading. This is a contemplative way to enter the biblical text. It is an opportunity to discern how God might be speaking into one's life at this particular time. As the psalmist reminds us in the chaos of our daily lives, "Be still and know that I am God." **Sunrise** is an opportunity to be still by participating in this contemplative practice.

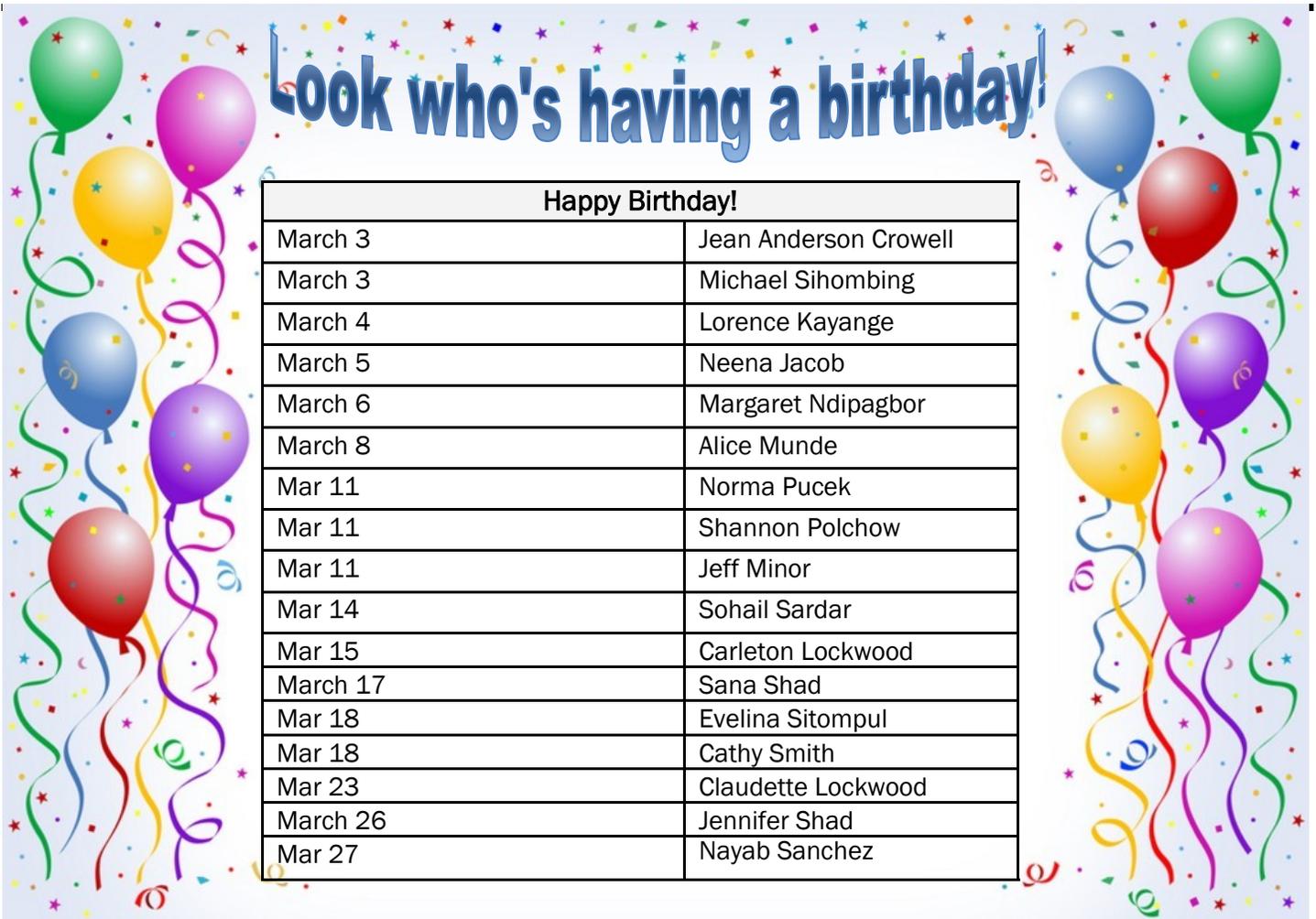
The second opportunity, which are **Suppers**, will occur three times during Lent. **Suppers** will be accompanied by **Study**, as well. We will dive deeper into the particular beatitudes addressed within the context of our worship. Here is the schedule of the **Suppers** and the topics:

- ◆ March 15<sup>th</sup> Potluck "Blessed are the poor in spirit..." and "Blessed are those who mourn..."
- ◆ March 29<sup>th</sup> Potluck "Blessed are the meek..." and "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst..."
- ◆ April 5<sup>th</sup> Pizza/Salads "Blessed are the merciful..." "Blessed are the peacemakers..."

On April 5<sup>th</sup> you will be asked to give a small donation to help cover the costs of the pizzas and salads.

The **Suppers** start at 6:00 p.m. and the Study follows. Let's be intentional about listening for God's still small voice in our own lives and in the life of this church, as we walk through this Lenten season together.





### The Season of Lent Begins With Ash Wednesday, March 1st

Our Ash Wednesday will be a new experience this year, as there will be two different opportunities to participate. The first opportunity will take place at Ed Hale Park from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. Pastor Cheryl along with seven other pastors from our community are taking ashes into the community and Pastor Cheryl will partner with Pastor Brenda Torrie from the United Methodist Church. Ed Hale Park is located at 101 E. State Street, in the downtown central business district. Other pastors will position themselves along State Street as well. We will offer ashes and prayer to anyone from the community who so desires. Of course, I am hoping if you are available during the day that you would risk entering the community to receive ashes and prayer to mark the beginning of Lent. Bearing this visible sign on your forehead could become an entry point for conversation with those you encounter throughout the rest of the day. You could say something like this, "I worship a God who meets us where we are, but doesn't leave us where we are found, for as I impose ashes I will say, 'The old has gone and the new has come'."

The second opportunity will take place in the narthex of the sanctuary at 7:00 in the evening. We will gather together for prayer, scripture readings, silence, music and the imposition of ashes.

Lent is a reminder that an old identity is made new through Christ. It is a time to seek God ever more faithfully, a time to call on God and confess our propensity to turn away from God, and a time to return and recommit ourselves to the ways of God. As we begin Lent together, may this prayer by Walter Brueggemann guide our thoughts and our ways, "God of grace and demand, you challenge us to reclaim our baptismal identity as those whose lives are built on your call and your promises—not on the easy, seductive forces around us. Stir our hearts that we may engage your transforming word anew and rediscover its power to save. Amen"

May the Beatitudes be transformative for us and for our community of faith this Lenten Season.

## Pastor Cheryl's Whereabouts

by Personnel

Pastor Cheryl will attend *Companions on the Inner Way* at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu from the evening of Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> through Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. This has been an annual contemplative retreat that she has attended since her ordination in 2002. It is an opportunity for deep reflection, as well as a time for interacting with those who know God to be active in our world today.

This year the speaker is Brian McLaren. He is a leading voice in contemporary spirituality and religion, who argues that – notwithstanding the dire headlines about the demise of faith and drop in church attendance – Christian faith is not dying. Rather, it is embarking on a once-in-an-era spiritual shift. For millions, the journey has already begun. Drawing from his work as global activist, pastor, and public theologian, McLaren challenges us to stop worrying, waiting, and indulging in nostalgia, and instead, to embrace the powerful new understandings that are reshaping the church and world.

Each day includes lecture and dialogue with Brian McLaren; small group community around spiritual readings; corporate and individual times of silence and contemplation; worship with Eucharist; and communing with God through movement, art, and nature. Pastor Cheryl will lead a small group, as well as be the preacher on Thursday.

This topic is timely for us as a church and will surely provide spiritual sustenance for our pastor. Please pray for Pastor Cheryl during her week of study leave. She will be in worship at the morning service on March 5<sup>th</sup> and for both services on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Special Service of Worship

**Celebrating the Installation of Rev. Cheryl Raine**

**Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.**

As an act of the Presbytery of Riverside, the First Presbyterian Church will host the Service of Worship to install Rev. Cheryl Raine as our Pastor. The service of worship will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and will be followed by a celebrative luncheon in the Fellowship Hall. The worship will celebrate the faithfulness of God in the life and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Come and share in the excitement of as we mark our new beginning!

## From the Mission Commission

We recently received a letter from Bread for the World alerting us to the current situation concerning hunger in the U.S. and other parts of the world. The following is an excerpt from the letter:

“Typically, more policy changes take place during the first six months of a new administration than during the remaining time of the president’s term. The new Congress and President Donald J. Trump have signaled that during the first half of 2017 they plan to pass a budget and adopt programs that would significantly affect hungry people. Bread for the World members and supporters have been advocates for many of these programs. They have proven effective in reducing hunger in the United States and abroad. The number of people living in poverty worldwide has been cut in half in the past decade alone. The money invested by our government in programs that fight hunger in this country has saved millions of dollars in health care and other costs.

Early in 2017, a budget framework for government spending will be introduced and debated. Unless the spending caps set by sequestration are raised, Congress could take funds from hunger assistance and other anti-poverty programs to increase defense spending, using the fast-track privileges of budget reconciliation. Congress could also make sweeping changes to SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and other programs that help hungry people.”

Many of us at First Presbyterian have helped advocate for these programs in the past by writing to our members of Congress. Bread for the World is asking us to ACT NOW! Call, write or email your members of Congress. Urge them to invest in programs that have proven to make a difference in the lives of hungry people, including SNAP, WIC and international poverty focused development assistance.

### Senator Dianne Feinstein

email her by visiting [Feinstein.senate.gov](mailto:Feinstein.senate.gov)

United States Senate

331 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

### Senator Kamala Harris

email her by visiting [Harris.Senate.gov](mailto:Harris.Senate.gov)

112 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

### Representative Pete Aguilar

email him by visiting [Aguilar.house.gov](mailto:Aguilar.house.gov)

1223 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

## Annual Deacons Update

by Gayle Timilione

**Members:** Dorothy Moore, Izar Martinez, Jean Vieten, Terry Zeidler, Lynn Phelps, Lynn Jordan, Joula Kussoy, Kasim Barus, Alice Munde, and Gayle Timilione, moderator.

The Board of Deacons is charged with the responsibility to “care for the poor of the congregation and those who are sick and shut in, and shall perform such other administrative charitable community services authorized by the session”.

The Deacons do not have an allocated yearly budget by the session. The contributions made to the various organizations by the Deacons are totally dependent upon the contributions made by the members of the congregation.

Your generous donations to the Deacons Fund enable us to make contributions to the following organizations:

- Family Service Association of Redlands
- Home Again
- Salvation Army, Redlands
- Peanut Butter and Rice fund
- Salvation Army bus passes
- Salvation Army gas assistance
- VA Charitable Services bus passes
- Youth Hope
- Christian Counseling Services

In addition to providing financial support to the above charitable organizations, the deacons collect non-perishable food and household items that are placed in the Deacon basket located in the narthex of the sanctuary. Last year more than 150 lbs. were collected for Redlands Family Service Association.

**Thank you so much for your continued support!  
We couldn't do it without you.**



## Giving Beyond Ourselves

Jesus reminds us that we are to be a light to the world, and one way we can do that is by giving beyond ourselves. We have been a light to the following four Organizations:

In December of 2016, the church made a donation of \$258.00 to support youth recreational scholarships to the Recreational Division Youth Scholarship Program, which was developed to help low-income families participate in activities like sports, classes, and any other recreational services provided by the city. Their letter of gratitude expressed the opinion that, “It is organizations like yours that make our community a great place to be.”

Also, in December of 2016, the church sent gift cards to the Family Service Association of Redlands. This organization strives to help families in need during the holidays and for special events. A cash donation of \$300.00 was also given in January. Their letter of thanks said, “Your support of our mission, to alleviate poverty, encourage self-sufficiency, and promote the dignity of all...makes our community a better and stronger place.”

A Centsability donation was made in December of 2016 to The Blessing Center/Joseph Storehouse of \$53.73. This organization also helps families in need, especially the elderly and young. They responded to our

donation, “With the generous support of people like you, we have been able to continue helping many of these families...”

Then, last but certainly not least, the church made a donation of \$115.45 to the Presbyterian Hunger Program. This campaign participates in God’s reconciling work in the world through creating, partnering with, and investing in faithful projects and campaigns that address root causes of hunger, poverty and environmental destruction. “With your gift, we are able to learn from and with Presbyterians, to connect them to inspiring anti-hunger work, and to support incredible partners in ministries around the world.”

These are only a few of the Church’s contributions to various PCUSA campaigns. We support the Christmas Joy Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, the Pentecost Special Offering, the Presbyterian Women’s Birthday Offering, and the work our Deacons do in the community.

Your generous financial support has made life better for many in our own community and around the world.

**Thank you.**

**First Presbyterian  
Church of Redlands**

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**RETURN SERVICE  
REQUESTED**

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## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF REDLANDS

An Inclusive Community of Faith, Hope and Love

The mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands is to grow spiritually with the community by sharing the love of Jesus Christ with all who seek to know God through worship, prayer, fellowship, and evangelism.

