



February 5, 2012

"Loving the church often seems close to impossible. Still, we must keep reminding ourselves that all people in the church ... belong to that long line of witnesses moving through this valley of tears, singing songs of praise and thanksgiving, listening to the voice of their Lord, and eating together from the bread that keeps multiplying as it is shared. ... Loving the church is our sacred duty."

Fr. Henri J. M. Nouwen

The Flowers on this Scout Sunday are given by Troop 212.

Prayer Requests To request prayers for a family member or friend, please contact deacon Marcia LeGault at mlgucci@yahoo.com. You may also leave a request in the offering plate to be given to our prayer teams.

Remembering each other in prayer Each week throughout the year, we remember several of our church members and their families in prayer as continuing evidence of our love and concern for each other. This week, let us remember:

*Dorothy Matsushita
Jackie Mays
Bea Mazey
Tina Mc Cambridge
Jim & Betty Mc Coy
Herb & Barbara Mc Daniel
Mollie Mc Farland
Robert & Anna Mc Farland*

During Each Communion service, our Deacons receive an offering to help with their ministry of caring, concern and outreach. Please use one of the green Deacon's Fund envelopes provided in the pew rack.

Adult Education

Sunday, February 5, 10:30 AM, Rm 405
Dr. Jeff Siker - "Surprise! Jesus in the Gospel of Mark" Part I

For 2,000 years we have read and reread the Gospel of Mark. We have become so familiar with the story that it is easy for us to miss the surprise and scandal of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. Dr. Jeffrey S. Siker is a New Testament professor, scholar and Presbyterian pastor.

Inquirer's Class Our Inquirer's class has been postponed until May. For more information, contact Rev. Marion Park.

Dear Friends,

As much as I love to bask in the after-Christmas holiday glow, Lent and Easter are already upon us. Ash Wednesday is in a couple of weeks on February 22. Ready or not, the liturgical cycle pulls us into the ongoing story of God's work with and for us. This year, I will be offering a Lenten class on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Marilyn Saul Ministry Center to help us *Listen to God*. We will focus on listening to God with our hearts, minds, lives, struggles, spirits, and with others. John 14 will be our ongoing text, which will also be the Sunday worship texts. I hope you can plan now to join me.

Every Sunday, we agree to listen and respond to God when we pray, "Thy will be done on earth." Jesus gave us those words to remind us to stay connected to God, yet in the busyness of life we become distracted, delayed and disobedient in listening to God. As we go through this time in the life of the Christian faith where so much is in flux, it is a good time to reconnect and refocus our efforts toward God's will for our lives.

Jesus was never far from God throughout his life and ministry. He told his followers:

- "I can do nothing on my own...I seek to do not my own will but the will of the one who sent me." John 5:30
- "Doing the will of the one who sent me and bringing this work to completion is my food." John 4:34
- "...I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as God instructed me. And the one who sent me is with me and has not left me alone..." John 8:28-29

Jesus directed his followers to continue his work, God's work in the world:

- "As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." John 17:18
- "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last." John 15:16

Jesus also warned us that we would be unable to do God's work without staying connected to Christ:

- "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Jesus also assured us that we would not have to do it by ourselves:

- "...the Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you everything..." John 14:26
- "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

We are Christ's body in the world. It is our call and our joy to carry out the will of God in Christ. This Lent we will be drawing near to God again to listen and be fed. Plan now to come and "Let the Lord your God show us where we should go and what we should do." Jeremiah 42:3

Grace and peace,

Steve

Steven E. Wirth
Pastor

Our Sympathy to Pastor Steve, whose aunt, Maxine Kolb, passed away on January 31.

Today Is Scout Sunday Thank you to our Scouts who are assisting in worship today and to their families who are providing refreshments between services.

Since 1954, Grace First Presbyterian Church has continuously chartered Boy Scout Troop 212, which is for boys age 10 ½ through 18. Boy Scouts of America has a main goal to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development and fitness, towards self-reliance. This is done through a wide range of outdoor activities, which Troop 212 does, through backpacking, camping, hiking and other events.

We are truly blessed to be able to call Grace First Presbyterian Church our home. Your generous support has made it possible for us to teach skills, plan events, recognize achievements and prepare our youth to lead our communities and nation into the future. We look forward to working together to instill positive values in our local youth for years to come.

Yours in Scouting,

John Douglas, Scoutmaster
Lauren Ansorge, Chartered Organization Representative
Bennett Moxon, Committee Chair, 2011

East Long Beach: Save the Date

"Huge Parking Lot Rummage Sale & E-Waste Drive" Saturday, **March 24**, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM provided by Long Beach Boy Scout High Adventure Troop 212. This is our annual parking lot Rummage Sale and E-WASTE Drive at Grace First Presbyterian Church at 3955 N. Studebaker Road, Long Beach, 90808 which helps to fund our equipment and supply needs. **Donations are welcome** - (Furniture, Clothing, Books, Household items, etc) on **March 23** from 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

E-Waste (TVs, Computer Monitors, Keyboards, loose Electrical Cords, etc.) can be dropped off on Friday, **March 23**, or use the convenient drive-through on Saturday, **March 24**, and a scout can help you unload. Your support is always very much appreciated! For more information, contact Scout Parent Shelly Hamagishi.



Youth We are setting up plans to perform *Godspell* this spring, led by our youth and children. Rehearsals will begin on Sunday,

February 12, at 4:30 PM in Room 405. More information will be available within the next week or two about rehearsals and performance dates. If you would like more information, ask Stan DeWitt or Kristina Abella.

Souper Bowl of Caring Today

140 million Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game today. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal. Please join our young people as they demonstrate God's love by loving their neighbors through the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. It's a simple, yet significant act of caring for others. Our young people will have a table outside the Sanctuary, and if you feel led, simply drop \$1 (or more) in the soup pot as you leave worship. All the funds collected will go to COA to help care for those in need in the downtown Long Beach area. For more information, contact Alegre Wilhite, moderator of the Youth Team.

Scripture Seekers You are invited to join our men and women's Scripture Seekers Bible study group on Tuesday, **February 14**, at 10:00 AM in the Fireside Room. Please call Sandy Finstuen for more information.

Congregational Meeting

February 12 - One Service - 10:00 AM

There will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, **February 12**, at 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary for the purpose of receiving the 2011 Annual Report, receiving the 2012 budget, electing the 2012 Nominating Team, electing an elder to fill a vacancy on Session and approving pastors' Terms of Call. Following the meeting, join us for the dedication of the Marilyn Saul Ministry Center and a wonderful lunch.

Moving Days Now that we are able to use our new Marilyn Saul Ministry Center, Jonathan Tyra, our Facilities Manager, has begun the task of moving the many items which were displaced during construction and returning the Youth Room 401, Room 405 and the Fireside Room to their intended use. The library will be severely impacted until all decisions can be made, so bear with us. This is a work-in-progress! If anyone is interested in taking any of the round brown tables which were previously used in the hall, please contact Sue Wright. We will be keeping all of the brown rectangular tables.

2012 Offering Envelopes may be picked up in the Narthex for the next few Sundays. Please help us save postage by picking up your envelopes. Included in each box is a Per Capita envelope. Other per capita envelopes are available in the kiosk in the Narthex.

2012 Compassion Response

Update We have received 201 Compassion Response Cards to date for a total of \$687,977 or 92% of our goal of \$750,000 for 2012. We are still waiting to hear from 32 of you who pledged in 2011. Please bring your card to worship or mail to the church office so that together we can reach our goal and plan our 2012 budget.

Tina Arechiga, George Eldridge, Michael Webb
The Stewardship Team

What is Per Capita? Per Capita is how Presbyterians mutually share the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit's leading for the future, are trained to become better elders and ministers and participate in the life of the wider church. This year our Per Capita Apportionment is \$25.23 per member (\$50.46 per couple) for a total of \$13,271. **If you are able to contribute your per capita, it will enable us to use \$13,271 of our budgeted funds for local programs.**

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Session will meet on Tuesday, **February 7**. Your Session members are Tina Arechiga, Marc Bonner, Janis Bos, Gerardo Castro, Joyce Clark, Melissa Cohea, Susan Debuquois, George Eldridge, Carol Fraser, Barbara Lai, Jenifer Lipman, Danny Nakagi, Gene Noji, Michael Webb and Liz Wood.

The Youth Team will meet on Tuesday, **February 7**, at 7:00 PM in Room 401. Members include moderator Alegre Wilhite, Jeanie Cojerean, Terry Hopper, Leslie Reese, Mike Schock, Diana Takeshita, Tamara Wilhite and Alison Yamaguchi.

The Mission Team will meet on Thursday, **February 9**, at 1:00 PM in the Fireside Room. Members include moderator Shirlee Jackert, Jane Barrett, Barbara Bostwick, Mary Buck, Hatsune Izumi, Patti Phillips, Pat Sargeant, Judy Schmidt, Ann Seufert and Amy Tsubokawa.

The Worship Team will meet on Monday, **February 13**, at 7:00 PM in the Library. Members include moderator Carol Tubbs, Grace Carroll, Bruce Ford, Paul Schmidt, Alison Snider and June Swinney.

The Sanctuary Choir is looking for a few good men who can sing nice and low. If you enjoy singing but don't like singing the high notes, see Stan about joining the best bunch of basses in any church choir around!

Kidz Nite Out Calling All Kids...

Ages 3 to 6th Grade

Come join us for an evening of fun, games, crafts and food on Friday, **February 10**, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. Kidz Nite Out is a ministry of Grace First Presbyterian Church Children's Ministry to give children and parents alike a night of fun and fellowship. Dinner cost is \$5.00. For more information, contact the church office or Pastor Marion marion@gracefirst.org.



Fellowship Groups **Icebreakers and Friends**

You are invited to attend Dewey Erney's musical concert on Sunday, **February 19**, at 2:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Dewey will interpret songs from the Great American Songbook of his generation. At 3:45 PM, we will share a soup supper in the Ministry Center.

Cruisers are on the move...

In February, the Cruisers will attend the congregational meeting and luncheon on Sunday, **February 12**. They will then be able to attend the Shinnen enkai potluck on Sunday, **February 19**. Their regular monthly meeting is moved to Sunday, **February 26**, at 12:00 PM in the Fireside Room. Join other senior singles at one or both of these events. For more information, contact Pat Sargeant.

Monday Night Knitting will meet on Monday, **February 6**, at 6:30 PM in the Library. We are currently knitting Scarves for Troops, as well as sweaters for World Vision & the Limuru orphanages. New knitters are always welcome. For more information, contact Sue or Suzanne in the church office.

Women of the Word Book lovers gather on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Library to discuss a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. For more information on the group, contact Sandy Finstuen. **February 28 Zorro** by Isabel Allende

Blood Pressure Screening Our Health Ministries cabinet will be offering blood pressure screenings today between services in the Library.



Mission Ministry

Equal Exchange

Coffee We will be selling Equal Exchange coffee, tea and chocolates today, **February 5**, on the

patio. We offer goods carefully grown by farmers all over the world and shared in cooperatives in their area, so that together they can have better education, health care and even transportation. We have some new Chai and Chamomile teas that are definitely worth your trying.

Zatoun Olive Oil Available

Today "Zatoun" is the Arabic word for olive. When you purchase Zatoun extra virgin olive oil, you support the farmers of Palestine in the struggle for livelihood and land. Farmers are paid fair trade prices through Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA). As well, a share of the proceeds from each bottle sold supports "Project Hope," an expressive arts and education program for youth in Palestine and "Trees for Life," a project to plant olive tree saplings to replace destroyed trees. Buy a 500ml. (16.8 fl. oz.) bottle of this excellent olive oil for \$16 and support these projects!

Christian Outreach in Action

COA dinner for the homeless is Tuesday, **February 14**. We begin cooking at 9:00 AM in the church kitchen. Homemade cookies may be left on Tuesday morning in our church kitchen. Monetary donations should be marked "COA dinners." To cook, call Judy Goodrich. To serve, call Pat Sargeant.

2 Cents Per Meal Hunger

Program is an on-going fund to help members of our Grace First family who need assistance with their food budget. Containers are available during Coffee Hour. If support is needed, please make a request to a pastor to learn how help may be provided.

The Point Copies of our quarterly newsletter are available in the kiosk and at the Welcome Center in the Narthex. **The Point** lists a variety of opportunities for Bible study, adult education, concerts and fellowship for January through March.

Uplander Key The key to the Uplander van is missing from the office. If you used the van and still have the key, please contact Suzanne to arrange for its return.

LBPD East Division has issued an Auto Burglary Alert for our area. Thieves are especially looking at whether cars have power cords for various electronic equipment. Copies of the alert are available in the kiosk in the Narthex.



Concert Series - February 19 2:00 PM Sanctuary

Dewey Erney - Hailed as one the greatest interpreters of the "Great American Songbook" of his generation, singer Dewey Erney returns - on his birthday! - with his phenomenal line-up of some of the best jazz instrumentalists in Southern California.

THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

Sunday, February 5 - Worship 9 & 11 AM

Scout Sunday

Souper Bowl of Caring

- 9:15 AM Great Adventures (201)
- 10:00 AM Blood Pressure Cks (Lib)
- 10:30 AM Adult Ed (405)
- 11:15 AM Great Adventures (201)
- 1:00 PM L A Bronze (Sanc)
- 5:00 PM MS Youth Group (311)
- 6:00 PM Sr High Youth Group (401)

Monday, February 6

- 7:00 PM Monday Nt Knitting (Lib)
- 7:00 PM Troop 212 (Min Cntr)

Tuesday, February 7

- 10:00 AM Quest IV (FS)
- 7:00 PM Session (FS)
- 7:00 PM Youth Team (401)

Wednesday, February 8

- 7:00 PM Fireside Fellowship (Lib)

Thursday, February 9

- 1:00 PM Mission Team (FS)
- 6:00 PM Bells of Grace (Narthex)
- 7:30 PM Choir (405)

Friday, February 10

- 6:00 PM Kidz Nt Out (Min Cntr)

Saturday, February 11

Sunday, February 12 - Worship 10 AM

- 11:00 AM Cong Mtg (Sanc)
- 12:00 PM Lunch (Ministry Center)
- 4:30 PM Youth Choir (405)
- 5:00 PM MS Youth Group (311)
- 6:00 PM Sr High Youth Group (401)

Every Member, Minister
Steven E. Wirth, Pastor
Marion Park, Associate Pastor
Ron Oglesbee, Parish Associate
Stan DeWitt, Minister of Music
Jason McNally, Organist
Anna Ford, Pianist
Abby Carlson, Children's Music Director

Grace First Presbyterian Church

3955 N Studebaker Rd
Long Beach CA 90808
(562) 420-3393 - FAX (562) 420-6414
www.gracefirst.org

*You may also view the Church Master Calendar
online at www.gracefirst.org*



Megumi Kai 2012 "Shinnen-Enkai"

The *Megumi Kai* Ministry invites everyone to celebrate the *Year of the Dragon* by attending the 2012 "Shinnen-Enkai" New Year's celebration and potluck to be held on Sunday, **February 19**, at 12:15 PM, in the *Marilyn Saul Ministry Center*.

To start the New Year's festivities in appropriate fashion, *Grace First's* Taiko drummers, *Aka Taru*, will open up the event. Following the meal, the recipient(s) of the 2012 *Kimi Sugiyama Award* will be presented, followed by a special presentation about the "Year of the Dragon." All those born during the years 1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, and 2012 will be given special recognition.

To ensure plenty of delicious food for all, please bring a New Year's dish of your choice (main course, side dish, salad, or dessert) that will serve eight people. Please also bring your own plates and tableware [although there will be plenty on hand should you forget].

Please contact Barbara Lai or Amy Tsubokawa if you have any questions. We look forward to celebrating the New Year with each of you.