

THE MESSENGER



The Pastor's Corner "Lean in Towards the Light!"

Although our new church liturgical year started on December 3rd, our calendars say New Year's Day is January 1st. This is the day when our calendars change from year 2023 to year 2024, and with each yearly turning new hopes and dreams begin to surface for what might be.

What hopes and dreams are surfacing for you or for those whom you love? Is a graduation pending or a new birth anticipated? Is a special celebration or a long-awaited excursion on the calendar for 2024? What do you hope will unfold for you in 2024?

What hopes and dreams do you have for this church? Is there something God has put on your heart that you would like to see the church become involved with – a ministry, a study, a sermon series, a fellowship opportunity? What do you think God hopes and dreams for us as we seek to live the heart and mind of Christ at the heart of the city in this New Year? What would God have us prioritize or engage in as a church 2024?

Throughout Advent and Christmas, we were invited to pause and remember that God is right here, right now, in the moment. We also learned that the greatest gift we can offer each other is the gift of our presence. We were challenged to be present to each other with hope and peace, joy and love no matter what challenges we were facing. Of course, this is only possible because God is present to us. God gives us these gifts and then equips us to be present for each other.

As this new year dawns, how will you carry what we explored during Advent into 2024? How will you be the gift of presence with another? Where will God use your specific time and talents to bring blessings to others? How might God use you to bring a bit more of heaven on earth in 2024?

I know it is often easier to focus on all that is not right with our world; the
(Continued on page 7)

January
2024



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SESSION MEMBERS

- **Jim Appleton**
- **Gayle Timilione**
- **Luann Bangsund**
- **James Rager**
- **Kasim Barus**
- **Al Polchow**
- **Jack Brennan**
- **Paul Lambert**
- **Marcia Fagan—Clerk of Session**

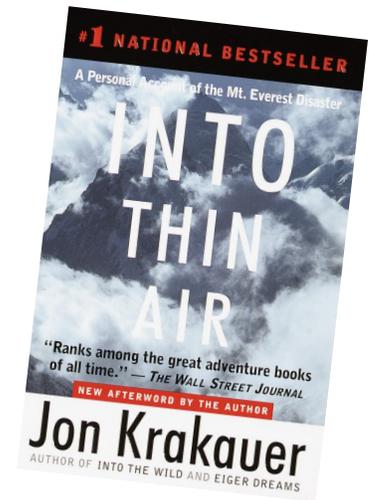


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN MONTHLY BOOK CLUB

The FPC Book Club will meet Thursday, January 11, to discuss *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*, both by C.S. Lewis .

The group chose *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount Everest Disaster* by Jon Krakauer for February. "Krakauer examines what it is about Everest that has compelled so many people...to throw caution to the wind, ignore the concerns of loved ones, and willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense."*

Pastor Cheryl will lead the discussion.



*Goodreads.com

January 1	Adrian Roiballove
January 2	Delima Sitompul
January 15	Elita Barus
January 18	Cakra Toar Nelwan
January 20	James R. Appleton
January 20	Gayle Timilione
January 21	Gretta Gardenia Sitompul
January 24	Larry Dwight
January 30	Marcia Stewart



**First Presbyterian
Church of Redlands**

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

All Services Will Be held in the sanctuary on Sunday and available on Facebook Live on demand

<https://www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Redlands-106569590974548>

English Worship Service 10:00 A.M.
Indonesian Worship Service 5:00 P.M.

Third Sunday of the Month—11:30 A.M. Urdu
(Facebook Live Only)

**January 7, 2024 All Church Sunday -
Communion**

**Baptism of the Lord and Installation/
Ordination of Deacons and Elders**

First Reading	Acts 19:1-7
Second Reading	Mark 1:4-11
The Message	Becoming Instruments

January 14, 2024

First Reading	Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18
Second Reading	John 1:43-51
The Message	Come and See

January 21, 2024

First Reading	Psalms 62:5-12
Second Reading	Mark 1:14-20
The Message	Follow Who?

January 28, 2024

First Reading	Psalms 111:1-11
Second Reading	Mark 1:21-28
The Message	Naming the Demons

**Annual Congregational
Meeting**

Save the Date

**Sunday, February 19,
2024, at 11:15 A.M.**

Our annual congregational meeting is planned to be held in John Knox Hall after worship on Sunday, February 19, 2024. The annual report will be available by email prior to the meeting and some copies will be available at the meeting.

As with any congregational meeting, a quorum of the congregation is required for the meeting, which is 10% of the membership or currently, 16 people. Of course, the hope is for participation that far exceeds this minimum!

**On February 19, 2024, we will be
conducting the following business:**

1. Receive the Annual 2023 Report for the Congregation and answer any questions you may have about it, including a presentation of the 2023 budget.
2. Electing at Large Members of the Nominating Committee and elders for the vacancies on Session.
3. Remember those who joined the Church Triumphant in 2023.

Other business could be conducted, according to the limitations noted in the Book of Order, but at this point none is planned!

Hopefully, this will prepare all members for active engagement in our annual meeting.



Biblical Reading Challenge for the New Year!

The Gospel of Mark

The church’s liturgical calendar begins with Advent each year and this year the Gospel of Mark is highlighted in what is known as the lectionary readings. Therefore, this would be a good year to reread the Gospel of Mark, which begins without a birth narrative as it gets right to the point, saying, “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.”

Mark wants to let us know that an event has taken place that radically changes the way we look at and experience the world. The gospel seems almost breathless as the sooner we get the message, the better off we will be. God is here, now, pay attention!

This gospel is generally recognized as the earliest attempt to reduce the apostolic tradition concerning Jesus the Messiah to written form. It is also the shortest of the four gospels and contains a collection of narratives that depict Jesus as being almost constantly active. A favorite word in Mark is the Greek word meaning *immediately* or *at once* or *then*, which occurs about forty times in sixteen chapters. Mark records fewer words of Jesus than any other gospel as well. It contains just one collection of sayings (Chapter 13) and only a few parables. The shorter ending of the gospel is also not a favorite for Easter because it ends with these words, “for they [the women] were afraid.”

Read through Mark’s Gospel and notice what you notice. How is it different than the other gospels? What new things might you take away from your reading of this gospel this year? Be in the word this year!

And I will be reading through Mark in January. Would you like to join me? We could gather to read and/or chat about what we noticed in our readings together in-person or via zoom during the day or in the evening. Let’s dive into the word together! If you are interested, please contact the office or drop me a note or text. Just let me know! I look forward to reading with you.



Celebration of Life for Veta Arnold

Friday, January 19, 2024 at 10:00 A.M.

Come and help Veta Arnold’s family celebrate her life Friday, January 19, 2024, at 10:00 A.M. in the sanctuary. Veta lived a long and fruitful

life, with words of gratitude in her heart and on her lips all the days of her life.



Staff Whereabouts

Judy will be out of the office Monday, January 15.

The church office will be closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday.



Photo by [Sage Friedman](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Contemplative Corner

Praying with the Gospel of Mark

As this New Year begins, the lectionary focuses on the Gospel of Mark. So, throughout the year in this monthly article, I will highlight verses from Mark. You will be invited to spend a month praying with a portion of scripture and the questions that may arise from it for your life. We worship a living God, and therefore our faith is to be living and active. Our faith is to be engaged in the daily aspects of our lives as we ponder and act on what we have discovered. And so, I offer these words from the opening chapter of Mark this month:

“The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make the Lord’s path straight.’” [Mark 1:1-3]

In a sentence or two how would you define the good news of Jesus Christ? Mark quotes Isaiah, so I invite you to go back and read Isaiah 40:1-31. How do these verses inform what the good news means for us today? As you explore Mark 1 and Isaiah 40, invite God to show you a new thing! What good news might God be calling you to explore as well as share?



The Connectional Church at Work 2024 Per Capita

Each year, each member is asked to give, in addition to a pledge, what is called per capita. Per capita giving fuels the connectional nature of our denomination, with some per capita funding the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. In 2024 the per capita per member is **\$40.00**. Here is the breakdown of how this **\$40.00** is apportioned:

Presbytery	\$27.30
Synod	\$ 2.85
General Assembly	\$ 9.85

In **2024**, the per capita apportionment for our church totals **\$6,600**, which is based on our membership as of **December 31, 2022, of 165 members**.

Per capita is the gift that binds us together. Per capita allows the whole church to share equitably in those things that make us Presbyterian: our theological identity, our connectedness, our system of mid councils that allow elders and ministers to work together to discern the mind of Christ, our ecumenical connections that make us part of the church universal, our core structures that keep us together as a church, and our call to work for full participation in decision making as we further the mission of Jesus Christ around the world.

As a pastor, I have benefitted immensely from the connectional nature of our denomination, from the support and guidance of higher councils as well as availability of resources and expertise, not always available in a local church. Let us also remember that as a church we received several grants in the last four years: \$130,000 grant support for our sanctuary renovation, a \$30,000 grant for our sanctuary HVAC, a \$5,000 technology grant, and a \$5,000 grant for the park. As a church we have been abundantly blessed by the connectional church! So, our giving enables us to support each other! *Let us all give our fair share towards our church's per capita apportionment!*



Final Christmas Sunrise Lectio Divina

Thursday, January 4th, will be our final Advent/Christmas Sunrise Lectio Divina. We will meet via zoom at 7:30 A.M. and listen for God's still small voice through a spiritual practice called Lectio Divina, which simply translated means "divine reading". The biblical text is based on a portion of a text to be used for the upcoming Sunday. As we gather, we will still our bodies and quiet our minds so we can listen for the stirrings of the Holy One among us. The Spirit consistently gifts us with new insights, as we willingly open our lives to the movement of the Holy One among us.

The next Sunrise series will be held during the season of Lent, and it will start on Thursday, February 15, 2024, the day after Ash Wednesday. This Lenten Sunrise series will meet each week until Thursday, March 28th.

(Continued from page 1) *The Pastor's Corner*

wars raging; the devastation and destruction broadcast nightly; the rhetoric of hate that dehumanizes others; the vitriolic election cycle that is already plaguing the headlines and so much more. But as Carrie Newcomer sings, "Every kindness large or slight shifts the balance towards the light." These words come from a powerful song entitled, "Lean in Towards the Light."



What if this year, we take seriously this call to action. What if we lean in towards the Light of lights. What if we listened deeply to the stirring of the Spirit in our lives and life of this church. What if we listened to the Spirit's whispers that remind us to love God with our hearts, and with our souls, and with our strength. What if we really practiced loving our neighbors as ourselves, seeing the Christ in everyone. What if our love was rooted and grounded in God's love?

My prayer for us as a church is that together we will lean in to the Light of life, the Light of all life, Jesus the Christ. No matter what our circumstances are right here, right now, we have a way forward if only we will be brave enough to be God's love and light. May we be brave enough to follow the way of Jesus. Amen.

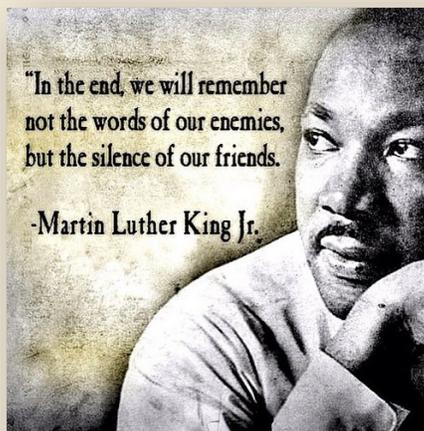
Leaning in Towards the Light,
Pastor Cheryl

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1929—1968

"In the end, we will remember
not the words of our enemies,
but the silence of our friends.

-Martin Luther King Jr.



PROPERTY AND FINANCE UPDATE



Sanctuary: You may have noticed some small black boxes near the railing on the front steps of the stage. These are “fill” speakers for the first few rows to fine tune the sound with our new system. We want to remind everyone that we do have the original hearing devices for those who may still struggle to hear clearly.

Pledges: We have received \$117,500 in pledges for the 2024 calendar year. In addition, we have an anticipated undesignated giving of \$75,000 for 2024, for a total of \$192,500. This is down \$13,500 from last year’s budgeted income. If you would still like to turn in a pledge, it would be welcomed. Our collective generosity makes ministry possible!

Financial Update as of November 30, 2023:

Here are some broad highlights from our financial reporting Year to Date November 30, 2023:

	<u>Actual</u>	-	<u>Anticipated</u>	=	<u>Difference</u>
Pledges and Donations	\$168,703.22		\$188,833.33		(\$20,130.11)
Rental Income	\$105,421.98		\$108,029.17		(\$ 2,607.19)
Total Income	\$289,221.37		\$310,177.09		(\$20,955.72)
<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>\$285,677.13</u>		<u>\$304,111.17</u>		<u>(\$18,434.04)</u>
Net Unrestricted Income*	\$ 3,544.24				
Adjusted *NUI	(\$ 3,686.42)				

So, what do these numbers mean? Our donations and pledges are less than what was anticipated at this point in the year by \$20,130. With this, our Net Unrestricted Income (NUI) was less than our expenses by \$3,544. The Adjusted NUI happens below the NUI line because the principal payments on our loan are not considered an expense for accounting purposes, although the principal payment does come out of our checking account. Therefore, at the end of November our Adjusted NUI was more than our expenses by \$3,686, that is, *we have spent \$3,686 more than we have received at the end of November.*

Our collective generosity and our community partnerships along with the movement of the Spirit among us makes our ministries possible. Thanks be to God for our ministries.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about finance or facility issues, please ask James Rager, our Property and Finance Moderator, or Pastor Cheryl.



Here is the plan for 2024:

The first Sunday of the month everyone participates in worship on Communion Sunday.

All other Sundays Ms. Sereena and Mr. Wilson will be our lead teachers, with Mr. Wilson teaching and helping with any technology needs! Thanks, Mr. Wilson! These teachers are assisted by other capable volunteers, as we always need at least two teachers in each class.

Has God been nudging you to become a helper or teacher? Let Ms. Sereena or Mr. Wilson or Pastor Cheryl know! Thank you!

Looking back to December, the young disciples enjoyed decorating their hope and love boards and singing with Ms. Dora. Thank you to all the young disciples who sang for us on Christmas Eve!

Let Mr. Wilson know if your young disciple would like to participate in worship.

We give thanks for the Young Disciples that assisted with leading the Prayer for Illumination during December: Rich Cunningham, Nevil Cunningham, Penelope Cunningham, Zachary Emmanuel, and Alison Kayange. If your children and youth would like other opportunities to lead worship let Pastor Cheryl know!

May we instill in our children and youth a lifelong passion for nurturing their relationship with God!



Winter camp program at Big Bear Lake Christian Conference Center still has space available.

Winter camp will be the weekend of March 15th - 17th. The cost for Junior and High School kids is \$135. This year's March Madness includes crafts, worship, and other activities.

If you would like more information, go to www.bblccc.com.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER 2023



The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands held its regularly scheduled Stated Session Meeting on Monday evening, December 18, 2023, via a Zoom Meeting, and took the following actions:

- Received the Unaudited Financial Report for the month ending November 30, 2023.

Total Unrestricted Income:	\$23,690.41
Total Unrestricted Expense:	\$26,688.60
Unrestricted Income (Loss):	(\$2,998.19)
Less Principal Payment on Loan:	(\$664.89)
Adjusted Unrestricted Income:	(\$3,663.08)
Balance in General Account:	\$116,708.52

Total Operating Funds in the General Account: \$37,657.54

- Received information about the work of the various church committees and the Board of Deacons during the months of November and December 2023.
- Expressed gratitude to Patti Robertson for her tireless work on the Board of Deacons for the past six years, and especially for her leadership as Moderator for the past three years.
- Reviewed the FPCR Membership Roll and approved, with regret, removing thirteen (13) members from the FPCR Roll as a result of the member's move from the area or the member's lack of active participation in the work and worship with the FPCR congregation for a period of two years. (Book of Order G-3.0204).
- Approved an Anti-Racism Policy and an Anti-Harassment Policy for FPCR, as required by the Presbytery of Riverside.
- Approved tabling the motion to approve the 2024 FPCR Budget until the January 13, 2024 Leadership Team Meeting where further discussions can take place.
- Approved a Congregational Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, February 18, 2024, after the 10:00 a.m. morning Worship Service, for the purpose of presenting the 2023 FPCR Annual Report to the congregation.



A MOMENT FOR DEACONS

By Patti Robertson,
Moderator of Deacons

Well, we are through another year, goodbye to 2023! Hello, 2024!

This is my last Moment for Deacons as my term as moderator is finished as of 01/01/2024. I wanted to thank our wonderful congregation for all of the support given to the Deacons over the past year. We have had memorial receptions, lilies at Easter, Poinsettias at Christmas, helped those in our congregation that could use a little help, and helped our community in many ways and it is all because of the generosity of our church members supporting the Deacons.

Thank you all so much. Deacons will start 2024 with a new Moderator, Angela Lambert! I could not ask for anyone better to take over leadership.

Happy New Year and God Bless,

Note from the church secretary:

Thank you, Patti! I so appreciate your “Moment for Deacons” article always arriving in my mailbox well ahead of the newsletter publishing deadline. Serving as moderator of any committee is a daunting task, but it is especially so for an active group like the Deacons. Angela has some big shoes to fill!



Redlands Area Interfaith Council

January 11, 2023

The Redlands Area Interfaith Council’s (RAIC) first meeting of the New Year will be a rich celebration of the diversity of faith traditions in our city. The meeting will take place at Redlands Seventh-Day Adventist Church located at 520 Brookside Avenue.

This organization is building bridges that promote interfaith relationships with mutual respect and understanding and working towards peace in our community in tangible ways.

Be a part of their work by reaching out and getting to know someone of another faith tradition! We are to be repairers of the breach in our community and our world.

Facebook Daily Prayer

First Presbyterian Church of Redlands

Did you know that the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands has a public Facebook page? This is where people from around the globe can access our weekly worship services as well as a daily post, which shares a portion of a psalm each day. We have had people from a River Cruise in Europe, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malawi, Scotland, Texas, Arizona, New Jersey, Oregon, and other places around the world drop in to see what God is doing in our midst! The good news of great joy is being shared worldwide through this gift of technology.

If you don't have a Facebook account, you can still access all worship services by copying and pasting the following link into your web browser:

<https://www.facebook.com/106569590974548/live/>

The Daily Prayer Ministry shares a portion of a psalm with a reflective question, a prayer, dismissal, and a photo. Here is an example of what you can expect:

Daily Prayer - Monday, January 1, 2024



Happy New Year!

“Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. Praise befits the upright. Praise the Lord with the lyre; make melody to the Lord with the harp of ten strings. Sing to the Lord a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts. For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. God loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.” [Psalm 33:1-5; NRSV] What is causing you to rejoice this day as this New Year Begins?

Prayer

Eternal God, our beginning and our end, be our starting point and our safe haven, and accompany us in this day's journey as the New Year begins. Use our hands to do the work of your creation and use our very lives to bring others the new life you give this world through Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all. Amen.

Dismissal

May God bless you and keep you and give you peace this day. Amen. #dailyprayer #redlands #fpcredlands #devotional

Elders and Deacon Gathering January 13, 2024 from 9 A.M. to Noon

As we begin this New Year, please pray for our elders and deacons as they will come together on January 13, 2024, in Room One from 9:00 A.M. to Noon. Together we will review 2023 and strategize for 2024 and beyond. With Pastor Cheryl's upcoming sabbatical from June through Labor Day Weekend in September, we have much to accomplish.

In preparation for our meeting, we would love to hear from you. You can email office@fpcredlands.org or pastorcheryl@fpcredlands.org with input to the following questions:

What are the church's strengths? What are we doing well?

What are our challenges? What needs to be changed, improved, or eliminated?

Share your own stories: How have you contributed to some of the church's strengths and how have you been involved in helping the church meet some of its challenges.

It is an honor and privilege to be your pastor and I ask that you pray for all our staff as well as our elder and deacon leadership teams, as together we all seek to be faithful in serving this church responsibly with the gifts God has given each of us.



Point In Time Count – An Opportunity to Serve January 25, 2024

The Point-in-Time count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. The 2024 Point-In-Time Count will be conducted beginning on January 25, 2024, from 6:00am to 10:00am in individual cities. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens. Continuums of Care must also conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on an annual basis. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

You can sign up to participate by registering at the following website:

<https://sbchp.sbcounty.gov/community-projects/point-in-time-count/>

David Rabindranath, our City of Redlands Homeless Solutions Coordinator, is requesting our help! Who would like to join Pastor Cheryl in this community service. It does require one early morning and a training session. Pastor Cheryl is familiar with the software being used, so there's no need to be tech savvy to participate. You just need to be willing and able to walk and record those in the area you have been assigned. If you have any questions, just ask!

First Presbyterian
Church of Redlands

Living the heart & mind
of Christ at the heart of
the city

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, relationships,
exploration, and prayer.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF REDLANDS

AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY
OF FAITH, LIVING THE HEART
AND MIND OF CHRIST AT THE
HEART OF THE CITY

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welcome your comments!

You may also view this newsletter on our web site. Go to
www.fpcredlands.org and then click on The *Messenger*
tab at the top of the page.

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**Return Service
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