

# FIRST PRESS



## PENTECOST

*Even Better Than Christmas!*

Let's be honest: if Church holidays were high school students, **Christmas** would be both the class president and homecoming queen—popular, well-dressed, and everyone's favorite. But **Pentecost**? Pentecost is like that quiet genius in the back row. Not flashy, doesn't get much attention, but without him, the whole thing falls apart.

Yes, I'm here to say it: **Pentecost is more important for the Church than Christmas.**

I know. That sounds like heresy at first—especially to anyone who's ever sung "O Come, All Ye Faithful" under twinkle lights with cocoa in hand. But hear me out.

*Christmas Celebrates the Birth of Christ; Pentecost Celebrates the Birth of the Church*

Jesus being born is, of course, a Very Big Deal. No Jesus, no Gospel. No Gospel, no salvation. And yes, the Incarnation is a miracle beyond comprehension—God putting on diapers for the sake of the world.

But here's the twist: **the Church didn't start in the manger.** No one in Bethlehem formed a committee, handed out nametags, or organized a committee meeting. The shepherds worshiped, the Magi traveled, Mary sang a solo, and then everyone went home.

The Church—the gathered, Spirit-filled community of believers who carry the Good News to the ends of the earth—was born not in Bethlehem but in **Jerusalem**, on the

*(continued on page 2)*

# PASTOR NOEL ANDERSON



day of **Pentecost**. That's when a rushing wind blew, fiery languages fell, and the disciples suddenly became a movement rather than a study group.

Pentecost is the moment the mission starts. It's the Church's birthday—and the beginning of the new life whereby the Holy Spirit leads us rather than the Law.

*At Christmas, God Came To Us. At Pentecost, God Came Into Us*

That's a subtle but cosmic difference.

At Christmas, we marvel that God would dwell *among* us in the flesh. "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us," John writes (John 1:14). And we should marvel. The Incarnation is wonder wrapped in swaddling clothes.

But at Pentecost, God takes it further. The Holy Spirit doesn't just walk alongside the disciples—**He fills them**. The divine presence takes up residence *amid* human beings. That's not just God with us. That's God *in and among* us.

And what happens next? They speak in tongues. They preach. They baptize thousands. Peter—the same guy who couldn't admit to knowing Jesus to a little servant girl—suddenly sounds eloquent and highly charged—a preacher with a fire in his bones.

Christmas introduced Jesus to the world. Pentecost unleashes Christ into and through the Church.

*Pentecost Actually Requires a Response*

Let's be honest. Christmas is lovely, but kind of passive. It's like getting on a ride at Disneyland. The sights and sounds may be marvelous, but you sit through the ride as a spectator—an observer. Yes, you decorate, sing songs, attend a pageant, and sip cider. You up your gift-giving a bit and get misty-eyed by the carols at the candlelight service. But you are a locked into your seat for the ride. Pentecost? That's a whole different story. **You can't "just watch" Pentecost.** You're either filled with the Spirit... or asking what in the world is going on.

When Peter preached on Pentecost, the crowd was "cut to the heart" and asked, "*Brothers, what should we do?*" (Acts 2:37). The answer wasn't, "Go home and think about it." It was: *Repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit, and join this wild, world-changing movement.*

Pentecost demands participation. It says: you've heard the Gospel, you've seen the power—**now get in the game.**

*There's More Fire and Less Fuss*

Let's talk logistics.

Christmas involves weeks of preparation, traffic, shopping, wrapping paper, complicated family dinners, and fights about whether "Die Hard" is a Christmas movie (it is). It's a beautiful season, but it's not exactly restful.

Pentecost, on the other hand? One big day. No shopping. No baking. Just wind, fire, preaching, and the explosive growth of the Church. You don't even need decorations—just wear something red and show up hungry for the Spirit.

Sure, there's no Beyoncé soundtrack, but you do get tongues of flame. Try fitting *that* into a snow globe.

*Jesus Himself Said Pentecost Was Better*

Don't take my word for it. Take Jesus'. In John 16:7, Jesus tells the disciples, "*It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you.*"

Wait—what?

Yes, Jesus Himself says that the coming of the Holy Spirit—what we celebrate at Pentecost—is *better* for us than His physical presence on earth.

That's huge.

*In Conclusion: Let's Party Like It's AD 33*

This isn't a knock on Christmas. We love it. We need it. Keep the nativity scenes and the candlelight carols. But let's stop treating **Pentecost like the Church's weird cousin who only gets invited out of obligation.**

Pentecost is the day the Church becomes who we're meant to be—Spirit-filled, mission-minded, and radically alive.

So this year, throw a Pentecost party. Wear red. Light a fire pit. Bake a cake. Sing a *new* song. And remember: *the Spirit has come, the Church is alive, and the best is yet to come.*

Now that's worth celebrating—even if it doesn't come with presents. †

# ELEVATE WITH MATT SHOOL



## Authentic Discipleship of Tween and Teen Girls

[www.empoweredhomes.org](http://www.empoweredhomes.org)

### One

**Discipleship happens when you trust God fully with His daughter.**

Someone once taught me in ministry the importance of recognizing my role in discipleship. I am no one's Savior and it is not my job to bear all the burdens Jesus is meant to carry. I regularly do three things with girls I meet with:

#### Ask God,

- "Lord, how are you discipling \_\_\_\_\_ today? How can I join you in that? What are you asking me to share with her?" This positions my heart to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and whatever/however He is trying to work in her life.
- When girls are sharing heavy burdens with me, I allow God into those moments with this simple prayer to Him: "God, I place the cross of Christ between me and \_\_\_\_\_ right now." This simple acknowledgement and confession to Jesus allows me to release the weight of these heavy burdens and reminds me to let God rightfully take it.
- **Remember:** You are entrusted to guide your daughter to God's word and to a relationship with Jesus. You are called to submit to the process God has laid out for parents and trust God for the outcome.



### Two

**Discipleship happens when people are known.**

In order to really walk with a student through seasons and stages of life, it is key that they be authentic and truly known. I have found there is no better tool than to become a great question-asker and listener. Create space and opportunities for open communication and be patient to learn her hurts and pains, insecurities, areas of strength, and ways you see God has naturally wired her. This will help you as you continue to invest in her as the relationship grows. Be a student of your child and patiently learn how she communicates best.



### Three

**Discipleship happens when girls are taught how and why to study the Scriptures and spend time with God regularly.**

Scripture and conversations regarding the Lord are huge in discipleship. It is so important to share with students both how to read Scripture and why it is essential to our relationship with Christ. There is nothing sweeter than teaching and walking someone through Scripture. Helping girls develop the discipline of creating their own space and time for this daily practice is huge.





**A few suggestions:**

- ESV Scripture journals have been a great tool in walking with girls through Scripture.
- Regularly check in on how time with the Lord has been. I ask girls weekly where they have been in Scripture and what God is teaching them.

**Four****Discipleship happens when girls are taught to pray.**

Prayer should play an essential part of discipleship. It should not be assumed that girls know how to pray. Teach them to pray by modeling it with them and letting them into your prayer life. Pray together. Let them know you are praying for them throughout the week. Have them pray for you and be authentic in what you need prayer for.

**Five****Discipleship happens when girls are challenged to be Christ-minded leaders in their homes and areas of influence.**

Not only should girls be learning how to read through Scripture and pray, but they also need to be challenged in areas of influence in their lives: at home, in their schools, and in their activities. Kids love being challenged. I am regularly inspiring students to love their families in different areas, encouraging them through friendship and relationship challenges, and pointing them to lead for Christ in their passions.

**Six****Discipleship happens when girls see your real life.**

It's great for a girl to see me sitting at a coffee shop reading Scripture and praying with them, but that is only part of my walk with Christ. Allowing girls to see the full picture includes parts you maybe wouldn't broadcast to the world: hardship, family life, and even just days where walking with Jesus is hard. In age appropriate ways, share your story and how God is working in your own life. They are watching you at all times. How you interact on social media, how you talk to the person at the checkout counter, and how you respond to the trials you face. All of these areas and more are shepherding them in how to walk with God in every area of their life. They don't need you to be perfect, they need you to be real and see a true expression of living out faith and practicing your own need for God's love and forgiveness.

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

**Luke 11:9-10A**



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## TRUSTEES WITH GARY CUSTER

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### **GREAT BLUE HERON**

Another of God's "GREAT" creations. When I saw this at Cambria, I thought, this bird reminds me of myself. No doubt you think I'm saying this because he is tall, but you would be mistaken. I was thinking this because he has his mouth wide open, just like I do when the summer months get here and it becomes more challenging to get the offerings to keep our ministries going, as well as the air conditioning.

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING SO  
THAT OTHERS MAY KNOW CHRIST!**

# WORSHIP WITH TONY WEBNER

## FPCU FAMILY BRINGS THE PASSION OF HOLY WEEK ALIVE

Holy Week 2025 was truly a labor of spiritual and congregational love by our FPCU family.

From the early planning stages to the final moments of worship, over two dozen congregation members offered their time, energy, and gifts to ensure Holy Week services were thoughtful, welcoming, and spiritually rich.

A particular highlight was the Good Friday Tenebrae Worship Service. It was a moment that truly showcased our church as a family in action—members reading scripture, singing with the Choir, preparing the sanctuary, ensuring everything flowed smoothly.

Every detail came together because of people's commitment to the passion of Holy Week.

We want to express a heartfelt thank you on behalf of the entire Congregation.

FPCU is more than a congregation. We are a family of the Holy Spirit, and together we make our church a place of Christ's love in action!







## How Church Summer Activities Help with Family Social Bonding

Church summer activities provide a meaningful way for families to spend quality time together, strengthen relationships, and build lasting memories. These activities—such as picnics, retreats, service projects, Vacation Bible Schools, and family fun days—create a relaxed and supportive environment where families can connect with other community members.

Participating in these events encourages open communication, teamwork, and shared experiences, all of which contribute to stronger family bonds. Whether working together on a mission project or enjoying games and meals at a church picnic, families learn to support, listen, and enjoy one another's company outside their daily routines.

Church summer programs also connect families with others who share similar values, offering opportunities to form friendships and support networks. These connections reduce feelings of isolation and promote a sense of belonging, essential for emotional well-being.

Spiritually, these activities reinforce family values, strengthen faith, and provide collective reflection and prayer moments. Worshipping or volunteering together deepens the sense of unity and shared purpose within the family.

Community summer activities nurture family bonding by blending fun, faith, and fellowship. They help families grow closer to each other and their community, creating a foundation for strong, healthy relationships that last well beyond the summer.

So join our summer activities like VBS and others, and grow as a church family. See you all this summer.

Kevin Clinton, Director of Children's Ministries



## GATHER WITH SUE FRAZEE



It's been a busy time for Gather! Cinco de Mayo followed quickly after the Easter brunch. Then came Mother's Day! We are planning our annual Father's Day make-your-own ice cream sundae social, YUM! We enjoy providing these opportunities for fellowship and hope you enjoy them too!





## Get a lift from LIFT

(Ladies in Fellowship Together)



**Let's Sing!**  
Time to Sing  
Along with the  
Rancho Rockers!

**Friday, June 13, 11am -1 pm, Hart Hall**

**Doors open 10:45 -- Program starts promptly at 11:00**

We are ending our fourth year! Once again, the Rancho Rockers will entertain us with their ukuleles and we are also again providing lunch! Let's celebrate!

The Rockers, a local group that plays at various venues like churches and community centers, will entertain us with a wide range of songs from oldies to country. This is their 4th appearance with us.

Following a time of worship and a devotion, the Rancho Rockers will rock out on their ukuleles. Then we will join them for a rousing rendition of "You Are My Sunshine." After that, lunch will be provided. Let's spend time planning some summer fun with each other!

### Ready for Summer Reading?

Time for our summer book exchange. Bring your books to share – put your name and phone number in the books if you want them returned.

### Men are invited!

Yes, it's Ladies in Fellowship Together, but we are happy to invite the men. So don't be shy, gentlemen!

### Help us feed the hungry!

We are collecting contributions for the food ministry Foothill Family Shelter in Upland.

**Personal care items are also needed.**

**Please note: This is our last meeting  
till the second Friday of September 2025**

**Lunch Will Be Provided!**

**To be sure we have enough food  
for everyone, please sign up  
after church service June 1 and 8,  
or contact Carol Diess by June 10,  
626-482-8862 or sbbmom@aol.com**

**Thank you for  
your generous  
donations  
to support LIFT  
programming!**



## JUNE PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2-Wilson	3-Zahniser	4-Andong	5- Alford	6-Amason	7- Anderson
8	9- Anguka,J	10- Anguka,W	11- Argent	12- Azubuike	13- Barker	14- Basile
15	16- Bimber	17- Borger	18- Bragg	19- Bridge	20- Brown	21- Buccheri
22	23- Burns	24- Carder	25- Carpenter	26- Carter	27-Chaffino	28- Cook,D.
29	30-Cook,J.					

**Please pray for healing and restoration for:**

Jean Vanvieldt, Felicia Foreman, Bill Howie, Lynn McClelland,  
Joni Stallings, David Brinkley, Kay Hester, Iris Joiner, Marie Swenson, Bob Summers,  
Terry King, Melinda Dorsman, Barbara Hansen

**Pray for those who are homebound or in convalescent care:**

Dolores Karros, John Dooley, Beth Brinkley, Florence Lutz, Dick Davidson  
Please call Gael in the office if we need to update any information. Thank you. 909-982-8811.

## *June Birthdays*

08 Joanna Anguka  
09 Mike Van Beek  
10 Gerri Mowery  
11 Maria Basile  
13 Blanca Hernandez  
20 Dick Zahniser  
22 Mark Basile  
23 Bob Haas  
24 Donna Strowger  
24 Lisa Murdy  
26 Bob Whitmore  
27 Marjorie Brown

28 Joan Sullivan  
28 Nancy Mulligan  
29 Rachel Cowles  
30 Les Alford

We would also like to extend birthday greetings to any other **June** babies not on our list. If you know of a member's birthday that needs to be added, please call Gael in the church office @ 982-8811. Thank you, and

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!**

JUNE						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> <b>10am</b> <b>Worship</b> <b>with</b> <b>Communion</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Personnel</b>	<b>3</b> <b>6pm Serve</b> <b>7pm Gather</b>  <b>AA Groups-</b> HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	<b>4</b> 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	<b>5</b> <b>5:30pm</b> <b>Deacons</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>EOT</b> <b>Church</b> <b>2pm-10pm</b> <b>HH</b>  <b>9am-noon</b> <b>Session</b>
<b>8</b> PENTECOST <b>10am</b> <b>Worship</b>	<b>9</b> <b>"TRUE</b> <b>NORTH"</b>  <b>VBS 5-7 pm</b>	<b>10</b> <b>5pm Worship</b> <b>6pm Trustees</b> <b>AA Groups-</b> HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR  <b>VBS 5-7 pm</b>	<b>11</b> 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate  <b>VBS 5-7 pm</b>	<b>12</b> <b>12:30pm</b> <b>Preschool</b> <b>Board</b>  <b>VBS 5-7 pm</b>	<b>13</b> <b>L.I.F.T.</b> <b>9-2 pm</b>  <b>VBS 5-7 pm</b>	<b>14</b> <b>2 pm</b> <b>Memorial for</b> <b>Louis Kimes</b> <b>Reception in</b> <b>H.H.</b>
<b>15</b> <b>10am</b> <b>Worship</b> <b>VBS Sunday</b> <b>Father's</b> <b>Day</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  <b>AA Groups-</b> HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	<b>18</b> 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	<b>19</b> <b>6:30pm Grow</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <b>10 am</b> <b>Worship</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  <b>AA Groups-</b> HH & upstairs  <b>6:30pm</b> <b>SESSION</b>	<b>25</b> 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <b>10 am</b> <b>Worship</b>	<b>30</b>					





**GROWING IN CHRIST,  
MAKING HIM KNOWN**

**Deacons**

Becky Custer  
Heather Decauwer  
Carol Diess  
Sue Fredendall  
Gloria Geiger  
Martha Hebert  
Lisa Murdy  
Margaret Pilcher  
Mark Polchow  
Kim Righetti  
Sue Sindelar

**Trustees**

Gary Custer, President  
Sue Frazee, Secretary  
Herb Joiner, Member at Large

**Staff**

Noel Anderson, Senior Pastor  
Matt Shool, Youth Ministries  
Kevin Clinton, Children's Ministries  
Jannina Guzman, Office Manager  
Gael Lecce, Receptionist

**Elders**

William Anguka  
Gary Custer  
Georgia Decker  
Sue Frazee  
Trevor McMullen  
Pam Polchow  
Randy Righetti  
Van Romine  
Jim Smirl  
Donna Strowger  
Tony Webner

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