

FIRST PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF UPLAND



"LIVING OUR FAITH"

"What does the Lord require of you, mortal one? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

During the week of the spiritual retreat that I attended on the island of Iona in Scotland, we began every day at 7:15 am with silent meditation and prayer. After breakfast, I attended morning prayer services in the ancient Abbey. We began the teaching session at 10 am with prayer and ended it with prayer, movement and song. We were encouraged to use the afternoons to walk and explore, appreciating the beauty of God's creation, even in the rain.

What was God teaching us on this retreat through all this prayer and teaching and walking that we did? Several important themes emerged, which remind me strongly of the passage from Micah 6:8. The first theme was the amazing intimate Presence of God that is always with us. We experienced the Light of Christ with us in prayer, in song, and in our walks. We

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PASTOR TINA BLAIR

experienced the joy of God as we absorbed the beauty of the Earth into our being. We remembered that God never abandons us, whatever the circumstances are in our life. We remembered to walk humbly with our God.

A second theme was that of love and compassion. God created us in God's own image, breathing God's divine spark of life in us. Each one of us is unique and precious to God, and so we are to care for ourselves and nurture the gifts and abilities that God has given us. Likewise, we are to look for God's spark in every human being, honoring them as a unique creation of God. Just as we love God, who is Love, we are to love. Just as God has shown compassion to us, so are we to pour out compassion on others. Through our walk with God in prayer, we can draw on power of the Spirit to love more fully.



The presence of God, along with the importance of love and compassion, lead naturally to understanding that the work of justice is also essential. The Presbyterian Church has long believed that we live out our faith by working to transform our world. We are to examine ourselves and the structures of our society and to change them if needed. If justice, mercy, and equality are not applied to every one of God's creatures then we are to advocate for them and help them in their troubles.

We also acknowledged that the Earth is to be valued as God's precious creation. It is to be loved and cared for, rather than exploited and abused. On the island retreat, we were very aware of the beauty of the intersection of earth, air and sky. For centuries worshipers there have been praising

God for the riches and beauty of this planet. Part of our work of justice and compassion, then, is to care for the planet that is our home — for its earth, its air, its waters, its creatures.

I hope that during this month of October, we may begin to think of ways in which to live out more fully these words of scripture. I hope that we can find the ways of justice, the ways of kindness, and deepen the ways that we walk humbly with our God.



ELEVATE MATT SHOOL

HOW I'M TEACHING THE PSALMS

Author: Cody Cagle

Source: youthpastortheologian.com | September 9, 2026



While this article is geared towards youth pastors and teachers, all Christian parents should function as Bible teachers and youth pastors to their own kids "Training a child in the way they should grow." (Proverbs 22:6). Maybe reading the Psalms together using these tools could prove to be a helpful resource for you and your teenager.

...so I decided to lead our student ministry through a series in the Psalms that we're calling "Walking with God through Every Season."



I chose this series title because the Psalms, as a collection of Hebrew songs and prayers, enable us to do just that: to walk faithfully with God through all seasons of life! In these ancient songs we find poetic language that helps us no matter where we are in our walk with Christ. We can learn to rejoice and lament, wrestle and rest, repent and forgive! The Psalms cover the entire range of human emotion, and they can model how to express our feelings, while learning to trust God even when navigating difficult circumstances.

Why Teaching the Psalms is Important

We all have students in our ministries who are looking for ways to express the anxieties of their hearts: the 10th grade girl whose parents are getting divorced, the 7th grade boy who is bullied at school or at home, the 12th grader who is overwhelmed about life

after high school, or the student who is just grateful for what God has been doing in their life and can't find the right way to say it. The Psalms give us words, inspired by God, to reflect on and hold fast to no matter what we are experiencing. They help us praise in times of rejoicing and comfort us in times of grief. They help us move forward in hope and encourage us when we despair. They guide us when we are confused and ground us when things are falling apart. They are truly words with the power to change our lives!

But the Psalms do this in a way that is directed, becoming guardrails that shape how we approach God. They give us substantive and essential doctrines, admonishments to live wisely, and give us models of how to pray to God, praise God, and deal with hardship and suffering. In short, I believe you should seriously consider teaching the Psalms because they are experientially and theologically rich. They provide our students with a God-given vocabulary for interpreting and responding to the failures, challenges, and joys of life.

Considerations for Selecting Psalms to Teach

I am a strong proponent of expository preaching in student ministry, which often lends itself to teaching sequentially through a book of the Bible. That is one approach I wouldn't recommend when it comes to the Psalms! But organizing the series thematically doesn't mean abandoning exposition, especially since the Psalms are grouped into particular "books" within the book, allowing for purposeful selection without neglecting their intended use. Each week, I still aim to carefully explain and apply the Psalm; the difference is simply that I'm choosing the texts according to a narrower focus, rather than preaching Psalm 1 to Psalm 150. To be a good steward of the very limited time we have with our students, I think these factors should be considered as we develop our teaching scope and sequence.

Here are some of my recommendations for choosing which Psalms to teach:

A. Choose Significant Psalms

When it comes to guiding our students through the psalter, I believe we have a duty to select those psalms that have proven to be significant in the life of the church. How cool is it to teach the Psalms that have formed the

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worship, theology, prayers, and imagination of God's people for generations?! Examples include: Psalms 1, 8, 19, 22, 23, 46, 103. Additionally, it might be helpful to preach Psalms that your students, immediately associate with the psalter (and no, you don't need to always do so with "a twist"). Don't underestimate the impact hearing a familiar message on a favorite passage can have!

B. Choose Your Favorite Psalms

We all have those certain Psalms that are special to us. Maybe during a hard season of life, a psalm encouraged you in a powerful way. Maybe, like myself, there were certain psalms that you read as a student that struck a chord (like Psalms 32, 34, 51, 100). Do your students a favor and include some of those psalms that you are passionate about! Tell them how that psalm impacted you, whether it comforted you in a dark time or helped you see God in a new light. It is never a bad idea to encourage students with how God's Word has worked in your life! They'll appreciate your authenticity.

C. Choose a Variety of Psalms

One final word of advice when it comes to selecting which psalms to teach is to choose a variety of psalms. One of our goals, in addition to covering some of their favorite "classics," should be to expose students to a variety of topics, themes, genres, and tones.

As poetry, the Psalms themselves cover a great variety of subjects, and they consist of many different poetic forms and types. There are Psalms of lament, praise, thanksgiving, celebration, wisdom, imprecation, and each one matters for a different reason. The Psalms are artistic theological expressions, and we should embrace their variety to our advantage!

How I Structured My Series on the Psalms

I chose to organize my sermon series into 5 thematic "mini-series". I have found this to be a helpful approach because it allows me to cover a lot of ground, while at the same time protecting me from the oversight of choosing psalms that are too repetitive.

1) Walking with God (Introduction to the Psalms)

- Psalms 1, 2, 8, 19, 23, 27.
- Learning who God is and what it means to walk with him.

2) Walking with God Through Suffering (Lament & Trust)

- Psalms 22, 30, 42-43, 46, 88.
- Learning to bring our suffering to God while trusting his character.

3) Walking with God Through Failure (Repentance & Grace)

- Psalms 32, 51, 103, 106.
- Learning to respond to our sin while resting in God's abundant mercy.

4) Walking with God Through Worship (God's Greatness)

- Psalms 34, 95, 97, 145.
- Learning to respond to God's greatness with wholehearted worship.

5) Walking with God Through Hope (Future Confidence)

- Psalms 73, 121, 139.
- Learning to place our confident hope in God's promises.



Many students are used to hearing teaching that falls flat because it doesn't connect with what they're going through. They are struggling, worried, and they often don't think that God's Word is the cure they need. But the beauty of the Psalms is that not only does it afford us the flexibility to touch on heavy issues, but they give us guidelines to how we should respond in our own hearts! What an opportunity for our students to not only hear the truth, but to feel it. As they hear David's cries for salvation, the mourning of Israel in their ascent, the awesomeness of God that only Moses could understand, and the cries of the Suffering Servant who died to make them new, may God's Word plant its roots deeply in them. After all, that's what we hope for.

TRUSTEES GARY CUSTER

FPCU STEWARDSHIP, PLEDGING, AND GIFTS

Church stewardship is the spiritual practice of managing God's gifts of time, talent, and treasure to support the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Upland. Currently, our mission and ministry are "Growing in Christ, and Making Him Known," which defines our core purpose, establishes our values, and guides how we serve God and our community.

Stewardship is a lifestyle of gratitude, recognizing that everything belongs to God, cultivated through spiritual growth (a deepening faith, rather than a response to a financial obligation or a fundraising pitch).

If you have been present at FPCU in October in the past, you remember this is the month we take pledges to support the church's needs. This year, I ask that instead of viewing pledging as "paying dues" to keep the church doors open, you view it as a spiritual discipline - similar to prayer, worship, or reading scripture; yes, you could say it is part of "GROWING IN CHRIST, AND MAKING HIM KNOWN,



The Northern Flicker's return to California Peaks in October, in time for PLEDGING YEA!!

First Presbyterian Church of Upland Financial Summary				
SUMMARY	Income/Expense August 2026		Year to Date	
Opening Checkbook Bal.	\$ 66,725.99		\$ 17,218.61	
Added Voided Checks	\$ -		\$ -	
Income for Budget Accts.	\$ 52,771.95		\$ 368,952.62	
Security Deposit Received	\$ -		\$ 2,200.00	
Transfer To/From Reserves	\$ -		\$ -	
Expenses for Budget Accts.	\$ (48,333.29)		\$ (319,804.00)	
Income for Non-Budget Accts.	\$ 20.00		\$ 4,030.00	
Disbursements for Non-Budget Accts.	\$ -		\$ (1,412.58)	
Checkbook Balance as of 8/31/2026	\$ 71,184.65		\$ 71,184.65	
Note:				
	Collected / Expended August 2026	Monthly Budgeted	Collected / Expended Year to Date	Amount Budgeted to Date
Pledge Income & Loose Offerings	\$ 28,782.50	\$ 31,255.00	\$ 242,376.33	\$ 250,040.00
Budgeted Expenses	\$ 48,333.29	\$ 57,888.00	\$ 319,804.00	\$ 463,104.00

GATHER SUE FRAZEE

Gather's first event of the season was the kickoff Sunday Brunch. A delicious meal was served and enjoyed by all!



A purple poster for a 'Trunk or Treat' event. At the top, a string of orange and black triangular bunting hangs across the width. The title 'TRUNK OR TREAT' is in large, bold, orange letters, with 'OR' in a small white circle. Below the title, white text reads: 'PLEASE DONATE CANDY & DROP OFF IN THE CHURCH OFFICE! CANDY MUST BE SEALED IN PACKAGE. THANK YOU!'. In the center, there are two yellow rectangular boxes: the top one says 'WEDNESDAY. October 28th' and the bottom one says 'Starts at 5-6:30 PM'. At the bottom, three cartoon children in Halloween costumes (a pumpkin head, a witch, and a boy) are holding baskets of candy. A faint outline of a shopping cart is visible in the background.

TRUNK OR TREAT

PLEASE DONATE CANDY &
DROP OFF IN THE CHURCH OFFICE!
CANDY MUST BE SEALED IN PACKAGE.
THANK YOU!

WEDNESDAY.
October 28th

Starts at 5-6:30 PM

A poster for an Oktoberfest event. The background is white with various yellow and blue icons related to beer and food, such as beer mugs, hops, and pretzels. Two blue and white checkered bunting strings hang from the top corners. In the center, a graphic of a beer mug with a red ribbon banner across it says 'OKTOBERFEST'. Below this, the date and time are listed: 'SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH' and '6:00 PM'. The ticket prices are '\$10 per Adult' and '\$5 per Child'. At the bottom left, a photo of two men in traditional German attire (lederhosen and hats) holding beer bottles is shown. At the bottom right, there is a graphic of wheat stalks. A block of text at the bottom explains the event details.

Join us for an

OKTOBERFEST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
6:00 PM

\$10 per Adult
\$5 per Child

We will serve traditional German food and beverages. Come enjoy the oom-pa-pa fun. Sign up in Hart Hall after Sunday service or call the office at (909)982-8811 to make your reservation.

CONNECT SHAWN KATHOL

Connecting at First Pres: Finding Your Place & Helping Others Find Theirs

You might have recently heard about the **Connect Team**—a newly formed ministry committee accountable to Session and working in active partnership with the Board of Deacons. Our mission is to **build intentional bridges between Sunday morning worship and the everyday life of our church family**, ensuring every newcomer feels seen, regular attenders find pathways to belong, and our congregation remains closely connected.

What We've Been Up To

Since forming in late July, our team has been meeting weekly to lay the groundwork for several key initiatives:

- **Visitor Welcome Bags:** We are assembling special welcome bags for first-time guests, complete with 3D-printed crosses and bookmarks, a daily devotional, information about church ministries, and a welcome letter from Pastor Tina.
- **Database & Record Cleanup:** Behind the scenes in Planning Center, we have resolved over 200 outdated or unassigned records so our parish lists and directory remain accurate and dependable.
- **Deacon & Care Support:** We set up automated contact workflows to help our Deacons and pastoral staff track regular check-ins, ensuring members navigating illness, relocation, or life transitions are actively supported.
- **New Member Classes coming soon:** In coordination with Pastor Tina and the Deacons, we are working on the lists for new member orientation classes. Stay tuned for dates! Let us know if you're interested in attending!

Have questions, suggestions, or want to connect? Reach out to us at Connect@FPC-Upland.com or chat with any team member: **Shawn Kathol**, **Diane Hallihan**, **Donna Strowger**, **Becky Custer**, or **Loreto D'Monte**.

LADIES IN FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER

Get a lift from LIFT
(Ladies in Fellowship Together)



**Happy
Anniversary
to Us!**
**Celebrating
5 Years!**

**Friday, October 9,
11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Hart Hall**

Doors open 10:45 – Program starts promptly at 11:00

Who doesn't like a celebration? We certainly do! And we are celebrating FIVE years of LIFT. We began as soon as COVID-19 protocol allowed us to gather once again and we're still going strong. It's become a must-go-to, be-there-or-be-square event for many of us.

After a few worship songs and a devotion, we will spend our time reminiscing what LIFT has mean to us all accompanied by a slide show of some of our experiences. We've enjoyed some great presentations, learned a few things, made new friends, and more. So spend some time reflecting on your favorite LIFT memories and choose at least one to share with the rest of us. It will be a wonderful blessing to all of us, especially for the leadership team.

And there will be cake!! But first we will enjoy our brown bag lunches and fellowship. Beverages are provided – or you can bring your own.

**For more information contact Carol Diess,
626-482-8862, or sbbmom@aol.com**

Foothill Family Shelter Needs Your Support

Show your love each and any month by bringing your contributions of personal care items. Items needed on an ongoing basis include *shampoo, bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and hand and body lotion.*



OCTOBER PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1- McClelland	2- McCormick	3-McCrea-Foster
4	5- McMullen	6-Merryman	7- Morgan	8- Mowery	9- Mulligan	10-Murdy
11	12- Ogot	13- Oji	14- Olson	15- Pavaella	16- Phillips	17-Pilcher
18	19- Polchow	20-Richardson	21- Righetti	22- Rihs	23- Riivald	24- Roman
25	26- Romine	27- Ruggles	28- Rumisek	29-Runner	30-Russell, D.	31- Russell,L.

Please pray for healing and restoration for:

Jean Vanvieldt, Bill Howie, Lynn McClelland,
Joni Stallings, David Brinkley, Kay Hester, Iris Joiner,
Terry King

Pray for those who are homebound or in convalescent care:
Beth Brinkley

Please call Gael in the office if we need to update any information. Thank you. 909-982-8811.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

02 Jennifer Hesterman
06 Herb Joiner
06 Rosemary Kiertzner
09 Luke McClelland
13 Betty Curcija
13 Chuck Subject
18 Carol Diess
26 Doug Thomson
28 Alec McGee
30 Pam King

We would also like to extend birthday greetings to any other **October** 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!

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Palabra Church 7-11pm HH	2 6:30-11pmHH Palabra Church	3
4 10am Worship with Communion 1pm Radiant Church-Sanc. 2-7pm Palabra Church-HH	5 Personnel	6 3pm Connect 6pm Serve 7pm Gather AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	7 5pm Elevate	8 Deacons 6 pm Palabra Church 7-11pm HH	9 LIFT 11 am-1 pm Palabra Church 6:30-11pm HH	10 Wedding Sanctuary and Hart Hall
11 10am Worship Celebration of Life for Matt Miles 1pm Radiant Church-Sanc. 2-7pm Palabra Church-HH	12	13 6pm Trustees AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	14 5pm Elevate	15 Palabra Church 7-11pm HH	16 Palabra Church 6:30-11pm HH	17 Oktoberfest 6 pm
18 10 am Worship 1pm Radiant Church-Sanc. 2-7pm Palabra Church-HH	19	20 AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	21 5pm Elevate <i>Bible Study Resumes in Flamingo Room at 9 am</i>	22 6pm Worship Palabra Church 7-11pm HH	23 Palabra Church 6:30-11pm HH	24 76ers Reunion 10:30-3pm HH
25 10 am Worship 1pm Radiant Church-Sanc. 2-7pm Palabra Church-HH	26	27 6:30pm Session AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	28 5pm Elevate Trunk-or-Treat 5 pm to 6:30 pm	29 Palabra Church 7-11pm HH	30 Palabra Church 6:30-11pm HH	31 Halloween



**GROWING IN CHRIST,
MAKING HIM KNOWN**

Trustees

Gary Custer, President
Sue Frazee, Vice President
Van Romine, Treasurer
Shawn Kathol, Secretary
Herb Joiner

Deacons

Norma Lee Beaton
Carol Diess
Loreto D'Monte
Ebie Fogle
Janet Hunt
Kathy Kler
Gerri Mowery
Lisa Murdy
Margaret Pilcher
Ocha Ukwu

Staff

Tina Blair, Bridge Pastor
Matt Shool, Youth Ministries
Jannina Guzman, Office Manager
Gael Lecce, Receptionist

Misty Wren, Preschool Director
Nadina Rearte, Director's Assistant

Elders

William Anguka
Gary Custer
Frank Fogle
Sue Frazee
Sue Fredendall
Diane Hallihan
Lisa Murdy
Randy Righetti
Van Romine
Jim Smirl
Donna Strowger
Tony Webner

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