

FIRST PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF UPLAND



ENDING DENOMINATIONAL NARCISSISM

Many well-meaning people say, “We love the Presbyterian Church.” We all know that our ultimate love is not for *a* church but for *the* Church—the Body of Christ that transcends time, culture, and denomination. Praise God for that! Yet when we say we love our *denomination*, we should pause to ask: what exactly do we mean? Because far too easily, our affection edges closer to self-regard than to true devotion.

Presbyterian pride becomes sinful when it mistakes the *form* for the *substance*—when structure, tradition, and institutional identity eclipse the living presence of Christ. We must also guard against confusing loyalty to the PC(USA) with our allegiance to the true Church universal. The Presbyterian Church, like every denomination, is merely a vessel—useful for a time, imperfect by nature, and destined to change, fade, or be summarily dismissed by the Spirit. And that’s

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PASTOR NOEL ANDERSON



okay. No denomination was meant to last forever. Only the Body of Christ is eternal..

Our calling, then, is not to preserve *an institution* at all costs, but to serve Christ *through* it for as long as it remains a viable instrument of His work. God honors our service, even within flawed structures and denominations (really, is there any other kind?). Every denominational body is a cracked clay jar; it is the treasure *within* that matters.

The real danger comes when we *sentimentalize* the Church. We love our worship traditions, our sanctuaries, our pews, our polity, and our community life—and rightly so. But that affection must be grounded in truth, not nostalgia. Loving our denomination should look less like revering a masterpiece and more like caring for an old, three-legged dog: devoted affection, yes—but with full awareness of its flaws. It's one thing to smile at those imperfections; it's another to ignore them altogether. The PC(USA) doesn't just need our affection—it needs critique and renewal. It needs repentance, reformation, and, perhaps, a spiritual flea bath and de-worming.

When we love the denomination for its own sake, we risk a subtle idolatry—like a sad flamingo that falls in love with a plastic lawn flamingo. That love is misplaced, and for Christians, no denomination deserves such love. Denominational pride and loyalty amounts no more than denominational narcissism. Like Narcissus, we can become so fixated on our own reflection—our cherished heritage, polity, or brand—that we wither away into uselessness and madness.

Yes, we are Presbyterians by *conviction*, but let us

never become Presbyterians by pride.

Healthy Christianity includes spiritual maturity—a sanctified emotional intelligence that fosters humility, self-awareness, and openness to transformation.

True renewal requires trust. The source of spiritual vitality is neither past achievements nor sentimental attachment, but rather *dependence*—a deep, prayerful reliance on Christ and submission to His will. He alone can bring new life to His Church. If we rely only on our own wisdom and measures, we may preserve an *institution*, but we will fail to embody the will and word of Christ.

That distinction is crucial. Preservation without transformation is just embalming. The Church does not need curators of its past; it needs witnesses to its risen Lord willing to take their proclamation to all the world.

The Church belongs to Christ alone—He is its Head, its heart, and its hope. Denominations come and go, but the Kingdom of God marches on without end.

So let us fix our eyes not on the preservation of Presbyterianism, but on the glory of Christ. If we seek first

His Kingdom, everything else will fall into its proper place. The Spirit is still at work, calling the Church to renewal—not through pride or nostalgia, but through surrender, humility, and faith.

May God grant us courage to love our Church honestly, serve it faithfully, and hold it lightly. For only when our gaze turns away from ourselves and back to Jesus will the Presbyterian Church—not merely *survive*—but truly *flourish*. †

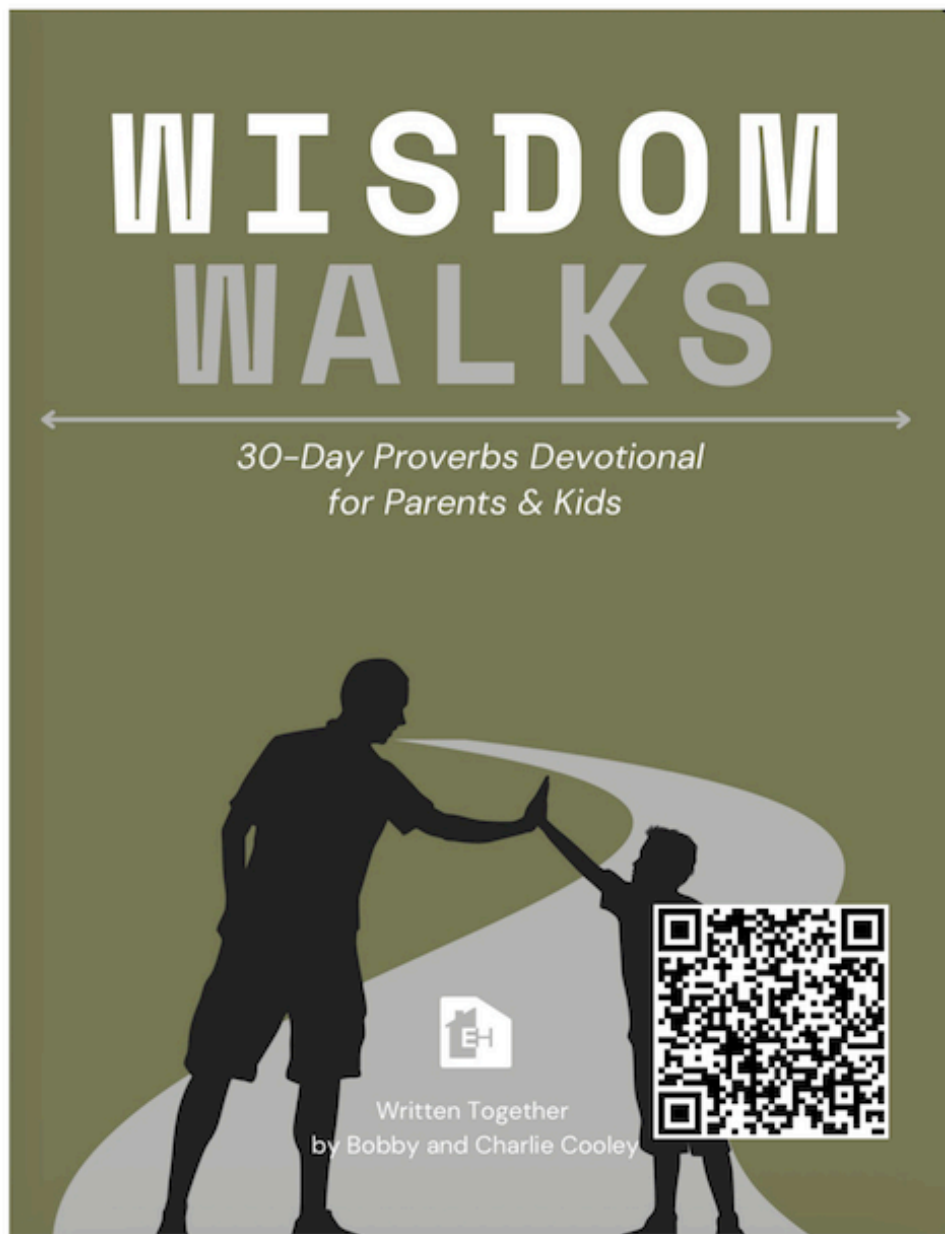


ELEVATE WITH MATT SHOOL



PARENT RESOURCE

Scan this QR code to open a valuable family resource on the wisdom from Proverbs.



TRUSTEES WITH VAN ROMINE

What Do We Owe God?

As a sinner, I owe God for my eternal salvation. As a son, I owe God for my wonderful parents. As a worker, I owe God a lifetime career. As an American, I owe God for freedom of worship. I could keep adding to this list for quite a while. I am very blessed,...

as we all are. So, we owe a lot to God for how He has supported and loved us all our lives.

But, exactly what should I give back to Him?

Obviously, God deserves my love, gratitude, service, and devotion. Should I give more? In Matthew 22:19-21, Jesus tells us that we ought to pay God what is His:

"...Show me the coin used for the poll-tax." And they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then pay to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."

Jesus knew the Bible very well, so He was definitely aware of Leviticus 27:30, where we are told that the tithe (which literally means 10%) is God's, and it's HOLY:

Now all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD.

As soon as we give our tithe, it's out of our hands and it is in the hands of God's Providence. Our faith and prayers must take over. It is up to our Elders, Pastor, Deacons, and Staff to be good stewards of the money we have given to them. It's a holy responsibility to manage God's Holy Tithe.

In 2025, our church leaders have tried to balance the needs of ministry with the available resources. It looks like we will end this year with a \$100k annual loss and cash reserves under \$75K. Once January 1st arrives, the challenge starts all over again. The Elders have agreed to a 2026 budget that reduces our annual loss to \$50k, while maintaining as many of our ministry priorities as possible.

As we give to God what we owe Him, and our leaders manage God's money for God's glory, please exercise your faith and prayers for God's blessing on our church.



YOUNG DISCIPLES WITH KEVIN CLINTON

TRUNK-OR-TREAT 2025

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED TO MAKE
TRUNK-OR-TREAT 2025 A SUCCESS!



GATHER WITH SUE FRAZEE

On Saturday, October 4th, Gather hosted an Oktoberfest complete with German food, music, and beverages. This is a tradition we could get used to.

Gather helped with Trunk-or-Treat on Wednesday, October 29th. We had candy, popcorn, and cupcake decorating for the kids!

Please be sure to mark Sunday, November 23rd, on your calendars. We will be hosting our annual Thanksgiving church Family Potluck. Sign-ups for the dinner will begin after church on Sunday, November 9th.





First Presbyterian Church of Upland
Presents

Ties and *Tiaras*

Father - Daughter Dance

Join us for a night of dinner, dancing, & fun!

**\$30 EACH
COUPLE
\$5 FOR EACH
ADDITIONAL GIRL**

**Saturday,
November**

15th

5-7 pm

**SCAN HERE
FOR TICKETS**



*Annual
Thanksgiving*

FEAST

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD
5-7 PM IN HART HALL**

SIGN-UPS BEGIN SUNDAY NOV. 9TH

LADIES IN FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER



**Alzheimer's Association's Arlene Bruins Shares
Vital Information for Yourself and Others**

**Friday, November 14,
11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Hart Hall**

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

Dementia affects some 57 million people worldwide with Alzheimer's making up 60-70% of cases, according to the World Health Organization. It affects on average 10% of people over 65. It is a progressive disease sometimes lasting as long as eight years.

There is no cure but there are a number of things we can do to manage the disease and keep our abilities longer. There are things caregivers and others need to know to maximize quality of life and provide the best care for themselves as well for whom they care, says Arlene Bruins, Inland Empire Program Manager for the Alzheimer's Association. She is joining us at our November 14 LIFT meeting to share with us practical information vital for helping us as caregivers to manage this disease and for supporting those facing dementia.

After a few worship songs and a devotion, Ms. Bruins will talk about such topics as warning signs, understanding dementia-related behavior, healthy habits for brain and body, help for caregivers, advances in treatment, and effective communication strategies. Please bring your questions.

Then 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**



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

Help Foothill Family Shelter distribute Thanksgiving baskets to families in need.

Please bring the following items to our November 14 meeting:

- Canned corn and green beans
- Boxed stuffing
- Canned cranberry sauce
- Canned turkey gravy
- Instant potatoes
- Canned yams
- Cake, cookie, or brownie mix
- Roasting pan
- Roasting bag
- Grocery gift cards



NOVEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10am Worship with Communion <i>Sound of Hope Movie 6 pm in Sanctuary</i>	3 5:30pm Bells Personnel	4 9:30am Zoom Bible Study 6pm Serve 7pm Gather AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	5 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate & Young Disciples	6 5:30pm Deacons	7	8
9 10am Worship	10 5:30pm Bells	11 <i>Veteran's Day</i> <i>Office Closed</i>	12 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	13 12:30pm Preschool Board Mtg. 6:30pm Grow	14 11am LIFT	15 <i>Father/ Daughter Dance 5-7 pm</i>
16 10 am Worship New Members Class	17 5:30pm Bells	18 9:30am Zoom Bible Study 9:30am Knitters and Quilters AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	19 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	20	21	22
23 10 am Worship New Members Class <i>Thanksgiving Feast 5 - 7pm</i> 30 Advent Begins	24 5:30pm Bells	25 9:30am Zoom Bible Study 9:30am Knitters and Quilters 6:30pm SESSION AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	26	27 Thanksgiving <i>OFFICE CLOSED</i>	28	29

NOVEMBER PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1-Bragg
2	3- Bridge	4- Brown	5- Buccheri	6- Burns	7-Carder	8-Carpenter
9	10-Carter	11- Chaffino	12- Cook,D.	13- Cook,J.	14- Cowles	15- Curcija
16	17- Custer	18- D'Monte	19- Davidson	20- Day	21-Decauwer	22- Decker,
23	24- Diess	25- Dooley	26- Doss	27- Ecklund	28-Edmon	29- Emrich
30						

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, Jerry Wilson, Robert Chaffino

Pray for those who are homebound or in convalescent care:

John Dooley, Beth Brinkley, Dick Davidson

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

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

03 Madelyn Summerhays
04 Jack Shool
05 Roger Ferguson
08 Shelby Summerhays
10 Masiya Phiri
12 Dana Shool
18 William Anguka
20 Cheveyo Hydro
23 Brooklyn Pavalella
24 Eric Halsey
26 Joel Carter

26 Iris Joiner
28 Kenneth Anguka
29 Kim Williamson
30 Allen Pavalella

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



**GROWING IN CHRIST,
MAKING HIM KNOWN**

Deacons

Becky Custer
Heather Decauwer
Carol Diess
Loreto D'Monte
Ebie Fogle
Lisa Murdy
Kim Righetti
Sue Sindelar

Trustees

Gary Custer, President
Sue Frazee, Vice President
Van Romine, Treasurer
Shawn Kathol, Secretary
Paul Sindelar

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
Frank Fogle
Sue Frazee
Diane Hallihan
Trevor McMullen
Pam Polchow
Randy Righetti
Van Romine
Jim Smirl
Donna Strowger
Tony Webner

First Presbyterian Church of Upland

869 North Euclid Avenue
Upland, CA 91786

OFFICE: 909.982.8811
PRESCHOOL: 909.982.8616

email: office@fpc-upland.com
website: FPC-UPLAND.COM