

FIRST PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF UPLAND



CALLED TO BE ONE BODY

Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit,⁵ and there are varieties of services but the same Lord,⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . .¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. . . .

²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. . . .²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (I Corinthians 12)

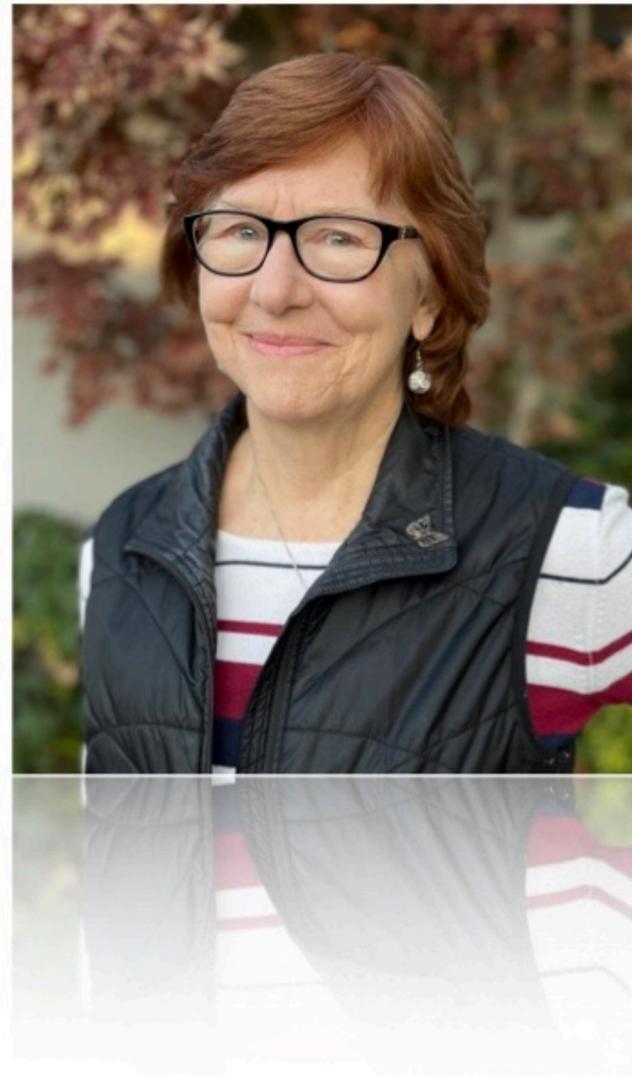
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ONE BODY WITH PASTOR TINA BLAIR

As we move deeper into Lent, and further into transitions in the church, I invite you to ponder your role in the Body of Christ. Every single one of you is important. Each one of you has been given gifts and abilities by God. As a member of the Body of Christ, you are called to use those gifts and talents for the greater good of Christ's church.

In times of transition, congregations examine themselves, including the process by which all the groups and teams work to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world. They often find that a few people do a lot of the ministry, while others hold back. In this time of self-examination, ask yourself what gifts you would like to use as we move forward. Perhaps there is something new that you would like to volunteer to do that you have never done before. Perhaps it is time to go back to what you did many years ago. Perhaps you could contribute if only you could get a ride, or a partner in this work. Ponder and pray about the ways Christ is calling you to participate.

No gift is too small or unworthy. Help others discover their gifts. Pray for each other. We are on the road with Jesus, leading to the cross. Offer him your very selves. In this you will find much joy! And may the loving and powerful Spirit of our Savior encourage and sustain us all!



ELEVATE WITH MATT SHOOL

Practicing Lent with Your Teenagers: Turning Forty Days into a Lifelong Faith

As parents, we all know the teenage years can feel like a whirlwind. Schedules are packed. Opinions are strong. Emotions run high. Somewhere between sports practices, homework, youth group, and social lives, it can be difficult to find meaningful space for spiritual formation at home.

That's part of what makes Lent such a gift.

Lent offers us forty intentional days to slow down, refocus, and walk toward Easter together. It is not just a church tradition to observe; it is an opportunity to shape the hearts of our families. And for teenagers—who are actively forming their identity, beliefs, and habits—this season can be especially powerful. Here are some ways to practice Lent with your teenagers as a family in ways that are thoughtful, authentic, and life-giving.

1. Start with the “Why,” Not Just the “What”

Teenagers are allergic to empty ritual. If something feels mechanical or performative, they'll sense it immediately. So begin Lent with a conversation.

Ask questions like:

- What is Lent actually about?
- Why do Christians practice it?
- What does it mean to prepare our hearts for Easter?

Talk about how Lent mirrors Jesus' forty days in the wilderness. It's a season of repentance, dependence, honesty, and renewal. It's not about proving spiritual toughness. It's about making room for God. When teens understand the purpose, they're far more likely to engage meaningfully.

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2. Choose Practices Together

Instead of announcing, “This is what we’re giving up,” invite your teenager into the decision.

You might ask:

- What distracts you most from God?
- What habit feels like it has a little too much control over you?
- What could you fast from that would actually create space for something better?

For some teens, that may be social media. For others, it might be late-night gaming, constant earbuds, or even certain attitudes—complaining, gossip, or comparison. But fasting doesn’t only mean subtracting.

Lent is also about adding. Consider choosing a shared family practice such as:

- Reading a short Scripture passage each night.
- Praying together before school.
- Serving together once during the season.
- Keeping a gratitude journal.

Let your teen have a voice. Ownership increases investment.



3. Keep It Honest and Real

Teenagers respect authenticity. If Lent becomes a performance of holiness, it will backfire. Be honest about your own struggles.

If you’re fasting from your phone and you slip up, say so. If you’re trying to be more patient and fail, admit it. Modeling repentance is one of the most powerful spiritual lessons you can give your child.

Lent reminds us that we are not perfect. We need grace. When teens see that Christianity isn’t about pretending but about returning to Jesus again and again, it builds trust in both you and the Lord.

4. Make Space for Questions

Lent is a season of reflection. As teens think about sacrifice, sin, suffering, and the cross, questions will come. Some may be theological. Some may be deeply personal.

- Why did Jesus have to die?
- Why does God allow suffering?
- What if I’m not sure what I believe?

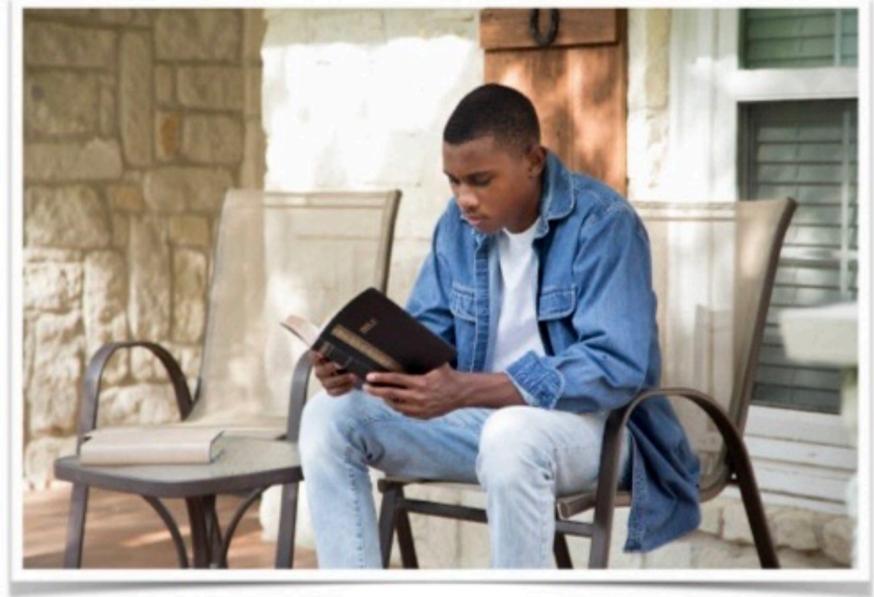
Don’t panic when hard questions arise. Questions are not signs of rebellion; they are often signs of growth. Create an environment where your teenager knows they can wrestle honestly without fear of shame.

If you don’t know an answer, it’s okay to say, “That’s a great question. Let’s explore it together.”

5. Connect Lent to Real Life

Help your teenager see that Lent isn't just about giving up chocolate. It's about aligning our hearts with Jesus.

- Talk about how fasting teaches self-control in a world of instant gratification.
- Discuss how generosity pushes back against selfishness.
- Reflect on how repentance brings freedom instead of guilt.



If your family chooses to give something up, consider redirecting the time or money toward something meaningful—supporting a ministry, blessing a neighbor, or serving someone in need. Show them that spiritual practices lead to outward love.

6. Pray for Your Teen

Above all, pray. Pray for softened hearts. Pray for curiosity. Pray for courage to follow Jesus in a complicated world. You cannot force spiritual maturity—but you can faithfully point your teenager toward Christ. Lent is an invitation for your entire family to step away from noise and step closer to Him. In a culture that constantly demands attention and performance, these forty days gently whisper a different message: Slow down. Repent. Remember. Return. What if this year, Lent became less about rules and more about relationship? Less about deprivation and more about devotion? Less about obligation and more about opportunity?

Your teenager is watching how you walk with Jesus.

Let them see a faith that is humble, hopeful, and honest.

And as you journey together toward Easter morning, may your home be filled not just with discipline, but with deep joy—because resurrection is coming.

LENT 2026 WITH GARY CUSTER

Lent is a 40-day, self-reflective season of prayer, fasting, and giving starting on Ash Wednesday and leading to Easter. It serves as a solemn, intentional pause to “lest we forget” the sacrifice, love, and mortality associated with the Christian faith.

It is a time for repentance, introspection, and deepening of one’s relationship with Christ and His sacrifice for all of us. May it lead to a renewal, that we do not forget our spiritual foundations and commitments.

Our present budget does not allow for an orchestra based on funds in our General Funds. Easter is the end of the season of Lent and is a time for immense joy and celebration of the Resurrection.

Matt has told me it will cost \$4000 for the orchestra for the Easter Celebration. I am asking that between now and Easter you put an extra \$20, \$50, \$100 or more in an offering envelope and mark it for “Orchestra” and put it in the offering plate.

LET’S CELEBRATE!!

“Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget Thine agony, lest I forget Thy love for me, lead me to Calvary”

Trustee, Gary Custer, President



WORSHIP TEAM WITH BARBARA HANSEN

Here is an explanation of the liturgical colors used in our paraments (hangings on the Pulpit, Communion Table and Lectern).

The main colors of the liturgical calendar are White/Gold (joy, purity for Christmas/Easter), Red (blood, fire for Pentecost/martyrs/Holy Week), Green (life, growth for Ordinary Time), Violet/Purple (penitence, royalty for Advent/Lent), and Black/Unbleached Linen (mourning for Good Friday/All Souls). Optional colors include Rose (joyful anticipation on mid-Advent/Lent) and sometimes Blue (Advent) or Scarlet/Red, with colors signifying the spirit of each season like repentance, celebration, or sacrifice

Liturgical colors are a visual way the Church tells the story of the Christian year. Through these colors, worshipers can immediately sense the season, the mood, and the theological emphasis of the day. The paraments that adorn our communion table, pulpit, and lectern quietly teach and remind us where we are in the journey of faith.

White/Gold is the color of purity, light, joy, triumph, glory and celebration. It is used during the great festival seasons of Christmas and Easter, as well as on special days such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals(optional). White points us to Christ's resurrection, purity, and victory over sin and death.

Red is the color of Fire, blood, sacrifice, Holy Spirit. Used for Pentecost, Reformation Sunday, feasts of martyrs, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and ordinations/confirmations

Green is the color of Life, growth, hope. Used during Ordinary Time (the long seasons between Christmas/Easter and Advent). Green reminds us that much of the Christian life is lived in faithful, steady growth as we learn, serve, and follow Christ day by day

Violet/Purple is the color of preparation, repentance, and reflection. It is used during Advent and Lent—seasons that invite us to slow down, examine our hearts, and prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas and the cross and resurrection at Easter.

Black is used sparingly and most often on Good Friday. It symbolizes mourning, sorrow, and the weight of Christ's death, allowing the Church to fully enter into the solemnity of that day before the joy of Easter arrives.

Scarlet/Red is the color of fire, the Holy Spirit, and sacrifice. It is used on Pentecost, Reformation Sunday, and commemorations of martyrs. Red calls to mind the flames of the Spirit, the boldness of faith, and the cost of discipleship.

As the colors change throughout the year, they help shape our worship and deepen our understanding of God's saving work. Even without words, the paraments proclaim the story of Christ—inviting us to see, remember, and live into each season of faith together.

Get a lift from LIFT

(Ladies in Fellowship Together)

From Morocco to India to France to Here!

Bridge Pastor Tina Blair
To Share with Us Her Many
Adventures in Life – So Far!

Friday, March 13,
11am -1 pm
Hart Hall

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



The daughter of a U.S. diplomat, she was born in Morocco, lived in India, Italy, and France. Then she spent time in several places in the United States, including a Navajo reservation and a stint as an elementary school teacher, before being ordained as a Presbyterian pastor after earning her doctorate in practical theology from the Claremont Colleges.

Those are just some of the highlights of a varied career and life. And she will share all the fascinating details with us at our March 13 LIFT meeting.

Following a short time of worship and a devotion, Dr. Blair will not only talk about her career but also how she came to become an ordained pastor at a time when women pastors were still uncommon.

Then we end our program with a brown bag lunch and time of fellowship. We will provide beverages – or you can bring your own.

Foothill Family Shelter Needs Your Support
Show your love each month by bringing your donations of food and person

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

Thank you for your generous donations to support LIFT!





Saturday, March 7th
Time: 2-4 pm in Hart Hall

MOTHER-SON SAFARI

Cost: \$ 25 for Mom & Son
\$5 for each additional child

Lunch will be served
Wear your best safari attire
Live animals, games, contests,
and prizes

MARCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Worship with Communion	2 5:30pm Bells Personnel	3 6pm Serve 7pm Gather AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	4 4pm Homework Club 5pm Elevate 7:10pm Choir	5 5pm Beginning Bells 5:30pm Deacons	6	7
8 10am Worship	9 5:30pm Bells	10 9:30am Knitters and Quilters 5pm Worship 6pm Trustees AA Groups- HH & upstairs	11 4pm Homework Club 5pm Elevate 7:10pm Choir	12 12:30pm Preschool Board Mtg. 5pm Beginning Bells 6:30pm Grow	13 11am LIFT	14
15 10am Worship St. Patrick Brunch	16 5:30pm Bells	17 9:30am Knitters and Quilters AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	18 4pm Homework Club 5pm Elevate 7:10pm Choir	19 5pm Beginning Bells	20	21
22 10 am Worship	29 5:30pm Bells	24 9:30am Knitters and Quilters AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	25 4pm Homework Club 5pm Elevate 7:10pn Choir	26 5pm Beginning Bells 6:30pm Session	27	28
29	30 5:30pm Bells	31 9:30am Knitters and Quilters AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR				

MARCH PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2-Zahniser	3- Andong	4-Alford	5- Amason	6- Anguka,J.	7- Anguka,W.
8	9-Argent	10- Azubuke	11- Barker	12- Basile	13- Bimber	14- Borger
15	16- Bragg	17- Bridge	18- Brown, H.	19-Brown, M.	20-Buccheri	21- Burns
22	23- Carder	24- Carpenter	25- Carter	26- Chaffino	27-Cook, D.	28- Cook, J.
29	30-Cowles	31-Curcija				

Please pray for healing and restoration for:

Jean Vanvioldt, 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.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

02 Doug Hunt
02 Laura McMullen
05 John Dooley
06 Ava Shool
06 Scott Hansen
09 Baraka Ogot
09 Zawadi Ogot
12 Bob Carpenter
13 Gary Custer
15 Linda Ecklund
19 Humphrey Ogot

25 Paul Sindelar
27 John Argent
30 Matthew Borger

We would also like to extend birthday greetings to any other **February** 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**

Trustees

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

Deacons

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