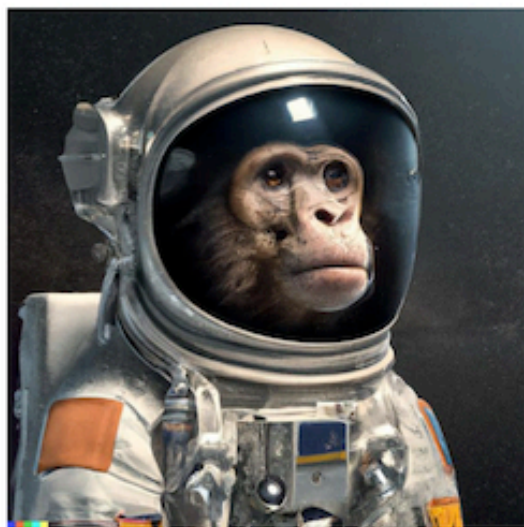


FIRST PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF UPLAND



HAM & A.I.

When I think of the future of Artificial Intelligence, I think of Ham. I don't mean the meat, so don't go picturing a big honey-glazed shank with dark argyle cuts, cloves, pineapple slices, and a cherry sitting on a big platter. *[Aside: I've already lost you, haven't I? Come on back, Homer—come on, come on—away from that food thought balloon in your head. That's right, this way]*—by Ham I mean Ham the Space Chimp.

Ham—a chimpanzee also known as Ham the Chimp and Ham the Astrochimp—was the first great ape launched into space. On January 31, 1961, Ham flew a suborbital flight on the Mercury-Redstone 2 mission, part of the U.S. space program's Project Mercury. Ham was known as "No 65" before he safely returned to Earth, when he was named after an acronym for the laboratory that prepared him for his historic mission—the Holloman Aerospace Medical Center in New Mexico. His name was also in honor of the commander of Holloman Aeromedical Laboratory, Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton "Ham" Blackshear.

That picture of a chimp in a spacesuit and what he "accomplished" strikes me as most significant. This semi-intelligent creature is made comfortable in the inhospitable environs of space by a technology far beyond his comprehension. It surrounds him, protects him, does his thinking for him, and sends him where no human being has yet gone, then returns him home where he is met by great applause for something he didn't even know he was doing.

(continued on page 2)

PASTOR NOEL ANDERSON



When thinking about the lightning-fast advances in AI, we are right to wonder where it is all headed. How long will it be before we find ourselves surrounded by an incomprehensible complex of self-guided, electronic assistants designed to keep us comfortable, well-fed, and as happy as possible? At what point do our assistants become our masters and we their dependents? It may take us to amazing new places, but we go forth like Ham—neither steering nor affecting our prescribed trajectory. We are free only to gawk, observe, and shriek with excitement as we take in whatever wonders the technologies provide.

Once we land, the AI applies its canned applause—which is really the AI applauding *itself* and its own achievements—and our shallow delight will be quickly absorbed by whatever new advancement and upgrades the last 20 minutes of AI superbraining has devised “for us.”

I’m no Luddite—I love my laptop and high-speed access—but I still know how and when to turn it off. Whenever screen fatigue or news saturation make me eager for a stroll in the sunshine, I close the lid and put it all to sleep. That is as it should be and raises a question that should be ever-present to our minds:

Who puts whom to sleep?

If we should succeed in creating an environment of auto-generated solutions to human problems, will we even bother with the painstaking efforts for which God gave us brains? Life shouldn’t be too easy. Endless wealth and privilege yield only

softened heads and insipid souls. God kicked us out of the Garden into the thorns in order that we would hunger for grace and mercy above all else.

Eating bread by the sweat of our brow is one of the foundational realities of this world. Being booted from Eden means we struggle against the elements to survive, and live with some unresolved tensions that keep us developing our brains and

spiritual gifts every day of our lives. We are here to learn to love God above all, to trust in Him, and to reject whatever works of our own hands that would play master over us (which is idolatry).

As much as I like ready-made technologies that inform me, entertain me, and

help me monitor my blood pressure, I dread the prospect of AI doing our thinking, creating, and working for us. Among fallen humanity, the deadly sin of *Sloth* will easily win the popularity contest against diligence and rigor.

Consumers may celebrate the day when AI takes care of everything for us—an our lives will look

easy and carefree. Free TV, free movies, free food delivered to every door, free healthcare and mood modification upon demand—all these benefits granted by our collective ingenuity—turning us into *pets*.

And we, like Ham, have no idea what’s going on, where we are, how we got here, or how to get ourselves out of this glass bubble of a helmet and straitjacket space suit. †

BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW YOU
WILL EAT YOUR BREAD, UNTIL YOU
RETURN TO THE GROUND—BECAUSE
OUT OF IT WERE YOU TAKEN. FOR
DUST YOU ARE, AND TO DUST YOU
SHALL RETURN.—GENESIS 3:19

IF ANYONE IS NOT WILLING
TO WORK, LET HIM NOT EAT.
—2 THESSALONIANS 3:10B

ELEVATE WITH MATT SHOOL



Growing with your learner as they prepare for life after high school

Kara Powell, Fuller Youth Institute

You grab your keys and head to your car for a 15-minute drive to the nearest shopping mall with your high school junior or senior. As you back down your driveway, you think, “Oh good, this will give us a chance to talk about life after high school.”

Your child sitting next to you thinks, “Oh no, now he’s going to want to talk to me about life after high school.”

I have realized (often through my mistakes) that planning with our learners (what we consider the stage between 13-18 years old) about their future can be a season of great family success or great family strife. If you want to grow with your child in these early vocational and college choices about life after high school, try the following:



Create a system that works for your learner to keep track of deadlines.

If your learner has the option of attending college, junior and senior years bring a quantum leap to the application, scholarship, and test deadlines that your family needs to track. Before shifting the burden of responsibility for all those deadlines to your learner (which we recommend), help them develop an organizational calendar and a system that works for them. It doesn’t matter if it’s a spreadsheet or a stack of sticky notes; what’s most important is that it works for your teenager.



Remember there is no single perfect job or school for your child.

Admittedly, all the unknowns after high school can be stressful. But don’t add an unnecessary cloud of anxiety to your family’s ecosystem by believing the lie that there’s only one great job or one great school for your learner. That puts too much pressure on the decision of one (often unpredictable) college admissions committee or

one (potentially arbitrary) employer. Most high school graduates have lots of good options, any one of which sets them up to succeed in their twenties and beyond.

Be interpreters of their interests.

Learners will often answer “I don’t know” to questions about their future work aspirations or possible undergraduate majors. As parents, pay attention to what they’re interested in and help them see where their interests and gifts connect with real jobs. For example: Does he love babysitting? Perhaps he would be a great elementary teacher. Is she always looking for excuses to get outside? There are some exciting jobs in forestry, marine biology, or mountain guiding. Does she find herself taking appliances apart to discover how they work? Engineers or mechanics do that every day. Does he continually ask “why”? Maybe he would be a great reporter or writer.



Enjoy the ride.

My personality is rather type A (or at times, more like type A+). Before diving into the college experience with our oldest, I feared that I would put too much pressure on him—and myself to work every possible angle to enhance his college application and thus expand his college options. But early in Nathan’s junior year, I felt like God reminded me of this reality: I only get to go through this college experience with Nathan once. After that nudge, when I felt my inner anxiety—and my subsequent tendency to place undue pressure on my child—rise, I reminded myself that we’ll never get to go through this again, so let’s enjoy the ride!



Rest in God’s plan.

As a mom of three learners, one explorer, and one focuser summarized, “The most helpful prayer that God has led me to pray with sincerity is, ‘I trust you.’ I can almost mark the season when that went from being something I knew in my head to something that was a genuine anchor for me. God has our son covered. We are given responsibility but we are not ultimately responsible.”

WORSHIP WITH JIM SMIRL

Meet the FPCU Worship Team: Serving with Heart and Purpose

Each Sunday morning, while many of us are just arriving at church, the FPCU Worship Team is already in motion—preparing the sanctuary, coordinating with volunteers, and ensuring everything is set for a meaningful service experience. Their behind-the-scenes efforts help create the welcoming, spirit-filled atmosphere that makes our sanctuary feel like home.

But their work doesn't stop when the service begins. The Worship Team plays a vital role in connecting with the congregation, actively seeking out feedback and reflections on the worship experience. Whether it's a comment about the music, the flow of the service, or the use of multimedia, this team listens with open hearts and minds. Their goal is to ensure our worship continues to inspire, connect, and reflect the needs and hopes of our church family.

The team meets at least once a month to review the input they've gathered thoughtfully. These meetings are a space for reflection and creativity—where ideas are shared, trends are noticed, and suggestions for future services are shaped. They work closely with pastoral staff and other ministry leaders to align worship with the mission and message of FPCU.

We're grateful for the dedication and service of this incredible team:



Jim Smirl
Worship Chair



Bob Carpenter
Member



Judy Carpenter
Member



Tony Webner
Member



Nathan Stewart
Member



Pastor
Noel
Anderson

Ex Officio
Member



Matthew
Miles

Ex Officio
Member

If you have ideas or feedback you'd like to share, feel free to reach out to any team member. They're here to listen and excited to shape the future of worship at FPCU with you.

TRUSTEES WITH SUE FRAZEE

In Memoriam

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Memorial Day approaches, we tend to remember all friends and family we have lost and those who served in the military. I think of them as soldiers in God's army. We have recently lost so many members and friends. As a Trustee, I have often been asked what we have done to honor them. We have a General Memorial fund you can donate to in their honor, but we have been remiss in communicating this. You can donate to the General Memorial Fund in the name of any or all of our departed friends. Your donations will be used to support and further the work of the church they loved. You may also designate how you would like your donation to be used by specifying: deacons, worship, B&G, gather, or children and youth ministries. You will hear more about this on May 25th at our Memorial Day service.

Yours in Christ,

Susan Frazee - Trustee

†





GATHER WITH SUE FRAZEE



We hope you all had a joyous and meaningful Easter. Your Gather team has been busy adding to the festivities, and we hope you enjoyed them!

On Palm Sunday, we enjoyed delicious Hot Cross Buns.





Get a lift from LIFT

(Ladies in Fellowship Together)

Helping the Homeless

***Deanna Alsdorf from
Foothill Family Shelter
Shares How They Help and
How We Can Too***

Friday, May 9, 11am -1 pm, Hart Hall

Doors open 10:45

Program starts promptly at 11:00

There are many myths about homelessness. For example, many people think people who are homeless should just get a job and then they would not be homeless. The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates as many as 40%-60% of people experiencing homelessness nationwide are employed, often holding two or three jobs. Many people think that people choose to be homeless. This myth allows us to ignore the trauma of homelessness and neurobiological effects trauma has on humans. Being homeless is stressful, humiliating, exhausting, and dangerous.

Joining us at our May 9 LIFT will be Deanna Alsdorf, community development coordinator at Foothill Family Shelter in Upland. She will share with us many of the facts about homelessness and what it takes to successfully help the homeless. "We do this by providing safe and stable housing, professional, comprehensive services, [using] a model that has proven to be successful and impactful," she explained. "We teach families how to succeed today, tomorrow, and in the future."

Following a short time of worship and a devotion, Alsdorf will talk about the many things that the Foothill Family Shelter does to help local families dealing with homelessness find stable, permanent housing, providing ongoing professional comprehensive services to enable them to succeed. She will also inform us about how we can help in the work of the Foothill Family Shelter.

Afterward we will fellowship over our brown bag lunches.

Foothill Family Shelter Needs Your Support

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

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

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



MAY PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1-Riivald	2- Roman	3-Romine
4	5- Ruggles	6- Rumisek	7- Runner	8- -Russell, L.	9- Russell, P.	10- Schrieber
11	12- Shool	13- Senecal	14- Sindelar	15- Smirl	16-Smith,David	17- Smith,Dean
18	19- Stallings	20- Strowger	21- Subject	22- Sullivan	23-Thomson	24- Ukwu
25	26- Vanvieldt	27- Webner	28- Whtmore	29-Williams	30-Williamson	31-Weaver

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, Louis Kimes, Florence Lutz

May Birthdays

02 David Borger
02 Sylvia Honeter
06 Florence Lutz
06 Marilyn Howie
07 Lynn McClelland
07 Lynn Olson
08 M.E. Fuzzard
09 Donna Rumisek
09 Linda Wilson
12 Diane Hallihan
16 Jerry Cook
16 Tony Webner

18 Leslie Borger
18 Phyllis Frei
21 Jean Vanvieldt
22 Chester Olson
25 Sue Frazee
27 Lisa Grist
27 Sandy Forney
30 Lynne Barker
30 Pam Polchow

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

MAY						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 5:30pm Deacons	2 9:30 am- 3:30 pm Blood Drive	Radiant Church-HH 9:30am- noon
4 10am Worship with Communion	5 5:30pm Bells Personnel	6 9:30am Knitters 6pm Serve 7pm Gather AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	7 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	8 12:30pm Preschool Board	9 L.I.F.T 11am-1pm	10
11 10am Worship <i>Mother's Day</i>	12 5:30pm Bells	13 9:30am Knitters 5pm Worship 6pm Trustees AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	14 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	15 6:30 pm GROW	16	17
18 10 am Worship	19 5:30pm Bells	20 9:30am Knitters AA Groups- HH & upstairs	21 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	22	23	24
25 10 am Worship	26 MEMORIAL DAY <i>church office closed</i>	27 9:30am Knitters 6:30pm Session AA Groups- HH & upstairs Radiant Church GR	28 9am Coco's Bible Study 5pm Elevate	29	30 5pm Wedding Rehearsal and setup	31 Wedding 4pm Sanctuary and HH



**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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