

Annual Report

January 2014



Congregational Meeting
Date: Sunday, January 26, 2014

A Year to Build On



It's my privilege to open this 2013 Annual Report for First Presbyterian Church Fresno. I am so grateful to the Lord that He has called my family to worship and serve among you. For the Vaccaro family, 2013 was a year to establish ourselves in Fresno. We are thrilled that each of the children (Kate, Andrew, & Rebekah) has established good friendships at school and church. Diane

and I have been serving at their schools, building relationships with our community, and loving on our neighbors. God has been so faithful in providing us a wonderful home, a great neighborhood, and a loving church family in Fresno. Here's the bottom line, friends: I love being a pastor of this church, and I am looking forward to what God has in store for us all in 2014.

Surely, God was at work among us this last year; this report is full of case studies that prove His faithfulness. I encourage you to read through each of the articles. I think you'll be encouraged. My primary areas of work have been preaching, working with the Session, and leading the staff. What follows is a brief summary of each of these areas.

There were some significant changes on the staff in 2013 (see the Personnel report for a summary), and I am pleased with our growth in the midst of these changes. We have worked hard to onboard our new staff members quickly and effectively; I think our new staff folks are doing very well. In my role as the lead staff member, I considered 2013 a year of team building. I am so grateful that the staff has been ready to adapt to my leadership style, and help to build the staff culture I think is necessary for excellent and sustainable ministry leadership and service. In the year ahead, we'll continue to grow as a team by establishing and pursuing our goals collaboratively.

The Session worked hard in 2013. I am so humbled by our Ruling Elders. They are deeply committed to Christ, collaborative, faithful, prudent, courageous, humble, and eager to grow. Serving as the moderator of the Session is a great joy for me. This last year, in the midst of all the regular decisions and work of the Session, we labored to clarify the Core Values of FPC Fresno. This work isn't done, but we've made significant steps forward. I'm excited about the way that these Core Values, and our Purpose Statement (also in the works), will help to keep us focused on the mission that God has given our church.

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In my preaching, I've tried to make sure that the Gospel is clear every week. It's the good news of God's grace that I hope will draw each of us to a place of worship on Sunday mornings. When we have an attitude of worship toward Christ, we are in a posture primed for transformation. God is the One who transforms, but we participate by taking on a posture of worship, surrender, and repentance. Preaching, by God's grace, should inspire us toward that posture and lead us toward our mission. This year, more than ever, I am convinced that I have tremendous room for growth in this area of my ministry. Thanks for allowing me to grow among you.

I think we all have grown in some important ways in 2013. Growing is what I hope will continue at FPC Fresno. I hope that we will grow in worship attendance and membership. There are so many people in our city who don't know the wonderful news of the Gospel; may we be a church that is regularly introducing new people to Christ. I hope that we will grow as a community of discipleship. No matter how long you have been following Christ, you still have room to grow; may we be a church that is dynamically growing in our Christian maturity. I hope that we will grow in the mission that Christ has given us. It's so easy for a church to make its focus only internal; may we also have an external focus, remembering that we are called to be the ambassadors of Christ to the world. Are you hoping for growth? Please, then, join me in praying that God will cause us to grow. May we "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." (2 Peter)

Rev. Jeremy Vaccaro, Senior Pastor

2013 Ministry Budget Review

Ministry	2013 Budget	2013 Actual Spending	2014 Budget
Administration	72,825	69,546	84,673
Adult Nurture	17,000	15,752	17,000
Deacons	1,725	1,228	1,500
Facility and Grounds	135,759	133,383	176,900
Capital Tech Fund	7,000	1,315	3,000
Worship	27,245	29,395	31,295
Christian Education	34,425	25,821	35,430
Outreach	16,800	15,245	15,800
Mission	118,000	117,299	132,000
Equipping	1,500	146	2,200
Personnel	767,721	690,016	760,202
Total	1,200,000	1,099,146	1,260,000
2013 Giving and Other Income: 1,258,285			

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Clerk's Report

"2013 has been a very good year at First Presbyterian Church, Fresno."

As Pastor Jeremy Vaccaro finishes his first year with us, he has earned his place in our hearts. It has been exciting to watch the Lord's work in our church as He is establishing Jeremy's leadership with us. Jeremy's "Rookie Year" is complete and he is now an integral part of FPC, Fresno.

Clerk's Report, continues on page 7

Our attendance has been on the rise. In 2011, our average attendance was 477 people per month. In 2012, our average attendance was also 477 people per month. In 2013, our average attendance was 500 people per month, an increase of 4.5%. This increase includes our changing the summer schedule to one service per Sunday. As Pastor Jeremy preached about “Making Room,” we made more room by adding a service on Christmas Eve to expand capacity, and our attendance went up from 1,007 in 2012 to 1,112 in 2013, an increase of 10.4%.

<i>Annual Sunday Worship Attendance</i>	
Year	Attendance
2009:	27,776
2010:	26,877
2011:	24,328
2012:	24,709
2013:	24,937

Note: 2012 figure is an estimate

After several years of our church not receiving enough giving to meet budget, Session chose a budget for 2013 that was more in line with giving trends. As a result, 2013 ended with our giving meeting budget, and because we were able to control spending, we added \$74,300 to our cash available for operations, which now stands at \$350,400, an increase of 27%.

A couple of years ago, a group was formed to identify key elements that describe our church, specifically, those items that describe our unique character and culture - our Core Values. That work was put on hold due to other pressing issues at the time. This past year, Session has picked up that work and has had rich discussions about our Core Values. From that work in 2014 we will write a Purpose Statement and then discern long-term goals that all ministries will work toward.

Clerk's Report, continues on page 8

These are just a few of the highlights of the year. Please read each ministry report to see in more detail how 2013 has been a good year for First Presbyterian Church, Fresno.

John Ellenberger, Clerk of Session

Membership	Previous Membership	Additions	Deletions	Inactive Membership	Current Membership
As Of 12/31/13	864	0	1	208	863
Inactive Membership	208	0		1	207

Deacon's Report

The Deacons have been busy in 2013. We love to serve our God and fellow believers in the way God's Word tells us to. After giving the qualifications for Elders, 1 Timothy 3:8 goes on to say, ***"...in the same way Deacons must be people who are respected and have integrity..."*** A huge task that we Deacons take on! Thank you Session, for calling us to be your "right hand", and thanks also to our fellow believers for allowing us these wonderful opportunities to serve!!!

The way we can best serve you is through our Ministry Teams. Through them we provide meals, memorial receptions, transportation, food, and other much-needed assistance. You may not know that we also host FPC's monthly Communion service and other special events throughout the year, such as Presbytery and breakfast for our Annual Meeting. Love I.N.C. keeps us connected to our community and gives us the chance to help meet needs outside our congregation, too.

The team leading the Deacons includes the Moderator (Sue Herbert), the person in charge of Communications (Andrea Mead), and a very talented Treasurer (Francis Weaver) who keeps our fiscal figures in line, along with our very own Pastor Lana. Serving our Lord and fellow believers in these many ways helps to keep us unified, respectful and full of integrity!

Deacon's Report, continues on page 9

We look forward to serving our God and congregation in even bigger and better ways this next year. One thing to look for is our Life Adjustment Seminar on March 8th.

This half-day event is a chance to learn from the experts how to prepare for some common changes that are likely to take place in our lives, and the lives of our loved ones. Keep an eye out for information coming soon!

Finally, we Deacons do want to thank our loving Congregation for their generous giving to the Benevolence Fund. It has been our joy to serve those in need around us with your loving gifts, all in the name of Jesus and for His glory.

Sue Herbert, Deacon Moderator

Saints Gone Home In 2013

Robert Osborne January 25	Dorothy Griffith August 20
Francine Griffin January 28	Victor "Vic" Wiens September 25
Howard LaMa February 5	Juanita "Nita" Montague October 24
Esther Phipps February 28	Jack Hoover November 23
Verla Peterson March 4	Leroy Gabrielson December 11
Marilyn Shiner May 6	Pauline Bradley December 23
Virginia Granz May 22	

Adult Nurture

The Adult Nurture team is excited about helping First Pres to grow as a community of discipleship. We have worked to find opportunities for our members and attenders to connect and grow. This year, in particular, the summer Sunday schedule offered us an opportunity to organize times for our congregation to connect in a more informal way through potlucks at the church, picnics at the park, and events at members' homes.



We also worked, with the Equipping team to increase the awareness in the congregation of other First Pres folks who live in their same part of town. We're hoping that 2014 will be a year to take these community connections to a new level. Finally, ongoing all-church events like the 4th of July Celebration, Barn Dance, and Get Right Date Night have been well attended.

Get Right 
Date Night 

Another project of ours has been to create a more visitor-friendly campus. We have been working with Susan Glover to create signage that clearly identifies our campus. A combined budget effort with the Outreach team has resulted in a plan for new signs at particular meeting spaces and a directional sign in the center of the campus. We're hopeful that this effort will make it easier for newcomers to find their way around our facility; it won't only help with Sunday morning, but should also be an improvement for Art Hop and other events on our campus throughout the week.

Of course, part of this work was to revisit the names of some of our rooms. After a fun query of our church, we decided to change the name of the Adult Lounge to The Hub (it's the hub of much of our activity around here, so it seemed to fit). Also, the name of Common Grounds was changed to The Commons.

We also spent 2013 getting ready to launch some new work in 2014. We're forming a group to help coordinate a weekly lunchtime Bible Study for people who work downtown. We're gathering folks and students interested in college ministry. We're planning a new effort to connect through community groups. And we've collaborated with Equipping to prepare for the launch of the new Link Crew (read more about this in

the Equipping report).

In the midst of our work this year, it became clear that we were paralleling the work of the Equipping Ministry Team. We have met jointly over the last quarter, and have now officially joined forces to create a new ministry group that is yet to be named. We are absolutely thrilled about the possibility this brings for our future ministry.

- Elders Joanie Martin, Denise Fink, & Keith Walsh

Christian Education

**COUNT IT ALL JOY!
WELL, WE CERTAINLY DO!**

**IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE TOGETHER IN
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY.**

We've spent some time this year examining what we are doing, and looking ahead to what God has planned for the future. We are so grateful for the numerous volunteers who pour out their hearts and lives for Jesus and for our children and youth. Keep reading to find out what our babies, children, and youth have in store in 2014.

- Elders Shelley Haught and Barbara Knepper

NURSERY

This has been a very productive and exciting year in the nursery. We had a bit of a baby boom as well as some new members join the

church this year, bringing our under 2's total to approximately 20. This is a huge increase since the beginning of the year.



Danielle and I are very excited to roll out and introduce the new Cry Room. This has been a dream of ours for a very long time and we are excited to have been working with Allan Knepper who made it happen. We will be preparing this room and getting it ready in the next couple of weeks.

The other item we are continuing to work on is acquiring some tumbling mats or something to lay on the carpet for babies who are learning to sit up. We are also in the process of going through and cleaning out old books and toys and bringing in some new items.

Lastly, we have recently partnered with our counterparts at Trinity Community Church to plan a training course for adult and junior volunteers. This new partnership has already been very fruitful in combining ideas to put together updated policies and procedures for our nursery. 2013 has been a great year and we look forward to an even better year in 2014.

- Michele Cooper & Danielle Hill



CHILDREN

The Lord is at work in Children's Ministry, and we continue to praise Him for it! When we felt called to change the structure of Sunday school, we knew it would require the Lord to call people to step forward to a greater commitment. We asked teachers to come forward to teach preschool a month at a time, every other month. We also asked teachers to commit to teaching elementary children every Sunday during the education hour. Well, we are thrilled to say that the Lord has provided.

Since September, we have been in full swing with this new structure, and we are seeing the blessings already. We are excited about the relationships that are being formed between the teachers, the students, their parents and the new visiting families that have been coming. God is clearly at work.

Preschool

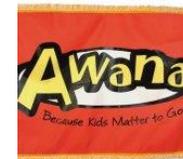
The consistency of our preschool teaching team is allowing deeper relationships between the teachers and children. Our preschool teachers are sharing the good news of Jesus' love with our preschoolers, as well as making

them feel very cared for. Our teachers are mailing special notes home frequently to encourage the children and to tell them how much God loves them. Preschoolers have seen their teachers outside of the classroom and have been able to tell mom or dad, "That's my Sunday School teacher!" Our preschool teaching team is dedicated and it is a joy to watch them serve these sweet kids!

Elementary

Our dynamic elementary team is throwing themselves into the new TRU Curriculum, as they lead our children each Sunday into a greater understanding of what it means to be in a deep relationship with Christ. The teams are bonding with each other as they come together to disciple our FPC kids.

It is important to us that our elementary teachers are serving in a life-giving environment where they find that they are growing in relationship with not only the children, but with their ministry teams and most importantly, with Christ.



AWANA

Not only are exciting things happening on Sunday mornings, but we also continue to burst at the

seams on Wednesday nights with AWANA. We have 50 plus volunteers every Wednesday night that come ready to pour into the lives of more than 100 children. It is a much anticipated night for the children of our church.

As you read about what God is doing in Children's Ministry, we would love for you to commit to praying for Children's Ministry. Would you pray for our children and teachers to continue to deepen their love for the Lord and understand even more the love Jesus has for them?

Would you also pray for our children to grow in a burden for those who don't have a relationship with Christ? Also, would you pray to see where the Lord might want you to serve? If you find that God is nudging you in the direction of Children's Ministry, please share that with us. We would love to pray and consider, along with you, where you could serve. There are more changes on the horizon and we would love to partner with more of you in discipling children.

- Trish Armstrong, Lori Meadors, & Craig & Ruth Hill



Jr. & Sr. HIGH

I finished my seminary experience this past spring by writing my senior paper on

discipleship within the church. As I was researching and writing on this topic, I continued to grow in my passion to see more students within our ministry grow in their walk with Christ.

After more prayer and discussions with the advisors we decided to change the strategy of how we are providing opportunities for students to grow spiritually.

All that we do in the Water's Edge youth ministry here at First Presbyterian Church has purpose and goals. Our purpose statement is *to make disciples of Jesus Christ who disciple others*. Each of our students is on a journey in their relationship with Jesus.

Each student is in a different place in this journey. We could use **Phase 1 – Phase 5** to describe the different places they are in their journey.

Phase 1 describes a student who does not attend church or know Jesus. A student who is deeply in love with Jesus and is taking opportunities to mature would be in **Phase 5**.

Phase Events

To help introduce students to Christ and to help them grow in that relationship, we provide:

Phase 1 - Big Events: once a month, such as miniature golf, Christmas party, etc.

Phase 2 - Sunday School: a topical study that can be engaged by believers and non-believers.

Phase 3 - Wednesday Bible Study: much of the time students are in small groups, more in-depth studying of the Bible, music, and longer times of prayer.

Phase 4 - Discipleship Groups: an advisor or other adult in the church meeting with a small group of students every other week for a higher level of accountability in their spiritual growth.

Phase 5 - Joshua Experience: for 10th -12th grade High School students only, application is required. I meet with this group twice a month to explore Christ-like leadership through community, prayer and learning experiences.

It is my hope that students are always moving into a closer, deeper relationship with Christ.

Hopefully students who are more mature in their faith will attend all types of events, but continue to challenge themselves and be seeking more ways to grow. Just because a student is not participating in a discipleship group and/or Joshua Experience doesn't mean that they aren't growing in their faith – they may be actively growing! These are simply more opportunities offered at FPC Fresno for students to grow and deepen their faith.

Other big news within the youth department is the hiring of Meagan Bergem as the full-time Assistant Director of Junior High Ministries! The new position began January 1. I am confident this will be a

wonderful benefit to the future of Junior High Ministry at FPC Fresno! I believe that Meagan has tons of potential and I'm grateful that we get to be a part of nurturing that for the Kingdom while benefitting from the gifts God has given her.

- Craig Blodgett, Youth Director

Equipping

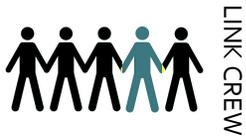
The Equipping Team has been filled with God's handiwork as it labored to build a culture of connection and support at First Pres. Throughout the first quarter of the year, our ministry team of faithful laborers agreed that our purpose of "intentionally preparing people to discover their gifts and use them to glorify God", was overlapping with other areas of ministry. As a result, several elders and church staff from Adult Nurture, Outreach, and Missions began to meet to discuss ways to minister more effectively.

By fall of 2013, it became clear that the Adult Nurture and Equipping ministry teams would best serve the congregation by uniting. We are now working as one team to help our congregation in these two closely related areas -- living the unique purpose God has for each of us, and growing in our personal relationship with Christ.

Our new team, yet unnamed, is excited and ready to witness how the Lord will continue to mold the

programs. We are open to new ideas and welcome others alongside us as ministry opportunities unfold.

One especially exciting new program, birthed from our Connections ministry, is Link Crew.



With the vision of making every person on our campus feel welcomed and plugged in, Link Crew members will be greeting on the lawn area, answering questions, directing folks to classes, and praying with and for those who have needs! We continue to praise God for His calling!

- Elders Pam Sells & John Slaughter

Facility & Grounds

We are seeing increased use of our facilities throughout the week which keeps our staff busy supporting the various ministries of our church. Hope Now for Youth and Bethany Church hold weekly worship services in the A-1 building.

Our current maintenance schedule is more reactive rather than proactive as we deal with our facilities which are over 40 years old. We are seeking proposals for a new heating and cooling system for our 60 year old sanctuary system.

Early estimates for a new sanctuary system are approximately \$200,000.00. The Session is looking at ways to increase our capital fund to cover future facilities improvements.

I want to thank all those individuals who volunteer their time to make repairs and do maintenance on our facilities. Dean Lloyd and Robert Wood, who were former Facilities chairmen, continue to provide valuable help and service to the church. Allan and Zak Knepper are improving our campus computer and wireless networks. They have upgraded our current system. If you see them tell them. "Thank You!"

We are working on expanding our resource list of volunteers who may be available to help work on various improvement projects. If you would like to add your name to our list please contact Jim Dice or Susan Glover. Please notify Susan or Jim if you see areas of our church campus that need attention.

- Elder Jim Dice

Mission

It is a privilege and a joy to work on Missions. Imagine meeting folks who are working all over the world to further Christ's kingdom and getting to hear their stories. We would love to have you join us on the Missions team if this sounds interesting to you.

Last year broke our hearts as we said farewell to God's servant Bob Osborne. Linda is continuing on in Albania and we continue to support her. Tom and Danette Bliss also retired after 20 years of service with World Impact. Thank you for sending them off with a gift. Also, a team helped celebrate the Erseke Church's 20th anniversary.



First Presbyterian Church was called by God to be a part of that church plant 20 years ago. We also wish to thank you for your support of the Kisongo Trek and the amazing turnout from school, neighborhood and church folks.



For next year, the Mission team hopes to continue to build the Neighbor's R Us team and connect with continuing events in the Lowell neighborhood. To follow up on the Kisongo Trek, please join us as Fresno Hope (a local group of several churches) comes in March to build promise packs for children in Swaziland.

The Missions team continues to seek better ways to communicate

with you many of the things that God is doing with your Mission offerings. The Mission Support partners help care for and pray for the missionaries that First Presbyterian Church supports. As a church, we hope to further our support of the San Francisco church plant with offerings and perhaps some small teams visiting and working alongside of them.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support of the Alternative Gift giving. Our hope is to connect a bit more with the Farmer's Market and have a greater interaction with those who are working and living in the downtown area. Again, we would love to add you to our team of folks who are doing and praying for missions. Perhaps we can encourage and support you for a short term mission this summer.

- Elders Richard Friesen & Terry Glaspey

Outreach

2013 was a great year for the Outreach ministry. We are grateful for Eric Crantz, who finished his term in June. Skip Lynn joined the ministry in 2013 and we are excited about what God has in store for us in 2014. In addition to direct ministry work, Outreach provides support for the newsletter, advertising in the Fresno Bee as well as invitations and signage for special events such as our Christmas Eve Service. The Outreach ministry seeks ways to

share Christ in the community.

Some highlights of 2013 were: New First Presbyterian Church Website (www.fpcfresno.org). Terry Jaurena has worked with our website company to redesign and update the First Pres website. With our new more user-friendly format, it better reflects FPC Fresno via the web. The site has a fresh look with improved functionality and is enhanced with beautiful pictures. It will continue to evolve as new information and segments are added in the future.

Please visit the site, pass the web address to friends and family that may be interested, and let us know your thoughts. We want to provide new and better tools for our members - this is a first step in this process. We are grateful for Terry's hard work and we look forward to using this new website for the Kingdom.



Church Ministry Support:

Outreach helped launch this year's downtown "Spring Into Service" luncheon and service projects. Over 75 adults and 40 children participated at 9 different service projects at downtown locations including the homes of

Linda Osborne, Nate and Esther Delahey and the Skibbie's along with Youth For Christ and First Pres. This was a wonderful opportunity to participate in downtown ministry on Palm Sunday. We look forward to developing new projects together in 2014 - look for an announcement and plan to come alongside!



Along with other ministry areas, Outreach also supported the 4th of July Celebration, the All Church Picnic at Woodward Park and the Fall Festival event at Burchell Nursery with the distribution of invitations. These events provided an opportunity for our members to enjoy fellowship and to invite others to experience the First Pres. community personally. Outreach is planning similar events for 2014 and we encourage everyone to bring neighbors and friends.

We look forward to expanding our team in 2014 by adding a Newsletter Editor, continuing to improve the website, and expanding FPC's downtown ministry opportunities. We welcome your thoughts and ideas as well as your prayers! Thank you for helping FPC to reach out to our community!

- Elders Kim Lee & Skip Lynn

Personnel

As we look back over this past year and the blessings God has so generously poured out on our congregation, we are very grateful to both God and our staff for helping everything run so smoothly.

Your Personnel Team has been very busy this last year updating hiring processes, staff review practices and personnel policies in order to enable our staff to do the work of our church as efficiently and as effectively as possible. We are so grateful to God as we have watched Him bless us every step of the way.

There have been some major changes in our support staff. In April, we hired Emily Phelps for a part-time position in Office Support. Her skills and abilities were such a blessing that in July, we offered her additional hours to support Christian Education. Her administrative support has become a huge blessing to our CE Department.

Also in April, we very sadly said good-bye to Crista Newman (Magnee). Her position was filled by Audrey Arce who has jumped in with both feet and has proven to be a wonderful addition to our staff as Front Desk Coordinator.

It became apparent that the needs of our Jr. High/ High School ministries were growing. To meet this need, Meagan Bergem, our Jr.

High Intern, accepted a full-time position as Assistant Youth Director to Jr. High beginning January, 2014.

Thanks to your faithful giving this past year, we were able to give our staff a 2% cost of living increase for 2014. We greatly appreciate their dedication and desire to honor the Lord in all they do.

In January, we will begin the work of hiring an Administrative Assistant for our pastoral staff to give them some much needed clerical support.

We are grateful for Pastor Jeremy's leadership and organizational skills which have blessed our team and have given us direction, focus and decisive wisdom to discern the Lord's will as we care for the needs of our staff.

- Elders Melanie Franz & Pauline Kliever



This year, your Worship Ministry Team maintained its focus on providing a rich, distraction-free environment as we honored and glorified God in worship both traditional and contemporary.

There were a number of opportunities for our congregation to mix and connect with one another in new ways: we came together for a single service this summer and grew and stretched a

bit as a congregation; we continued our tradition of hosting a wonderful good Friday service for the downtown community; we shared the 37th Annual Messiah Sing-along with the community at large and had a very full sanctuary; and we made room for newcomers by adding a third Christmas Eve service.

A new planning team was created for the purpose of planning worship in second service. Our bands mixed together in new ways, creating new bonds and relationships. Within the congregation, Julie created opportunities for participation in short-term choral ensembles. With the help of a generous donor, Worship was able to purchase the new battery-operated candelabras which beautify our sanctuary.

We have been blessed in 2013 with wonderful ensembles, directors and worship leaders who serve so faithfully and diligently: Margaret Licon, organ; Christopher Golden (who joined us in September), Brass Ensemble; Carol Dice, Bell Ringers; Daphne Saul, Full Court Pres; Roger Harabedian, Kids Praise Singers; and the Worship Bands.

We are deeply appreciative of our sound techs, screen operators, ushers, greeters, and wedding coordinators. Many of them work behind the scenes, so to speak, and allow our worship and events to be the best they can be!

We look forward in 2014 to deep, rich worship, to enhancing worship in both services, and to welcoming others to our church.

- Elders Rod Kellenberger & Sco^o Mozier