



First Pres Challenger

WORSHIP_{grow}
SERVE

Equipping the Family of God at First Presbyterian

January

The Annual Report For 2007

God's Provision, Our Challenge by Jamie Evans, Senior Pastor

God laughs at human plans. Apparently our plans weren't big enough. On our campus this year we have had to move our sibling congregation Bethany from our high school room at 11 a.m. to our fellowship hall, so prodigious has been their growth. Pastor Jonathan Vialobos and his staff are seeing great fruit.

Meanwhile Hope Now for Youth has launched a Sunday evening congregation on our campus and at last count over ninety are in attendance. Former gang members are thriving in worship! Bible Study Fellowship continues to pack out our campus on Tuesdays and Wednesdays utilizing every available space we can offer.

Our new nursery, slated to open in a few weeks, double the size of its former digs, now may be too small as children arrive in a wave of new births from our own rank and file. And AWANA Bible Club on Wednesday evenings has boomed to new heights in participation.

As a pastor I did not expect such growth. Our seventh grade junior high class begins the first arrival of that youth surge we expected from our tsunami in children; it is triple the size of the grade ahead. Life abounds numerically here, yet I am uneasy in all of this as well as grateful.

Your elders and staff prayed for this. Now God has been more than faithful. In gratitude, it is our turn to build ever deeper in our essentials to honor rightly this new crop He has given to mature in Christ.

Will we be more prayerful, deeper in Biblical literacy, further gracious in evangelism, energized and

more authentic in worship, clearer in our own gifts and their service in His season, stronger in our support of mission both locally and globally, and committed to lifetime relationships in this church family?

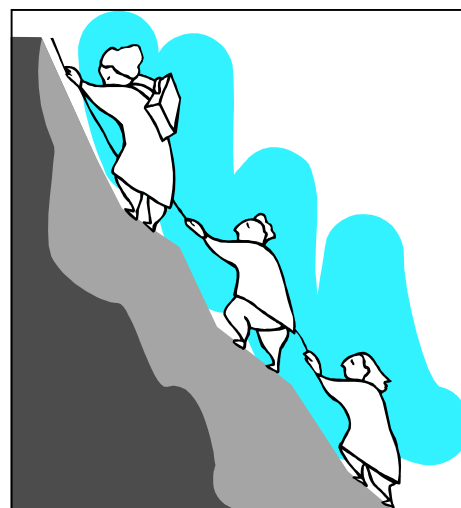
My unease stems from seeing God allow us a great test. He has given us the desires of our hearts. As young families abound and babies are the norm, and as our demographic age drops on this campus, will we rightly bless this next generation with all God has given in Christ?

Each one of us will play a part in this if it is to proceed according to God's plan. This is the time in 2008 to pray over how you and I can better raise up in discipleship this new wave of youth and young families.

I am glad that the Conversion Candle has been lit this year more frequently. This is a necessary trend if we are to honor the gift of these many young souls to encourage.

2007 has seen immense changes for our church family. During a challenging economic season in the Valley our plans for campus refurbishment move on at a steady pace in our new nursery, youth center at the Body Shop (old A1 Auto), new organ, permanent offices for Hope Now for Youth, our sanctuary sound enhancement, and our exterior sanctuary rebuild.

Funds continue to cover the costs of current construction. Only time will tell whether resources in hand will be sufficient for all of our dreams. Keep up the giving, and if



you have not yet pledged, this would be an excellent time to do so. This is our first major rebuild of our wonderful facility in fifty years. It is our turn to bless the future generations. God's House should be better maintained and more beautiful than our own.

Special Sunday Schedule January 27, 2008

8:30 a.m.

Brunch and Congregational Meeting in Fellowship Hall

10:30 a.m.

Joint Worship Service

Regular Schedule Resumes
On February 3

Going Forward In Faith by Scott

Each year I have the pleasure to report to you on the activities of Session. However, since the activities are detailed in the Ministry Team Reports, I feel more compelled to report to you on the spiritual nature of Session. In the past, I have shared my observations on how the Lord has used fellowship and prayer to unify the Session. This year I would like to share with you how the Lord has unified the elders with faith. Your Session truly enjoys being with each other, and if you have ever attended a Session meeting, you would see that much of our time is spent in prayer. But this year, more than ever, I have been amazed at what God has shown me during our Session meetings about faith.

In Psalm 37 David said, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” If you commit your way to the Lord and trust in Him, He will do these two things: (1) He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn; and (2) He will make the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

I have learned a lot about faith during our meetings. I have seen that faith is more than reading, thinking and believing. It involves enjoying the Lord. Faith is happy; it is peaceful and enjoyable. Faith is enjoying the knowledge that God has taken care of everything, and that we have a God that enjoys being with us. During our meetings we are reminded that God has prepared in advance the work for us to do with Him.

When Natalie was a little girl, she loved to be with me when I was working around the house. She loved to wash the car with me; a job I despised. She would mimic my every move. At first, I was little frustrated with her getting in the way. But I enjoyed being with her too much. Then it dawned on me— why not use her little hands to wash the wheels? (Please, no Child Labor Law com-

ments.) My hands were too big to clean the wheels, and she was too short to wash the top of the car. So we started washing the car together, each using our unique gifts, enjoying our time together; talking, singing funny songs, getting wet, and before we knew it, we had a very clean car. We enjoyed that car each time we were in it, because we cleaned it together.

I think that God feels the same way. I could have washed that car all by myself, but it was a lot more fun doing it with my daughter. I am learning to enjoy faith the same way that Natalie enjoyed being with me washing a car. The Scriptures tells us that faith builds endurance. I could have washed that car all day long.

As I look back on the year, I am reminded of many moments that Session enjoyed washing a car with God. I saw our Lord use the unique gifts of each elder, in doing the work that God Himself prepared in advance for us to do with Him.

A challenging task for any Session is preparing the budget. Session was faced with meeting a budget during a period when we were spending more than we were taking in. As we prayed and believed, we saw God feed a multitude with just five loaves and two fish. 2007 was another year that God faithfully pro-



vided the perfect measurement to sustain His ministries at First Pres. God taught us something special in 2007, which Session used in preparing the 2008 Budget. Every elder prayed over each line item of their Ministry Team’s budget. The result is a budget which is nine percent less than the 2007 budget.

Preparing the budget was daunting, after witnessing the congregation giving over \$3,000,000 for the *Mission: Possible* campaign. However, despite delays in obtaining building permits, God (in His perfect timing) is now showing us the fruits of that campaign. The construction team has reported that our new ground floor nursery will be completed within a few weeks. Construction has already started on the new high school and junior high school building, and I am told that it will be completed by the Summer of 2008. The Long Range Planning Team has also been told that the final plans for the sanctuary will be submitted by 12/31/07.

God has blessed our church with a Christian Education program that continues to grow. After just a few years, our AWANA program has nearly 100 children in attendance. Members of our church have enjoyed working with the Lord in this ministry. We have even received an award from AWANA, and other churches will begin using our program as a model.

Another example where Session has enjoyed faith is the mission ministry. Session believes that God is calling congregations to be conduits for Him to give to others in order to expand the Kingdom. Session therefore views our mission budget as our

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Going Forward:

(Continued from page 2)

tithe, and sees our members' dedication to our Mission Partners as a sign of a healthy congregation. Each year, our mission budget exceeds ten percent. Individual members give even more. Our 900-member-church gave over 150 Angel Tree Gifts in 2007. Members have also given their time and money to our new church plant, the LifeSpring Church, which is now holding services in a school in southeast Fresno. Each year our members also spend their time and money to travel abroad to serve alongside our Mission Partners. And in 2008, we desire to play a major role in developing Philip Prasad's "Dalit Avataar Presbyterian College" in India..

Session has enjoyed other steps in faith during 2007. As you know there is a political faction attempting to divert the PCUSA from a scripture-based commission. While other Presbyterian churches have left the denomination, our church has taken a national stand. We continue to pray for the denomination, and are committed to be the city on the hill. Our elders have taken a renewed role in leading our Presbytery, with one of our elders now serving as the moderator of San Joaquin Presbytery. In June of 2008, the General Assembly will be held in San Jose, California. Session is encouraging members to attend the General Assembly. It is our hope that First Pres will have a powerful contingent, which the Lord can use to change the hearts of others. The General Assembly Meeting will be a major battleground, with Session committed to the way of the Lord, as revealed through His Scripture. In faith, we will also enjoy this challenge.

2008 will bring many exciting opportunities for ministry. You will learn more about them at the Annual Meeting. As we meet the challenges of 2008, let us remember that God enjoys doing His work with us; and with faith, we can delight ourselves in Him.

Ministry Team Reports

Adult Nurture

First Pres men and women had a busy 2007. Dennis DuPertuis taught several adult equipping classes, Terry Jaurena facilitated the study of various topics and books, and Kevin and Kendra Barcelos facilitated a class on caring for orphans and the fatherless, featuring several guest speakers. Our committee also provided oversight to family camp, men's conference, and women's conference. At the latter, Chris Welch examined the seasons of life.

Women's ministry continued to be very active at our church. There were two women's Bible studies available—a Thursday morning Beth Moore study led by Marilyn Minasian and a Tuesday morning (Morning Glories) study at the home of Merlene Samuelian. In addition, Marcie York spoke and talked about women in the Bible on several Sunday evenings that comprised the "Fog Lifters' Series." She taught concurrently at the Mothers' Inc. group during the week. Women's ministry also oversaw the providing of flowers on Mothers' Day, where the special women in people's lives could be honored by the purchase of flowers to decorate the sanctuary. This was similar to the purchase of poinsettias at Christmas.

Mariners groups and several house churches were still active and meeting in 2007. The Elherts, Franklins, and Jetts led a college and career group manuscript study on the book of Galatians. Adult Nurture also kicked off what we hope to be an ongoing vehicle for small group fellowship and connection called "Satellite Sundays." The first event was listening to a concert by the Youth Philharmonic preceded by a dinner at the Franklins' home.

The marriage mentoring program began at our church with a few couples becoming trained to serve as mentors to newlyweds and other couples. We are looking forward to making available some practical teaching on marriage by Roger Minassian in 2008. New member classes also took

place in the spring and fall.

The Church in Society committee continued to monitor developments within our denomination and presbytery, resourcing our pastors and elders.

San Jose will play host to the 2008 General Assembly, which will be a focal point of attention in the coming year. Scott Predmore continued to supervise regular blood drives held at the church.

Finally, our ministry team would like to extend our great appreciation to the many individuals who could not be named in this report who nonetheless helped make these activities possible. Adult Nurture looks forward to serving you further in 2008.

—Chris Rosik

Christian Education

Nursery/Preschool

2007 has been an exciting year for the Nursery/Preschool area. We have welcomed so many babies, it is hard to keep track! As a result, the plans for the new nursery area moved forward and are almost complete, thanks to much hard work by the Long Range Planning committee. We look forward to welcoming the wave of new babies, and new volunteers, in the new year.

Lisa Rush, our faithful and wonderful nursery coordinator resigned effective January 1, 2008. She has served our nursery and young families in a beautiful and hospitable way. She will be missed as the face of our nursery ministry. She continues to serve young children in her new role as a Special Education teacher. Lisa, we love you and pray for great blessing for you.

Preschool is also bustling. The baby wave actually began several years ago, so preschool ministries are also bursting at the seams. The older preschoolers continue to enjoy the wonderful teaching brought to them by faithful Godly Play leaders, where they learn to experience church in a way that encourages wonder and awe about the mystery



Ministry Team Reports, Continued

of God. Our younger preschoolers continue to receive solid biblical training in Sunday school and are having a new experience based on Hebrew words for worship at the 11:00 a.m. service.

Many thanks to all of the incredibly faithful and hardworking volunteers that continue to make the ministry to our littlest treasures possible. You are all appreciated and loved.

—**Corrie Sands**

Elementary Department

The kindergarten to sixth grade children at First Pres have had a great year going deeper in their understanding of God's Word. Through the faithful service of 40 Sunday morning volunteers children are interacting on a practical level with strong biblical truths from both the Old and New Testaments. Kindergarten-fourth grades continue to learn from the monthly rotation cycles of Bible Knowledge, Games/Drama, Media, and Art/ Cooking. Five shepherds make a nine-month commitment to be with these children every week, building relationships and helping them apply what they are learning to their lives. Rhonda Pope equips the rotation teaching teams with their monthly curriculum and Craig Hill leads the children in singing and worship at the start of every Sunday. The fifth/sixth grade class under Wendi Norvell's leadership continues to be a vital, relational atmosphere in which kids build friendships and take their knowledge and application of biblical principles to a richer, deeper level. God has also provided excellent teaching teams for our 8:30 and 11:00 kindergarten-second graders, who are dismissed from the worship services, and I praise Him for each person!

AWANA clubs for preschool through sixth grade children thrive and continue to grow on Wednesday nights. Forty dedicated men and women show up after their own busy days with the energy and vitality needed to build into the lives of almost 100 eager, excited children! Jim Cousins continues to provide creative, delicious dinners beforehand for our dinner crowd.

Winter camp at Sugar Pine and

summer camps at Calvin Crest were great opportunities for children to make friends and go deeper with God. The summer networker ministry was chock full of activities that fostered friendships, built mentoring relationships and helped children grow in their faith. Vacation Bible Blast was just that, a blast! Our leadership teams were enthusiastic and empowered, and 125 children were blessed by their ministry.

It is a joy to watch the church treasures, our children, blossom and develop in their minds and spirits under the excellence and integrity of our Children's Ministry volunteers. We look forward to God's leading as we move into 2008.

—**Marcie York**

Junior High

This last year we went to San Diego during our Spring Break, did work projects and did a Vacation Bible School at Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana. We had our membership/baptism class during the Spring and many students became members of the church. We said goodbye to Cindy Carlson, Josh Purves and Ben Starbuck who were advisors last year and said hello to Luke Norvell this year. We studied the books of Ephesians, Philippians, the Gospel of Mark and heroes of the faith in the Old Testament. We had a good time seeing God work in and through the advisors and students last year!

--**Craig Blodgett**

Senior High

Our senior high group, the SOURCE, experienced a great year in 2007. New students and new advisors joined that group and the year was full of fruitful and relevant ministry. With a ski trip in January, winter camp in February, a mission trip to San Francisco with YWAM in March, graduations in May and June, a summer full of great activities including camp, a bike trip, skateboarding and fellowship, or the fall semester with game nights, Santa Cruz retreat, Video Scavenger hunt, a Christmas party and walking down Christmas

Tree Lane, our senior high students grew in faith and friendship.

Mary Koon has been working as an intern throughout the fall semester and has been doing a great job infusing creativity and life into the ministry. A key addition to the ministry in 2008 will be the A-1 Auto Complex just to the south of campus. We are looking forward to all that God has in store for 2008 in ministry. We will have a couple of offices in the building for Hope Now for Youth along with a computer tutoring center. We are grateful to God for His faithfulness and love of our high school students and anticipate transformational relationships in the year to come.

—**Greg Ehlert**

Church Care

This year has been a time of maintenance with much appreciation for our many volunteers who have spent countless hours caring for our facilities.

We would especially like to recognize the following: John Cotton, Dean Lloyd, Jim Dice, Tim Steele, George Melton, Charlie Schuler, Richard Samuelian, Ronnie Samuelian, John Ellenberger, Steve Pharis, Bev Ricklefs, Richard Regalado, Randy Reed and it goes without saying our "glue" Susan Glover for keeping everything rolling.

It is difficult to separate *Mission*: *Possible* improvements from the changes due to regular maintenance needs. One often is the result of the other.

We are in the midst of a complete restructuring of our sound system starting with an antiquated sound board that has just been recently replaced and moving towards an updated system for the delivery of sound for the sanctuary. This system will include a completely new speaker array and will also have sound panels added to the walls of our sanctuary. We have a wonderful acoustic quality for orchestral music but the reverb of our solid concrete wall creates significant problems for the spoken voice. Thanks to new technology we hope to have a great solution to accom-

Ministry Team Reports, Continued

modate both and have the project done by the middle of this next year.

Shortly after the new year we should have use of the new nursery/preschool. We are very grateful to many who donated their weekends to help paint the new addition and prepare it for use.

The A-1 building, new home for our youth, is under re-construction and is targeted to be ready for occupancy around the summer of this coming year.

—Robert Wood

Deacons

Isaiah 40:11 tells us, “Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock, gathering the lambs in his arms, Hugging them as he carries them, leading the nursing ewes to good pasture.” The deacons of our church take these scriptures to heart and apply them to our

congregation. We reach out in Christ's name to people who are in need, ill, hungry, or hurting. We do this with the help of the entire church. Without the help of members who volunteer through the Harvest of Helpers, we could not cover the needs of our fellow church members. Many individuals assist us by providing food for families, transporting people to appointments and to church, keeping the food closet well stocked, assisting in memorial receptions, assisting in preparing and serving communion, and helping celebrate the births of babies.

This past year our list of STARS (Seniors That Are Really Special) grew from 33 to 48 people. We are aware that our population is aging, so we are looking into methods of adequately addressing the needs in new ways.

If you have a need or know of a need, please call the church office and let them know. We cannot help if we do not know. We would rather hear about it four times then not at all or worse yet after the fact.

While the deacons have many tasks that we cover, our primary focus is on the care of our members in time of need. All of the 18 serving deacons are committed to being Christ's hands and feet here in Fresno. It is a privilege and honor to serve the church as a deacon. We truly are blessed with the people who dedicate the time to serve Christ by serving others.

This past fall we held a seminar titled Preparing for Life's Adjustments. The Saturday seminar was very well attended and the plan is to hold one every other year. Many experts donated

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2007 Annual Financial Report			
	Budget 2007	Actual 2007	Budget 2008
Administration	\$ 55,415	\$ 58,992	\$ 44,645
Adult Nurture	43,950	29,748	38,400
Capital Tech Fund	800	101	-
Christian Education	80,000	55,833	70,000
Church Care	120,000	97,219	105,000
Deacons	4,800	2,839	2,150
Evangelism	36,300	24,961	30,850
Ministry Equipping	3,000	1,199	2,500
Missions	163,900	154,187	139,200
Personnel	863,516	867,686	813,137
Worship	49,700	25,451	43,475
	\$ 1,421,381	\$ 1,318,216	\$ 1,289,357
2007 Revenues	\$ 1,356,298		

During the last eighteen months or so First Presbyterian Church has traveled down a fiscally tumultuous road. The congregation has remained very faithful; in fact since 2001 giving has steadily increased. Praise God for your faithfulness! However, at the same time expenses were also rising, and in many months were even exceeding giving/income, imposing the

need to delve frequently into the church's reserves. This two year combination of trends – increased giving AND increased expenses – encouraged Session to curtail prayerfully spending during the latter part of the year and adopt a budget for 2008 that is over nine percent lower than that for 2007 (reflected in the table above entitled)

Your incredible dedication to great stewardship is more than a complimentary reflection of your prayers and sacrifice. It is a manifestation of your heart and desire to see ministry occur.

Session is continually cognizant of that sacrifice which has resulted in their commitment to many hours of prayer and work that both they and their respective committees have placed into the development of the 2008 budget.

Session's stewardship of your gifts to God is governed by your devotion to prayer for His will at First Presbyterian Church. A deep felt responsibility is held by members of Session to consider carefully each expenditure and investment in ministry on your behalf. Thank you for your great generosity and for allowing Session to serve the needs and work of First Pres!

—Mark Ford

Per Capita for 2008

G.A.	\$5.79
Presbytery	14.04
Synod	5.17
Per member	\$25.00



Ministry Team Reports, Continued

their time and knowledge to educate people on estate planning, funeral pre-planning, reverse mortgages, long term insurance, how to choose alternative housing, respite care, issues with dementia, and hospice care.

We thank Rev. Paul Armstrong for his guidance and help. He not only has supported us; he has taught us, led us and inspired us to serve with joy. We are pleased with the new team support that will be happening in the new year and look forward as we endeavor to serve Christ and our congregation in new creative ways.

—Merlene Samuelian

Equipping Ministries

On the Equipping Ministry Team we wanted to find a way for people to connect more easily. We wanted our current groups to be able to post calendars and e-mail easily about events. But we also wanted new people to be able to see where they could join in and be able to contact us. We found out about Church Community Builder, a web-based program with high security that would enable us to do this and much more. Dave Kimball got it up and running and had several of our groups try it out.

For several years the Equipping Team has been doing exit interviews with deacons, elders, and nominating committee members who are ending their time of service. It gives them closure while allowing us to share with them some of the joys God has given as they served. It's always a great evening as we see where God has worked through His people. We also discuss what things equipped them well for service and what training they would have liked. This helps as we equip the new people coming on board.

As a result of these exit interviews, we were asked to facilitate the training for new elders and deacons. This year, together with the pastors, we put together a training session that covered everything from their specific duties, to biblical leadership, to the Books of Order and of Confession, to serving communion, to commitment to prayer

(Pastor Jamie asks all elders and deacons to pray one-half hour a day), etc. We learned from this training that we absolutely need two sessions instead of one. We're excited about helping facilitate the training for the next class of elders and deacons coming in.

We spent some time looking ahead to our five-year vision of where we feel God wants us to be. We hope to help new people connect, to celebrate and encourage our hard-working volunteers, and to equip all members to serve in the area to which God calls them.

—Laura Sponberg

Evangelism

The year 2007 was one of leadership transition and refocus for the Evangelism Ministry Team. Three new elders were elected in January to lead the team, so all three, all new to Evangelism, needed to get up to speed quickly. Then, our new Chair, Elizabeth Hulme, announced during the early summer that she would be leaving the team (and First Pres) due to the fact that she and her family were moving to the Central Coast. Soon thereafter, Tina White was nominated to take Liz's place on the Evangelism team, and was subsequently elected by the congregation. Our efforts in the early part of the term (beginning in July) were therefore focused largely on orientation to our roles and goal-setting for this year and beyond.

One of the major Evangelism programs for the past two years has been the Alpha program, which consists of a series of classes involving video presentations and small group discussion, all in the context of an informal atmosphere (usually involving a meal). The result has been tremendous growth in faith on the part of individual participants, many of whom are able to use the knowledge gained to pass on the Word of God and Jesus' teachings to others. All First Pres visitors and members, whether young in faith or long-time members, are encouraged to consider enrolling in Alpha classes, the next

series of which will commence in February, 2008.

The Evangelism Ministry Team continues to distribute front yard invitation signs in anticipation of Christmas Eve and Easter worship services. All who wish to do so are encouraged to pick up one of the signs on the front lawn in the weeks preceding these two most important times in our Christian calendar and place them in front of their homes in a conspicuous place. Thanks especially to Skin Mead for his efforts in coordinating this program.

The sermons continue to be made available for download on the First Pres web site soon after worship services have concluded each week. Anybody with a computer and Internet access is able to listen to the current week's sermon (or any other delivered within the past year) directly from the web site, or can save the sermon to a file on their computer for later listening. Likewise, CDs continue to be prepared each week of that week's sermon. There is no longer a fee for these CDs, although members and visitors who would like one are able to leave a small donation to cover reproduction costs if they so desire. These CDs are generally available on the table in the center of the Narthex. In addition to the sermons, we are experimenting with placing selected choir pieces on the CDs as well.

As we move forward in 2008, your Evangelism Ministry Team will continue to focus on these and other evangelistic outreach projects. One currently under study is a more consistent and effective means of assimilating visitors and new members into the life of the church, beginning with their first visit to First Pres. Other projects will no doubt be formulated in the coming months, and as always, God will lead us in these efforts.

The Evangelism Ministry Team this year consists of Becky Adams, Stuart Conrad, Greg Ehlert (Staff Advisor), Dave Kimball, Skin Mead, and Tina White. You are most welcome to join us at any time if you feel that God is leading you toward this type of service.

—Dave Kimball

Ministry Team Reports, Continued

Long Range Planning

Mission: Possible, the capital campaign, was started almost three years ago. The goal when this drive started was to do projects as the pledges came in so that we did not go into debt or need to do major borrowing. Some of the projects are finished, two are in process and the third and most visible phase is nearing the starting line.

We have accomplished the following:

- Purchase of the A-1 building
- New Organ console
- Relocation of the library to the educational wing

The following are in process:

- Renovation of the old library into a new nursery for our wonderful new babies
- Renovation of the administration building to accommodate the new nursery and meet the new code requirements.
- Renovation of A-1 building

This project is coming soon:

The most visible project will be the updating of the exterior of the Sanctuary. The final plans were submitted to the City for approval. We would covet your prayers that the plans will come out of the planning office in a timely manner.

We appreciate the faithfulness of many people as the pledges have made it possible for us to work quietly and efficiently. While most of us have not been disturbed in this process, we sincerely appreciate the staff as they have endured days of hammers, saws, and paint fumes.

We eagerly look forward to the final phase of this project and ask for patience as the grounds and buildings will be disrupted for several months. We eagerly look forward to a rededication of our Sanctuary.

—Richard Samuelian

Missions

The purpose of our Mission Ministry Team is:

- To care personally for mission partners and seek to provide financial support through the church budget process

- To help all ages of our congregation grow in what they know about missions in general and our missionaryies specifically
- To encourage and promote personal involvement in mission experiences, local or global, by all ages of our congregation

We work toward those purposes in some fun ways and they often overlap a bit.

Christmas in July is one of the ways we attempt to care personally for our Mission Partners. We ask our overseas partners to tell us what they'd like for Christmas, early. We let you know what those wishes are and you go out there and purchase them. Bless you! In years past, we've attempted to send them by August or September by boat, which is less expensive. That option is no longer available, so the cost of air only shipping overseas will mean some changes to this in 2008, but we're still committed to this unique way of connecting personally with those who spread the gospel of Christ overseas.

Another way we try to care personally for our mission partners is to read their mail and to pray for them. We made more of an effort to do this at our meetings this year and to return to the practice of publicizing prayer needs of our mission partners so more of the congregation can pray. You'll find them updated something like quarterly in our narthex. We also made them available on the website this year.

We've welcomed a number of mission partners here for visits which meant lunches, prayer gatherings, or desserts. Some of these have been intimate gatherings and others have shared in our large adult education class. This accomplishes both the caring for goal (nothing says we care for you more than spending time) and helping our congregation grow in what they know about missions (real people and real stories).

Karon Chambers traveled with Terry Jaurena to Ethiopia in April to see two of our mission partners first

hand: Horn of Africa Mission and Hope Enterprises. What a joy it was for them to be with such faithful partners in God's Kingdom up close and personal.

We've continued to keep the needs of LifeSpring, our church plant in the southeast part of Fresno before the congregation. We praise God for the families and individuals from our congregation who have heard the call of God to be involved in this effort. We continue to pray for their success in evangelism and discipleship.

We responded to the invitation from the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program to establish a church-based VORP program here. Jim Haman is serving as our church-based VORP coordinator. He's completed his first mediation with a victim and offender. We look forward to encouraging involvement in this mission experience from more of our members.

We closed out the year with two big projects: Angel Tree and our second annual Alternative Christmas Gift Project.

A highlight at this year's Angel Tree Party was that two young men that connected with Paul and Karon Chambers through Angel Tree years ago came to the party. One of them stood up and told the kids that he knew what it was like to have a dad in prison, but that he also knew what a difference Jesus has made in his life. Praise God for fruit!

Your alternative gifts for Christmas released \$ 11,900 to invest in God's Kingdom work. We pray for the fruit those gifts will yield.

And we pray for God to guide us as we continue to flesh out these purposes in 2008.

—Trish Armstrong

—Pam Sells

Personnel

There have been a few changes again this year in our personnel. Lydia Contreras Corrales resigned her position effective November 30, 2007. She wants to spend more time with her ailing Mother. Her home is in Orosi and that is where her husband is also em-

Ministry Reports, Continued

ployed.

Ben Arias, custodian, left his job in the late fall and has been replaced by Fred Rodriguez, Junior. Yes, he is the son of our other custodian, Fred Rodriguez. Like his father Fred, Jr. is doing a good job.

Earlene Andrus "retired" after many years of faithful service as our Accountant/Bookkeeper. We were fortunate to hire as a replacement Torsten Grunberg for this position and he has already made a positive impact in our accounting department.

Our church has had a long history of our pastoral staff and deacons visiting those in deepest need, such as a death in the family, ill health, pending surgery, depression, or loneliness. They also visit the shut-ins, and our STARS.

We are pleased to announce that Bob and Rosemary Avery will be joining our visitation team effective the first of the New Year. Bob and Rosemary believe that God is calling them to this ministry and they fully intend to devote most of their time in visitation.

We are grateful for our faithful staff. I would encourage each of us to thank our staff for their service whenever we have the opportunity to do so. It is good for our staff to know they are greatly appreciated.

—Phil Crantz

Prayer

Prayer is the life-blood of our church and the key to our personal development in Christ. There is no way to capture even a fraction of this

dynamic conversation in this report but there are ways for you to connect to ongoing prayer ministries within the life of First Pres. Here are a couple of opportunities.

The Long-Range Prayer Team prepared a 24-hour prayer vigil beginning after the Maundy Thursday service in the sanctuary. The theme was "Will you stay awake with me?" The vigil concentrated on identifying and laying aside the thorns in our relationships and offering them to the Lord. A wreath was constructed of real thorns with red labels as a physical reminder of our offering.

Pilgrims were greeted by hosts and given a devotional which outlined the route, the stations, and prayer suggestions. In addition, pilgrims were spiritually clothed as they put on the armor of God in preparation for their prayer journey.

Each prayer station was different, and pilgrims could linger as long as they wanted. A pastor was available to pray with pilgrims, and all found this to be a spiritually rich and rewarding time. Communion was also served by a First Pres deacon or elder.

This was a whole-church effort, and about 90 pilgrims of all ages participated in the vigil, plus hosts, pastors, elders, deacons, and security guards, all helping to provide a worshipful, quiet and meditative environment.

We invite you to participate in this year's vigil. Plans are in the works for a very meaningful time.

Pastor's Prayer Partners is now around ten years old and continues to pray faithfully during each worship service in the Heritage Room. During that time, prayer is offered inviting the Holy Spirit into our worship time, praying for the pastor and message and lifting up the needs of the congregation. The team also steps into the sanctuary at the end of each service to pray for any that might have a prayer concern or praise.

Prayer Partners have a quarterly breakfast/prayer meeting full of worship, sermonette and prayer for our

Current Church Officers

Scott McCallum Clerk of Session

Session Elders

Class of 2008

Trish Armstrong Missions Chair
Dan Barrows Nominating Committee
John Verwey Christian Education
Mark Ford Management/Finance Chair
Heidi Lynn Adult Nurture
Laura Spongberg Evangelism/
Ministry Equipping Chair

Class of 2009

Mindy Franklin Evangelism
Brian Roberts Prayer Chair
Jana Rolf Christian Education
Mark Ruiz Mission
John Ellenberger Worship
Robert Wood Church Care Chair

Class of 2010

Stuart Conrad Evangelism
Roxanne Cousins Worship
Phil Crantz Personnel Chair
Tina White Evangelism
Chris Rosik Adult Nurture
Janelle Grunberg Christian Education
David Kimball Evangelism Chair

Deacons

Class of 2008

Herb Arden Food Closet
Sylvia Armstrong Sunshine
Marilyn Conrad Meal Support
Audrey Deal Congregational Care/
Secretary/Memorials
Merlene Samuelian Vice-moderator/
Meal Support
Nancy Weaver Food Closet

Class of 2009

Bob Parkman Transportation
Jan Parkman Transportation
Daphne Saul Meal Support
Bob Wagnon LOVE Inc.
Francis Weaver LOVE Inc.

Class of 2010

Barb Wagnon Meals
Walter Saul Special Events
Carol Rudolph Communion/Meal Support
Marilyn Bokemeier Communion
Roger Taylor Deacons' Corner
Karon Chambers Special Events

staff. It's important to know that our pastoral staff and full-time program staff do attend and very much appreciate the sacrifice of time and energy that our PPP's take on.

Marjorie Miller spends time every month creating an encouraging letter full of Scripture and testimony that is sent out along with monthly prayer requests. Our PPP's not only pray on Sunday through the services, but daily over the prayer requests shared by various staff members. Thus our campus is constantly being prayed for!

Pastor's Prayer Partners always welcomes new prayer warriors. If you would like to serve in this vital ministry contact Jim Herbert at 226-4558. They also invite you to come share a prayer concern or praise after any worship service.

—**Brian Roberts**

Worship

Worship and Music

Worship continues to be diverse at First Pres. In fact, I believe that is one of our strengths! From bells to brass, children's choirs to adult choir, contemporary to classical and everything in-between, we have it here at First Pres! We are also incredibly blessed with a host of talented musicians. We are thankful for our music staff: Bill Barbour, Carol Dice, Connie Ellenberger, Daphne Saul, and Walter Saul.

The Chancel Choir led in worship and music during first service and occasionally at second service. They enjoyed collaborating with Eleven a few times. Easter and Christmas are major moments for the choir as they rehearse a great deal of extra music and work diligently to prepare it. Several "special singers" joined us for short-term singing commitments for these worship times. We had the wonderful opportunity to praise God in song at Bass Lake for a choir retreat in September. Thank you to Louis and Coke Evans for sharing their delightful cabin home! We also welcomed many new singers to the choir this fall.

We thanked Brian McGuire in June for his outstanding leadership as

Worship Elder as he rotated off of Worship and we welcomed Roxanne Cousins as new Worship Elder.

We also thanked Chester Goodale for his heartfelt leadership in Kids Praise Singers as he stepped down from this ministry in June. We are very excited to welcome a new director of Kids Praise in January - Krista Moore. Look for more information to follow, but if you have children in grades K-2 look for rehearsals to begin soon.

Full Court Pres and Kids Praise presented a musical called "Holy Moses" for both services in January. Daphne Saul and Chester Goodale worked together to make this an exciting and worshipful time for all.

Easter was celebratory and we rejoice that we were able to purchase new banners for our sanctuary marking the Easter season.

A special concert was held in October, in memory of Bob Smith. Four talented Christian musicians from Julliard School of Music thrilled us with their musical giftedness.

November marked our one-year anniversary of worshipping with our beautiful new organ! What a joy it has been to use it in new and wonderful ways each week.

Many of our music ensembles have been active in our community through visiting convalescent homes, shut-ins, providing music on Christmas Tree Lane, and more. We also continue to host the Messiah sing-Along.

Our primary focus, however, is weekly Sunday worship. It is a joy and privilege each week to offer praises to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are grateful for the many volunteers who join together to enhance worship. We are appreciative of each member of the music ensembles, parents of the littlest singers who bring them to church to rehearse and sing to Jesus, the sound technicians, powerpoint operators, ushers and greeters, prayer warriors, behind the scenes decorators, those who record our services and download them

to CD's and the website, and especially to you, members of our congregation, who join us in worship! Praise be to God!

—**Dr. Julie Carter**

Worship Arts

In 2007, both of the Worship Teams (our newer team is affectionately known as Eleven) facilitated worship throughout the year as we have done since our inception. During the year Eleven welcomed Koby Johns as the newest member of the band and we have all appreciated his musical talents as well as his tremendous heart for worship. We also said a reluctant "good bye" to the Blumers--John and Kathy--as they are stepping down from musical leadership for a season. They will be sorely missed. Although both teams are usually participating in the 11:00 service, a number of us also assist at the 8:30 service in various ways at Julie's request. We welcomed the Chancel choir in a couple of inspiring collaborations with Eleven at both services, and participated in a number of ways (as soloists, and in smaller ensembles) during particular services. Jamie Franklin, Dan Kehler, and Lana Roberts continue to be lead facilitators within their respective groups, but rely on the other members of their teams for input and creativity. Memorable this year was the combination of live music and video (thanks Paul Abajian and Eleven) on All Saints Day, helping us remember and celebrate those who have graduated to the Church Triumphant. Ash Wednesday was also particularly memorable as artist Rick Alonzo painted a large picture while the congregation watched, prayed and sang. It was profoundly moving--the picture is in the prayer room off the sanctuary. If you have not seen it, please do take the time, as it is a remarkable depiction of Jesus and the world. We look forward to 2008, continuing collaboration of many kinds, and welcoming new members to the team to fill in with their own musical talents and worshiping hearts.

—**Rev. Lana Roberts**

Necrology Report



We lovingly hold in memory those members who have gone on to be with our Lord:

Eva Baiocchi
01/27/2007

Leneve Leatham
02/02/2007

Berniece Ruby
03/08/2007

Douglas (Doug) Armstrong
04/15/2007

Helen Latta
04/18/2007

Ken Brenneman
06/09/2007

Lois Dalzell
06/11/2007

Marjorie Cook
06/24/2007

Hilda Wiens
09/01/2007

Zelma Litten
09/14/2007

Galen Hiatt
10/14/2007

Margaret King
11/24/2007

Rose Uridge
2007

Nominations For Church Office

Your Nominating Committee prayerfully submits the following nominees to serve First Pres in 2008-2009:

Deacons

Kimberly DeWolf
Ben Shaver
Don Scrivner
Beverly Ricklefs
Carol Dice
Pauline Kliewer

Elders

Steve Skibbie- Missions
Scott Predmore- Christian Ed
Ted Miller- Finance
Dennis Dupertius- Nom Com

Nominating Committee

Dan Barrows
Sue Herbert
Ronnie Samuelian
Esther Arden
Cindy Sterling
Karon Chambers

The following biographies were available at publication time:

Elders

Ted Miller

Diane and I moved our family to Fresno in 1998 and joined First Pres a few months later. I have previously served as Elder and Chair of Evangelism Committee from 2001 to 2003. I have also served as the Chair for Men's Conference for three years. You may see me "ushering the Ushers" on occasion during second service as well! I sincerely look forward to returning to Session, in service to our Lord. May His will and mission be evident as we moved forward at First Pres.

Scott Predmore

My wife Jennifer and I came to First Pres just over four years ago and have never looked back. We will have been married for ten years this August and have two children, Scotty (First grade at Gibson) and

Claire all of 4 years old. We were especially attracted to this church because of the strong youth programs and it is an honor to be nominated to serve in this fashion.

Steve Skibbie

My wife Shiela and I have been involved with missions ministry since college, traveling to Russia and Ukraine through InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and then some local involvement through the Pink House. We have been at First Pres since 1999 and have enjoyed the church's role in raising leaders and supporting missions worldwide, including trips to Albania. Currently, we have a home nearby in the Lowell Neighborhood and we're part of an intentional community of believers there. We have two children, Katherine, who is 4 and Weston who is five months. I own a photography business and in my spare time, I like running, cycling and playing guitar.

Deacons

Kimberly DeWolf

My husband, John and I have been attending First Pres 20 of the 21 years we have been married. Fifteen of those years we have been members. I have been involved in a variety of

Annual Sunday Worship Attendance

Year Attendance

1997: 30,121
1998: 30,285
1999: 29,843
2000: 29,838
2001: 28,414
2002: 28,256
2003: 27,335
2004: 29,146
2005: 29,030
2006: 29,557
2007: 27,837

Nominations For Church Office, Continued

ministries including Children's and Women's Ministries and choir. I have been waiting and seeking where God would have me serve next. This opportunity is truly the nudging of the Holy Spirit to enter into a more active role at First Pres in a new and different capacity. It is a blessing to work at Fresno Christian Schools where both my children, Miriam and Aaron, attend. I work as an Intervention/Discovery Therapist serving students who struggle with processing and learning issues.

Donald Scrivner

I moved to Fresno in 1938, and attended Easterby Elementary, Washington Jr. High and Roosevelt High. I worked twelve years at Vista Pharmacy, and 34 years with United Parcel Service. I have been retired ten years. My wife Judy and I have six children and fourteen grandchildren. We have been members for almost 25 years. As a deacon, I feel that I can serve the church in a different capacity by helping others and learning more about the interactions of the church and its members.

Ben Shaver

I have been coming to First Pres since June, 2002. I have been married to Karen for 27 years and have three sons: Scott (25), Mark (23) and Matt (18). I have worked at Children's Hospital Central California as a clinical social worker for the past 21 years. I enjoy being an usher and a marriage mentor with my wife. My hobbies include reading, gardening and traveling.

Nominating

Karon Chambers

I have attended First Pres over 20 years. Patsy Cooper invited me to a Body Life supper. I loved the fellowship and the youth group. It was and still is tremendous. I am a

wife, married 41 years to my high school sweetheart, a full time mom, and involved grandmother of three.

Sue Herbert

I'm married to Jim Herbert. I am a mom to Rebekah, Jared and Kimmie, and grandma to Caleb who's a year old already! I've been active at First Pres since 1992 serving in many areas of the church, including Children's Director 2001-2004. I've been a member of the Nominating Committee before and look forward to teaming up with other nominated members as we seek God's face for future leaders of our congregation.

Cindy Sterling

I have been married to Kurt for eleven years and a mother to three boys, DJ (6), Nick (2), Chris (1). I have a love for our local ministries, and have lived in the Lowell neighborhood for fourteen years. I taught at Lowell for eleven years, and then took some time off to stay home with our boys. Now I teach part-time as a certificated tutor at Thomas Elementary. I have been at First Pres for about sixteen years and have served in preschool classes, mission ministry team and Vacation Bible Blast to name a few things. I love to decorate cakes in my not-so-spare time!

Membership Report

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Membership Jan. 1	850	862	881	896	906
Membership Dec. 31	862	875	896	906	916
Gains:					
Letter	24	14	6	12	
Professions	26	6	27	3	13
Reaffirmation	4	20	8	18	13
Reinstated	4	2	1		
Losses:					
Death	9	11	12	13	14
Transfer	11	8	8	6	2
Inactive Roll	24	10	1	1	
Erased	0	0	6	1	
Ordained	2	0		2	
Marriages*	4	4	2	6	11
Funerals	10	14	15	7	12
Baptisms				11	4
Infant and Children	7	10	7	10	3
Adults	3	2	0	1	1
*By First Pres ministers					

Deadline Information

The deadline for the March Challenger is February 22 at 5:00 p.m. It will be mailed out **March 6.** Please call Daphne Saul (252-4064) or leave in newsletter box in church office.

The deadline for “A Place for You” is each Monday at 5 p.m. Please submit announcements to Cheryl Eaker (485-6460) or staff@fpcfresno.org and put Cheryl Eaker’s name in the subject box.

First Pres Challenger January 2008

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The Ministry Team

Rev. James Evans, Senior Pastor
Rev. David Abdo, Executive Pastor
Rev. Lana Roberts, Associate Pastor
Rev. Paul Armstrong, Pastor to the Congregation
Rev. Thomas Parsons, Pastor Emeritus
Rev. H. Spees, Pastor-At-Large
Bob and Rosemary Avery, Chaplains
Craig Blodgett, Assistant Youth Director
Dr. Julie Carter, Coordinator, Worship and Music
Greg Ehlert, Youth Director
Susan Glover, Administrator
Terry Jaurena, Mission Director
Corrie Sands, Birth-Pre K Children’s Director
Marcie York, K-6 Children’s Director

Newsletter Staff:

Editor: Daphne Saul
Editorial Board: Karin Cook, David Kimball, Paula Lloyd and Bobby Temple

If you would like to send an e-mail to any staff member at First Pres, please address it to: staff@fpcfresno.org and include the name of the staff member in the subject box.

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559-485-6460
Fax: 559-485-1538

Return service requested

For Your Information

Love And Respect

In 1999, Dr. Emerson Eggerichs left his pastorate of nearly twenty years to launch *Love and Respect Ministries*, devoting full-time to building healthy marriages. Married since 1973, Emerson and his wife Sarah have crafted a unique Biblical message for couples. Author of the best-selling book *Love and Respect*, Emerson is coming to Fresno February 15 and 16. Pam and Gary Sells, Ted and Diane Miller, and Roger and Marilyn Minassian are planning to attend. For information, contact any of us or go to www.pcevents.org.



Special Sunday Schedule January 27

8:30-11:00 a.m. Children ages 2 through 7 come to the Art Room for breakfast and activities, thanks to the Pink House.

8:30 a.m. Ages 8 through adults meet in the fellowship hall for brunch and the Annual Congregational Meeting. Cost is \$5 per person or \$10 per family,

10:30 a.m. Joint worship service in the sanctuary