



## PASTOR ASHLEY'S MESSAGE

I'd imagine most of us have had this experience before. You are sitting around a festive table with family and friends, eating delicious food that has been planned and prepared in advance of the holiday. Folks have flown and driven hours to be together. Updates have been shared about jobs, families, hobbies, and other major life events. Then it happens. Someone expresses an opinion that is not shared by the whole group. Perhaps it is something that has sparked frustration and debate before, or maybe it is a new issue that is hotly debated on political news shows. The tone in the room changes, and suddenly all are on alert.

If you're like me, even reading that paragraph causes some anxiety and unpleasant memories to arise. Conflict and disagreement can be painful and difficult, especially amongst our loved ones. This Fall we have worked through a sermon focus called *A Place at the Table*, during which we have looked in scripture for how we might navigate conflict in a faith and scripture-based way. We have been developing "house rules" which guide us. As we ready our homes and hearts for family gatherings this holiday season, I thought it would be interesting to try and apply these house rules.

*Check your motivation:* What do I want to get out of this interaction? What would it look like to follow Jesus' instruction in Mark 9 to the disciples that "whoever wants to be first should be last of all and servant of all"? Can I find a way to serve or care for the other person in this discussion? What is going on in my mind and heart?

*Pray without ceasing:* Take a breath and get some prayer flowing. God, help me to speak the truth in love. Jesus, help me see this person how you see them and not only through my anger. Holy Spirit, help us to understand each other and find truth and grace in our discussion. God, I know you saw that.

*Be curious:* Perhaps ask, "Could you help me understand how you got to that opinion?" "What are your biggest concerns?" "What do you want or hope for in the future?" "What do you want from me or others?" "I had a very different experience. Could you see how I have come to a different opinion?"

*Lament:* Before or after these conversations, take time to bring your hurt, anger, and disappointment to God. Remember that Jesus himself wept and spent time in prayer. Ask God for what you want and need. Take refuge and find rest on the solid ground of God's unchanging, unconditional love.

*Consider your role:* Before, during, or after difficult conversations about disagreements, think about what is appropriate (or not) given your relationship with the other person. Does my role entail treating and being treated with respect and thoughtfulness? Hopefully always. What about managing the other person's thoughts and choices? Usually not. How can I let go of what is out of my hands and do my best with the role God has given me as a sibling, friend, child, parent, family member?

*Use your voice:* As you work through the other house rules and have a thought that feels curious, appropriate, respectful, and honest, share it! Likewise, if you feel hurt or disrespected by a loved one, honor the relationship by telling them so that resentment doesn't build up over time.

*Keep love as your standard:* Remember the greatest commandments. Winning an argument, humbling an opponent, or yelling the loudest don't mean much if you have abandoned love. This doesn't mean we give in or give up on telling the truth. It means we follow Jesus in keeping a high standard in our behavior and speech.

How does applying these house rules change how you approach difficult discussions during the holiday meals that are coming? The list above is just a starting off point as we continue to consider what scripture teaches us about conflict. Please reach out and let me know your thoughts! My prayers are with you as we all look to trust Christ with our lives and even our holiday gathering tables.

Blessings and Prayers,  
Rev. Ashley Love

## VIRTUAL COFFEE HOUR

Because worship has returned to 10:30am, Coffee Hour via Zoom has moved to 12:30pm. We hope you can join us. The meeting ID number is 862 6004 7427 or you can call in using the number 669-900-9128 and put in the meeting ID number just like a conference call. This information is also emailed every week.



### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Willow Wright	November 6
Janet Lewis	November 13
Jerry Weber Jr.	November 17
Julie Yanes	November 18
Marjorie Wall (#100)	November 22
Suzi Treganza	November 24
Gloria Balis	November 30

### NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Sylvia & Gary Cavanaugh November 11



### ACCESS FPC WORSHIP VIDEOS

To access our worship services online, go to our website: [fpcstockton.org](http://fpcstockton.org), click on Ministries, then Worship, and click on the YouTube logo. You'll automatically be directed to FPC's YouTube channel.



### DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME



ends at 2am on Sunday, November 7th. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour before you go to bed Saturday night!



### STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

The pledge cards that had been received in October were dedicated during worship on October 31st. Thank you to those who returned their cards. Thanks to those who increased their pledge.

Unfortunately, we have fallen very short of our anticipated expenses for 2022 and we hope that those who have not yet returned a pledge card will do so prior to December 31st.

Thank you,  
Gail Herron, Chair



## CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Our long time member, Ruth Strombom, fell and broke her hip. She is at a rehab facility in Washington. If you'd like to send a card to her home, please contact Suzi in the office if you need her address.

A memorial service for Evelyn Morrow will be held on Sunday, December 26th, following worship.



### VACCINATION CLINIC



First Pres will once again host a COVID Vaccination Clinic on Sunday, November 7th, from Noon-4pm. The Clinic includes vaccinations, booster shots for those who are fully vaccinated, and take home COVID test kits.



### FOOD PANTRY

Our Food Pantry is once again up and running on Wednesdays from 2pm-3pm. We are working out the "kinks" with the help of Gail Herron, Marilyn Vaughn, and Suzi Treganza. If you would like to donate food, this month we are collecting food items that we take for granted at Thanksgiving. We would love to receive:

- Canned yams
- Boxed/bagged stuffing mix
- Cranberry sauce
- Bottled gravy
- Chicken broth
- Canned pumpkin pie mix

We are also handing out clothing on Wednesdays and are in need of men's and women's all weather shoes and socks, as well as umbrellas.

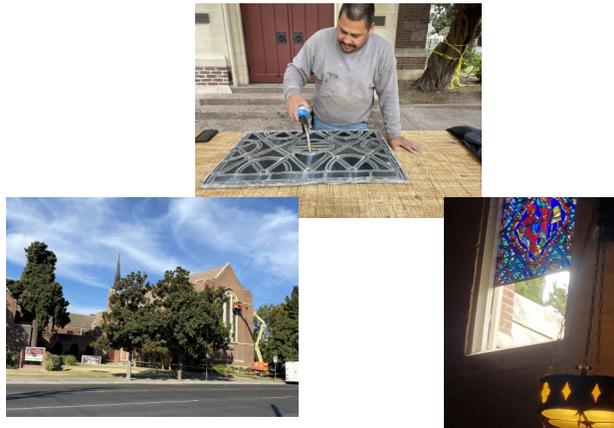
Finally, if you have a pick up truck or large car, we will soon begin picking up food donations from H.I.S. Raft and will need help to load there and unload here. Dates and times are yet to be determined but we would email anyone willing to help.

Tola Eley



## STAINED GLASS REPAIRS

During the week of October 18th, our stained glass windows were repaired by Willett Hauser, a company in Minnesota. Thank you again to all who donated to make this possible.



## READERS-R-US

In November, Readers-R-U's book club will be reading *The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles. Please call Janet Sepiol if you'd like to attend the November meeting.



AND



Please join with Presbyterian Women who will be meeting for Bible Study and Bring Your Own Lunch on Tuesday, November 4th, at noon in the Geneva Room.

Come even if you have not read the lesson. We will share new resources to teach us how to be wise and be just like Tamar, who saved the Jewish people.



## BOOK DISCUSSION

We hope you can plan to join us for a book discussion on November 14th following worship. The book is *Thou Shalt Not be a Jerk* by Eugene Cho.



## SESSION UPDATE

### OCTOBER MEETING

Here are the items that were approved or discussed at the October Session meeting:

- ◆ Having Reality Church use our building is going well.
- ◆ The roof in the Sanctuary will be repaired on November 3rd.
- ◆ FB&G is working on upgrading lighting around the church campus.
- ◆ Funding for a new Little Free Library was approved.
- ◆ The Support & Endowment Plan was amended. (If you need more information about this, please contact Craig Holmes.)
- ◆ Our new sound board has been installed.

If you have questions, please speak to a Session member or Pastor Ashley.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Session meeting packet, please let Suzi know.



## BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES

Our study of the book of Acts continues on Tuesdays, at 6:30pm, via Zoom. Watch your email for the Zoom logon information.



## OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING WEEK



The Church Office will be closed the week of November 22nd. Emails will be checked periodically. If you have an urgent need during that

week, please contact Pastor Ashley at 310-920-9945.



## COVENANT NETWORK

Save the date for Covenant Network discussion with Rev. Brian Ellison on Saturday, December 11th.



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Monday-Thursday, 8:00am-1:00pm



**SAVE THE DATE**—November 21st, immediately following worship for the purpose of electing officers and the congregational representatives to the Nominating and Support and Endowment Committees, and voting on the proposed amendment to the Support & Endowment Plan.

The deadline for submission of articles for the December Window is **November 20th.**

#### **WORSHIP ASSISTANTS**

November 7	Gail Herron
November 14	Sue McCormack
November 21	Kathy White
November 28	Carol Dietrich

#### **Our Mission Statement:**

*As God's family, through Jesus Christ, we seek*

- *to know God through prayer, worship, and Bible study*
- *to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*
- *to share God's love with each other, our community, and the world*