

**Do you sing?
Play an
instrument?
Like to
dance?**

As part of the annual church stewardship campaign, we want everyone to participate in the production of a virtual church-wide song. Please join us!

You may submit a video or audio recording for “You Are Holy,” our theme song for the stewardship campaign.

Email Christina Bellardo at cbellardo@gmail.com and she will give you the instructions. Submissions are due before Sept. 12. Find more information in the weekly church e-mails.

VirtuAll Voices will assemble all the submissions.

The Power of Together

by Tom Fingar and Rev. Dr. Debra Murray

We are quickly approaching a joyful time of thanksgiving and commitment through our stewardship campaign. Last year our children led our campaign and showed us the fun of being “All In” for God. And you followed their lead responding with magnanimity out of God’s generosity toward you. You were “All In” as well. Thank you for your generous support.

Our six-week campaign this year promises to be filled with fun and surprises. Our stewardship co-chair Tom Fingar will kick off our campaign on Sept. 26. Our stewardship theme is: “The Power of Together.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 is our anchor scripture.

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (Eccles. 4:9-12 NLT)



Each week we will focus on one dimension of our mission statement.

- Week 1: The Power of Together—All that we’ve done, all that we do, all that we can do (Tom Fingar)
- Week 2: Worship in a place of hospitality and grace
- Week 3: The children in our midst
- Week 4: The mission at our doorstep
- Week 5: Music in worship and service to the community
- Week 6: The Power of Together—All that we’ve done, all that we do, all that we can do (Tom Fingar and Pastor Debra)

Our stewardship theme song will be “You Are Holy.” See left column to learn how you can help demonstrate the power of together in song.

Thank you for your generous financial support during this pandemic. Your generosity has allowed us to be a blessing to our congregation, community, and global partners.

Members Approve Nominees for Leadership Positions

At a church conference on June 13, members of the congregation voted to approve the slate of nominations submitted by the Committee on Lay Leadership for service to the church in 2021–22.

The Committee on Lay Leadership thanks all those who agreed to serve as committee chairs and ministry leaders, and as board and committee members. Bless you for your service!

Lay Leader: Caryn Cranston

Board of Trustees Chair: Bud Buttrill

Membership Secretary: Kyle Trammell

Hospitality & Nurture Chair: Paula McKinney

Worship Chair: Mira Dabrowski

Discipleship Chair: Mike McCartney

Social Action Chair: Nancy Glaser

Technology & Communications Chair: Bill Nicholls

CEF Chair: Jeff King

UMW Chairs: Nancy Olson and Vickey Conley

SPRC Chair: Pamela Cutkosky

Treasurer/Acting Finance & Stewardship Chair:
Lou Bellardo

Lay Members to Annual Conference: Caryn
Cranston and Kathy Rose

Children’s Ministry Rep: Emily King

Youth Ministry Rep: Hope Crockett

Young Adult Ministry Rep: Christina Bellardo

Committee on Lay Leadership: Senior Pastor Rev.
Dr. Debra Murray

Investment Committee: Alan Cooper

First School Chairs: Judy Buttrill and Harold Jones

Memorial Garden Chair: Nancy Olson

Library Committee: Shared leadership

Reopening Task Force Chair: Susan Stephens

A Lesson from the Season

As you’re enjoying the fall colors and sipping apple cider, ponder this saying: “Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go.”



When leaves stop producing chlorophyll, they turn vibrant shades of yellow, orange and red. This yearly spectacle makes way for the leaves to let go and fall. It also serves as a good reminder of things we may need to drop: clutter around the home, a desire for control, commitments that no longer bring joy, personal expectations that cause added stress, a need to always be right and so on.

Just as the Israelites had to let go of their past as slaves in Egypt and Saul-turned-Paul had to abandon his persecuting ways, we, too, can let go of what weighs us down and gets in the way of God’s best for our lives. Embrace fall as a season of change and see just how beautiful it is to let things go.

by Janna Firestone in *The Newsletter Newsletter*



A banner installed by the Reopening Task Force encourages COVID-19 vaccination to produce “CommUnity ImmUnity.” Photo by Pamela Cutkosky

Support the 2021 Walk to End Alzheimer's

by Linda Grossman

Our First UMC Palo Alto Team is once again raising awareness and money for research for a cure for Alzheimer's.

This disease touches so many families in our church and around the world. Perhaps you knew my husband Richard Pike. He died in 2020 after living with Alzheimer's for a decade.

Likely you know there is no cure for Alzheimer's. Sadly, the few medications available slow the disease for a short while for some with dementia. For all, the disease is a one-way street, taking an unimaginable toll on the finances and the physical and emotional health of the families who care for those with the disease.

In addition to supporting critical research, the Alzheimer's Association provides 24/7 care and support.

Let's help lead the way to Alzheimer's first survivor!

YOU can make a difference in a couple of ways: (1) You can be a part of the FUMCPA team and solicit sponsors to support you. (2) Or you can sponsor the team or one of our team members through the Alzheimer's Association website: tinyurl.com/yemakntk. If you have questions, contact Linda Grossman or Robert Lasater.

All funds raised through the Walk to End Alzheimer's advance the care, support, and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. All donations are tax-deductible.

If you want to actually *walk*, you can walk from home in your neighborhood or participate in the Silicon Valley walk that will take place live in San Jose on Oct. 16. Safety protocols will be in place.



Thank you to Rick Allen and Thomas Allen, who constructed new shelving and racks in the breaker/storage room to hang our Christmas wreaths on. The old shelving had collapsed, dumping a tangle of wreaths and garlands on the floor. Photo by Pamela Cutkosky

Sponsor Altar Flowers When We Are Back



The Sacred Space folks want to remind you that when we begin worshipping in person again, you can sign up to provide flowers for the altar. This is one way to honor or remember loved ones while contributing to the "hospitality and grace" of our Sacred Space.

Here's how it works: Sign up online through our church website. On our "Giving" page is a drop-down menu for altar flower signups. Alternatively, use this url to take you directly to that page: signupgenius.com/go/9040f44aeaf2ea3f49-2021

Choose your date. Click Submit and Sign Up.

Enter your name and email. Use the comments section for your dedication or other instructions. Click Sign Up Now.

Charlotte Cutkosky from the office will note your dedication and remind you of your signup.

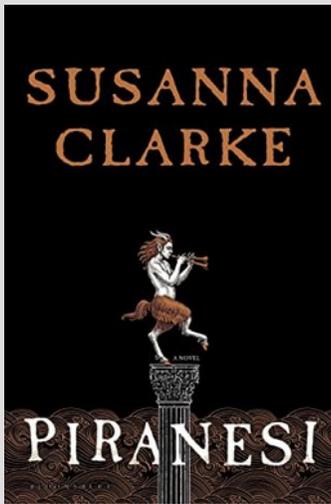
Send a check to the church for \$70 to pay for the flowers.

The online signup page will activate once we decide when we will return to in-person worship.

If we have a week when no one has contributed flowers, we will use the seasonal silk flower arrangements that have graced the altar during our virtual services.

Sign up information provided by Pamela Cutkosky.

Book Review from the Library Committee



Recommended by Charlotte Cutkosky

Hello First Palo Alto Readers! Are you looking for a short-and-sweet fantasy that will get you thinking, a story you can curl up with and a world you can escape into? I highly recommend *Piranesi* by Susanna Clark, whom you may know as the author of *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrel*.

Piranesi follows a young man making his way through a strange world contained in a seemingly endless labyrinthian mansion, of which he is one of only two living inhabitants—or so he thinks.

It's beautifully written and tightly plotted, an exploration of the human psyche wrapped up in an atmospheric fairy tale. It has won a variety of awards, including the Goodreads Choice Award in Fantasy for 2020.

If you haven't read it yet, give yourself a weekend's staycation and explore *Piranesi*'s world!

UMW CONNECTIONS

by Nancy Olson

I had such high hopes that by September we would be much closer to the end of the pandemic, but here we are. We are trying to move toward a more “normal” routine in schools, church, and work sites, while incorporating the health protocols mandated by health concerns.

Our United Methodist Women organization has been busy trying to keep us involved and up-to-date. Unfortunately, many wonderful educational meetings and workshops have been confined to online contacts. They share the same worry that has been plaguing me—how to reach and involve those of you who do not have/want computers or smart phones. We urgently need YOUR input and suggestions! Please write to me or phone me on my caption phone! Please!

The original Schools of Mission is now Mission U. It is free and open to all women, men, and youth of the church. Clergy members can actually receive educational credit for attending.

I was able to attend one of the studies, “Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools.” This study uncovered a reality to which many of us (me, for example) are oblivious: Beginning in preschool where black girls are 20% of the female enrollment, they account for 54% of girls receiving one or more out-of-preschool suspensions.

There are changes in our Reading Program, too. The UMW Reading Program is being administered a little differently this year. Instead of creating an all-new 2022 book list, the 2021 list is being expanded. The new expansion has just come out. The newly added books are included at the end of the online Reading Program catalog, or you can find a list of titles for both 2020 and 2021 at UnitedMethodistWomen.org/readingprogram. Look in the lower right-hand corner, under “Get lists by year,” click “2021-Updated for 2021–2022.” The new titles are highlighted.

If you would like for me to print a copy of this list and mail it to you, just let me know. Remember there are great books on this list, many of them available at the public library. You don't have to participate in the Reading Program to read a good book.

Some other Reading Program changes for this year are:

- 📖 Books going back as far as 2015 can be counted for 2021 and 2022
- 📖 Listening to two FaithTalk podcasts can be counted as one Spiritual Growth book
- 📖 Three FaithTalk podcasts count as a Bonus book in the Spiritual Growth category
- 📖 Watching these movies/documentaries will also count: “Just Mercy,” “The Hate U Give,” “Pushout”

Reconnecting Our Community in Person

by Pam Cutkosky and Mira Dabrowski, Photos by Mira Dabrowski

As our pandemic year stretches to two, we have had fewer opportunities to enjoy the fellowship of Christian community in person. But this summer, we were able to host Compassion Kitchen on June 19, which was this summer's version of Vacation Bible School. Children and youth took part in gardening activities, crafts, and enjoyed a petting zoo.



We held one in-person worship service on Aug. 1. About 30 people attended, the choir sang together again, and communion was celebrated.

We also were able to bring back Picnics in the Park, an annual tradition on Thursdays in July at the Pine Grove area in Mitchell Park. Outdoors at twilight, with room to spread out, 25–30 of us gathered for hamburgers, hot dogs and chicken sausages; an array of salads and desserts; and Steve Wood's homemade soda. We shared smiles and conversation. Allen Wood brought his water rocket launcher and shot off rockets to ooh's and ahhh's. Some folks brought their four-legged friends to enjoy the camaraderie.

We wore masks when we weren't eating, minimized the use of communal items, and availed ourselves of hand sanitizer. It felt good to be together!

Many thanks to those who contributed food and cooking talents: Rick and Diane Allen, Mike McCartney, Charlotte Cutkosky, Kathy Rose, Colleen Crangle, Carol Kumer, Sandra Florstedt and Bill Davidson, Linda Grossman, Mary Lu Wood.



First School Sandbox Repair Uncovers Mystery

by Judy Buttrill

The sandbox in the play yard at First School Preschool had wood that was deteriorating and creating wood debris in the box where children play. When the call for help went out, we were lucky to have two volunteers to step up at different times.

Harold Jones, at that time a Trustee and First School Board member, replaced the top boards on the sandbox. Once church administrator Susan Stephens had the landscapers remove the sand, Bud Buttrill, also a Trustee, removed and replaced the structural boards of the sandbox. Thanks to both Harold and Bud.

One of the unusual things that was discovered during this process was that the original sandbox was originally a much larger ground-level circle. The concrete circle of the original structure is still there, and the rectangular sandbox was built above-ground inside it.

If anyone was around before the rectangular structure was built, it would be interesting to hear how and why we went from a circle to a square box! If you know, contact Judy or Bud Buttrill at 650-321-8338.



^ Sandbox photos by Susan Stephens

v Prayer Walk photos by Pamela Cutkosky



Nearly 300 people from faith communities in our area joined in a prayer walk at FUMC on Sunday, Aug. 29, to support Pastor Debra, who was the target of hate incidents, and to condemn hate and aggression in our community. "Surround the City with Light & Love" was organized by Multifaith Voices for Peace and Justice. Volunteers from FUMC helped custodian Junior Basco set up, staffed the greeter table, and served as "hosts" at stations along the walk. Thank you to Caryn Cranston, Pamela Cutkosky, Mira Dabrowski, Tom Fingar, Linda Grossman, Carol Kumer, Nancy Olson, Kathy Rose, Lucy Tompkin, Patty Tomko, and Steve Wood.



Green Notes

by Nancy Olson

Greetings! While we sit back in our semi-retired state during this seemingly endless pandemic—things are happening.

California is facing one of the worst droughts in our history. It is so severe that California farmers have been warned that they may not be able to water their crops later in the summer. Reservoirs are running dry. Forests are red and scorched.

While California’s residents are asked to stop taking showers longer than five minutes and cut back on washing clothes and dishes, Nestlé’s new owner, Blue Triton, is drawing 25 times the legal limit of water out of the aquifer under the San Bernardino forest. The company is arguing that the Nestlé permit automatically transfers to the new company. The U.S. Forest Service is going to hold hearings about whether Blue Triton will be granted Nestlé’s permit. The California Water Resources Board has issued a cease and desist letter, which the billion-dollar corporation has ignored.

This is going on *now*.

The City of Palo Alto Utilities and Valley Water offer rebates to residents who replace a high-water landscape with a qualifying low water use landscape, and for installing a gray water laundry-to-landscape system.

We can save water, and money, around our homes by being leak detectives:

- ◆ A continuous faucet leak can waste thousands of gallons of water each year.
- ◆ An undetected “silent” toilet leak can waste hundreds of gallons of water per day. A “noisy” toilet leak can waste thousands of gallons each day!
- ◆ An irrigation leak as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen can waste over 6,000 gallons of water per month.

A free Do-it-Yourself Water Wise Indoor Survey Kit to check your home for leaks is available from valleywater.org/waterwisesurvey. 

Other rebates are available for rain barrels, pervious pavement, cisterns, and for rain gardens.

With this drought, it might be exactly the time to explore our options. Remember to complete an application before you install an upgrade, in order to qualify for the rebates. ❖



God Languishes With Us

A headline from last spring teased, “There’s a Name for the Blah You’re Feeling.” The writer decided what he and others felt as the pandemic wore on wasn’t burnout or depression but languishing—decreasing vitality; feeling dispirited. People of ancient times experienced this too: “The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine” (Genesis 47:13). “The wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh” (Isaiah 24:7). But there’s more.

If you used to be “merry-hearted” but now sigh a lot, hear this: “The heavens languish together with the earth” (Isaiah 24:4). Isaiah uses “the heavens” to refer to God, who languishes with us. Like an empathizing friend, God sits with us in our struggle.

With the psalmist we hold two truths at once: “My soul languishes for your salvation; I hope in your word” (Psalms 119:81).

by Heidi Hyland Mann in *The Newsletter Newsletter*

Aw-fall!

Share some laughs—or groans—with these autumn-themed jokes:

- What did the tree say to autumn? “Leaf me alone!”
- What did one autumn leaf say to another? “I’m falling for you.”
- How do you fix a broken pumpkin? With a pumpkin patch.
- Why are trees very forgiving? Because in the fall they “let it go” and in the spring they “turn over a new leaf.”
- How do leaves get from place to place? With autumn-mobiles.
- What’s the ratio of a pumpkin’s circumference to its diameter? Pumpkin pi.



SEPTEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

9/1	Elsa Nimmo	9/23	Ben Hickman
9/1	Tanya Buxto	9/23	Lino Bailon
9/2	Caroline Bowker	9/26	Sara Salsbury
9/3	Jill Perry	9/27	Brian Hamacheck
9/3	Graeme Crangle-Hall	9/28	Peter Michel
9/4	Chuck Roberts	9/28	Sandra Wilson
9/5	Annie Edwards	9/28	Karen Paulson
9/6	Annette Rahn	9/29	Ellery Price
9/6	Coral Baglin	9/29	Owen Price
9/8	Bernice Smoll	9/30	Bob Chatfield
9/8	Jill Kispert		
9/11	Stephen Black	9/2/1965	Bud & Judy Buttrill
9/12	Kate Newton	9/12/1971	Simone & Salome Bikai
9/14	Will Buxton	9/6/1975	Lou & Patty Bellardo
9/15	Richard Schramm	9/15/1979	Rick & Diane Allen
9/16	Mark Cutkosky	9/4/1982	Rick & Trish Riley
9/16	Linda Suzuki	9/7/1996	Charlie & Lisa Newton
9/19	Jim Gibbons	9/8/2013	Michael & Ann Reddick
9/20	Emma Keep	9/15/2018	Patrick & Coreen Riley
9/21	Patricia Collman	9/14/2019	Chuck Roberts & Tyler Badgley
9/21	Sally Irizarry		

The Finance Committee thanks you for your generous and gracious support and requests that you continue to keep your pledges current. Please direct inquiries to Lou Bellardo: lou@bellardo.com

July 2021 Income and Expense Summary FINAL	July 2021 Actual	Actual YTD 2021	Budget YTD 2021	Budget Annual 2021
Income				
Total Member Giving	18,915	238,987	249,000	409,000
Total Income All Other Sources	17,821	120,738	122,342	197,800
Total Income	36,736	359,725	371,342	606,800
Expenses				
Conference Tithe	2,329	28,102	31,000	54,000
Council on Ministries	3,910	11,262	21,580	38,930
Staff Parish Relations	27,788	201,493	229,028	394,860
Office and Finance	952	7,370	11,519	19,975
Board of Trustees	14,796	90,226	91,944	158,582
Total Expenses	49,775	338,453	385,071	666,347
Excess (Deficit) of Income over Expense	-13,040	21,272	-13,729	-59,547



WEEKLY SCHEDULE

→ All activities are online via Zoom or as noted until further notice. Check the church website for updates.

→ The church office is open. However, the office doors will remain locked and we ask that you phone the office—or ring the newly installed electronic door bell—to be admitted. **Masks are required.** Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sundays

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:45 a.m. Worship, on our website and YouTube. Find links at: firstpaloalto.com

Virtual Coffee & Chat, after worship
12:30 p.m. Community Affairs discussion

Mondays

7 p.m. Social Justice team hosts movie discussions. See the church e-news for movie details.

7:30 p.m. Bible Study

Tuesdays

Noon Community Chats & Check In
2 p.m. Bible Study, Channing House

Wednesdays

7 p.m. Upstream Bible Study and Contemporary Worship Service

Thursdays

Noon Community Chats & Check In
7 p.m. Chancel Choir

- 2 Worship Planning Team, Zoom meeting, 5 p.m.
- 7 First School Board, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
SPRC, Zoom meeting, 7 p.m.
- 12 Deadline for audio and video submissions for “You Are Holy,” see page 1
- 14 Trustees, Zoom meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Worship Planning Team, Zoom meeting, 5 p.m.
- 20 Insights deadline for October issue
- 21 Finance, Zoom meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 26 Stewardship Campaign begins, see page 1
- 28 Church Council, Zoom meeting, 7 p.m.
- 30 Worship Planning Team, Zoom meeting, 5 p.m.

October Dates of Note

- 3 Mid-Peninsula CROP Walk (in Menlo Park)
- 16 Walk to End Alzheimer’s (in San Jose)

Our electronic giving page is always open! Give with a few clicks at firstpaloalto.com/giving or text Give to 1-650-376-6784 for a link with instructions.

Your generosity makes our mission possible. Thank you!



Information for the next edition of the Insights newsletter is due Sept. 20.

Photos of church events are accepted at any time. Include photographer’s name, date of the photo, and a brief description of the event. Everything is subject to editing. Please send your submissions via email to Insights editor Michele W. Conway: insightsfirstpa@gmail.com or bring them to the church office. Thank you!



FIRST PALO ALTO
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

First Palo Alto United Methodist Church
625 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301-2016
www.FirstPaloAlto.com
Follow us on Twitter: [@firstpaloalto.com](https://twitter.com/firstpaloalto)

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Inside this issue of **INSIGHTS**
SEPTEMBER 2021

- Church-Wide Virtual Song, p.1
- New Leadership, p. 2
- Reconnecting in Person, p. 5
- Sandbox Mystery, p. 6
- Prayer Walk, p. 6

Next INSIGHTS deadline: Sept. 20

