



THE FPC JOURNEY

**Walking in Freedom,
Wholeness, and
Intimacy**

September 2025

www.ReachingTheValley.org

Welcome to: The FPC Journey.

Stay Connected with
First Presbyterian
Church of Santa Clara -
Your Church Family in
Santa Clara, CA- with
The FPC Journey

Join us as we share the latest news, events, and inspirational updates in our newsletter. Our newsletter is your go-to source for staying connected with our vibrant community, spiritual growth opportunities, and upcoming programs. Whether you're a long-time member or visiting for the first time, our newsletter aims to keep you informed about everything happening in our church and our local Santa Clara community.

Each month, we will strive to offer insightful devotionals/articles, upcoming event details, volunteer opportunities, and ways to get involved with the church. Stay up to date with our weekly services, youth programs, mission projects, and much more. Be part of the First Presbyterian family and grow in faith, fellowship, and service.

Visit our website at
www.reachingthevalley.org
for more details.



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CHURCH OF SANTA
CLARA**

OR



FIRSTPRESBYTERIANOFSAntACLARA

Seek and Ye Shall Find

By: Karen Grether

Seek and Ye Shall Find

Turn back to God in a way that is intentional.

We have lived lives already conventional.

He wants our hearts in awe so we can see what

A precious life knowing the Creator, no separating sea.

We pray for heaven; Jesus already brought it down.

Grace, healing and mercy found.

We pray for our daily bread, the food God gives.

We pray for temptation and evil to not come near us.

We have an enemy, who wants to deceptively steer us,

Bad is good and good is bad, self-absorbed, confusion, sad.

Comparison, insatiable; we want what will not satisfy.

Jesus is here and the enemy is defeated.

Psalms 27 says seek...

Respond in love, be humble, and obey.

Seek His face; Yes, Lord I will seek your face!

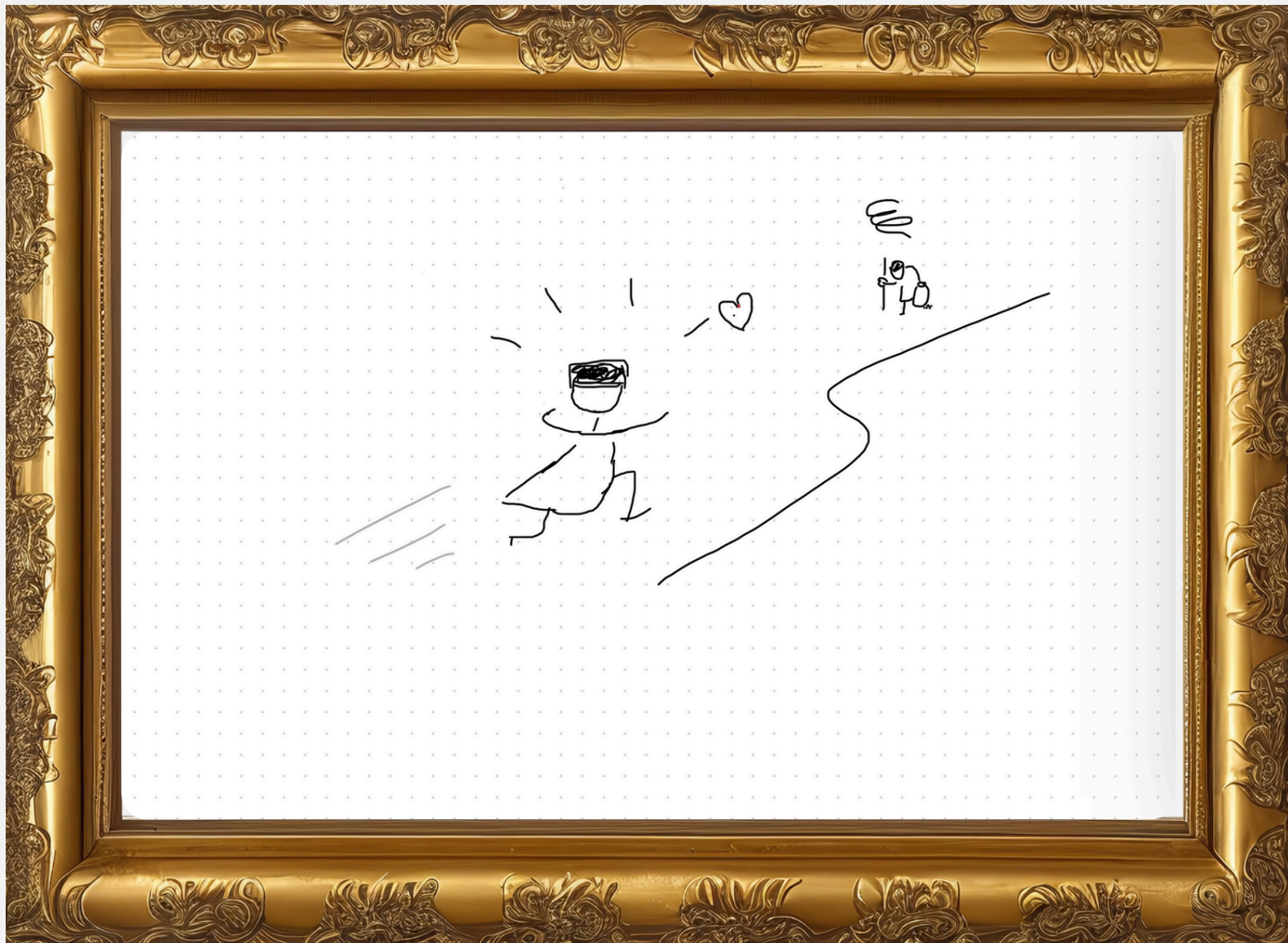
One thing I will seek; I want to dwell in the house of the Lord all my days and see his beauty!

We focus on broken like it is the only thing.

Holy Spirit guide our hearts to deeply seek our glorious King!

Homecoming

By: Sui Lim



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Busy People

By: Crisel Castro



God said to me:

(2-3) “Jeremiah, go and tell all the people of Jerusalem on my behalf:

‘I remember, people of Israel, that in your early days you loved only me.

You were like a bride in love, and you followed me through the desert, through a land where nothing grows.

You belonged only to me; you were my first love!

If anyone harmed you, they suffered the consequences. I swear it was so.”

— Jeremiah 2:1-2 [TLA]

As I read this passage, I realize that God is speaking to me like a faithful husband who tenderly remembers the devotion of my spiritual youth. But He also confronts me, because many times my heart has strayed from Him. Even so, the most beautiful thing is that God never stops loving me or pursuing my heart. He calls me again and again with the invitation: “Return, acknowledge your wrongdoing, and I will heal your rebellions.” That is the gospel I need to remind myself of daily—because it’s not just about having believed once, but about living in a continual return to Him.

I recognize that at times the pace of my responsibilities—even church-related ones—has outpaced the rhythm of my intimacy with Christ. My love has grown cold, and many times I have given the leftovers of my time to the One who should be the love of my life and my top priority. God has shown me the importance of stopping, recognizing my distractions, and returning to cultivate a heart that is tender and sensitive before Him. Small steps like setting aside time without technology, seeking accountability with friends, and dedicating the first hours of my day to the Lord are necessary for me to recalibrate my life and renew my relationship with Jesus.

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Busy People (cont)

Today, I understand that what matters most is not how efficient or productive I am at church or at home, but how much I love the Lord with all my heart. Before proclaiming Him to others, I need to experience Christ within me. The world doesn't need brilliant leaders—it needs people transformed by intimacy with God. That's why my prayer is to return each day to that first love, to acknowledge my weaknesses, and to live surrendered to Christ, so that His glory may be reflected in my life and reach others.



Back to God

By: Dennis Woodsmall

Introduction: The Call of Return

There is a perennial cry running like a thread throughout the pages of Holy Scripture: "Return to Me, and I will return to you" (Malachi 3:7). The prophets of Israel, the psalmists in lament, and even the parables of Christ echo this summons. To go "back to God" is not merely to retrace one's moral missteps, but to recognize the forces of pride, distraction, and rebellion that draw us away from the center of life with Him.

In our time, the relentless busyness of daily living distracts both mind and soul from the things of God. Yet the call to return is always a movement of grace, prompted by the Spirit and rooted in the Father-heart of God. It is not condemnation but invitation — the voice of the Good Shepherd, calling us to stillness, healing, and renewal. "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Biblical Foundations of the Return

The Hebrew prophets often employed the word שׁוּב (shuv) — "to return." This return is not geographical but covenantal, a coming back into restored fellowship with the living God. Hosea pleads: "Come, let us return to the Lord, for He has torn us, that He may heal us" (Hosea 6:1). Repentance, then, is not mere remorse but rediscovery — the assurance that God's covenant love has not failed.

Jesus makes this truth vivid in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The younger son rehearses his penitence, but before he can finish, the Father runs to meet him. His return is greeted not with censure but with celebration. This is the heart of going back to God: finding the One who, in Christ, has already run toward us with open arms and a heart eager to forgive.



Theological Reflection: A People in Exile

We inhabit a culture that is itself prodigal — wealthy in resources yet impoverished in spirit, technologically connected yet relationally fragmented. To go “back to God” is not nostalgia for a golden past, but re-centering upon the eternal fountain of life. Karl Barth spoke of sin as humanity’s “impossible possibility” — the attempt to live as though God were not. Returning to Him is to embrace once again the possibility made possible by grace.

C.S. Lewis reminds us in Mere Christianity that repentance is not simply laying down our weapons but “going full speed astern.” It is a radical reorientation — turning from the currents of self-will to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness (cf. 1 Timothy 6:11). These virtues can only flow from life in Christ.

Practical Pathways: How Do We Return?

1. **Through Prayer**— Honest, unvarnished words lifted to the Father. As the psalmist declares: “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord” (Psalm 130:1). Prayer is not performance but presence.
2. **Through Scripture** — Allowing the Word not only to be read but to read us. Immersing ourselves in the great story that calls us home.

3. **Through Community** – The Church is the household of faith where forgiveness is practiced, burdens are shared, and mission is renewed.

4. **Through Worship** – Lifting our gaze heavenward realigns the compass of the heart. Worship is not escape but return to reality — the reign of God.

A Pastoral Word

Beloved, going back to God is not an act of shame but of joy. It is the restoration of friendship, the recovery of peace, the rediscovery of purpose. Many of us drift not through malice but through neglect; not in open rebellion, but in quiet forgetfulness. Yet the Father stands on the road, watching.

As Augustine confessed, “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” Let us, then, turn again — as individuals, as families, as a community — back to God. The arms of mercy remain open.

At times, the Christian walk requires us to pause, to take stock, and to admit our need for a fresh touch of the Master’s hand. He calls us back to the original story — a story of freedom, wholeness, and communion with the living God.

Call for Submissions: Share Your Stories with Us!

We'd love to hear from you! The FPC Journey is now accepting story submissions from members of our congregation. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the lives, actions, and experiences of the people around us. However, please note that submissions should focus on stories about others — not about yourself. Think of it as an opportunity to highlight the good deeds, inspiring moments, and heartfelt connections that make our church community so special.

Please submit your stories to Chrys Sahgal : sahgalchrys@gmail.com . We can't wait to read your contributions and continue celebrating the amazing people in our congregation!

While we truly appreciate every submission, please understand that not all stories may be included in the newsletter due to space limitations. If your story isn't featured, please know it's not a reflection of its value — we simply strive to include a diverse range of voices and experiences in each issue. Thank you for your understanding and continued contributions!



SEPTEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

🎉 Join Us for FPC's End-of-Summer / Back-to-School Celebration! 🎉

- **Saturday, September 27th | 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM |**

An exciting event at FPC—designed to welcome our friends, families, and the entire community!

- Come enjoy an afternoon filled with delicious food, live music, and great fellowship. Whether you're new to FPC or have been part of our family for years, this is a perfect opportunity to connect, celebrate, and have fun together.

☀️ Family-friendly

🍔 Food and drinks provided

🎵 Live music

👐 All ages welcome!

Questions? Reach out to Chrys Sahgal at: sahgalchrys@gmail.com

We can't wait to see you there!

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Live Music

Fall FESTIVAL



Food



**NO
COST**

**NO
COST**

**27
SEPT**

3:00 PM- 6:00 PM

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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