

[www.ReachingTheValley.org](http://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](http://www.reachingthevalley.org)  
for more details.



A black and white portrait of a man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera.

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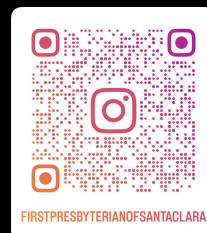
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF SANTA  
CLARA

OR



# **REVELATION: FORGIVING MYSELF**

**By: Cathy Paz**

I got a wonderful revelation from God this morning. I have been striving to see everyone and do every get-together and so overwhelmed. I went in to cover my husband, he's always cold. And I was thinking I am his caregiver and Buddy's too, the dog. I can't do everything.

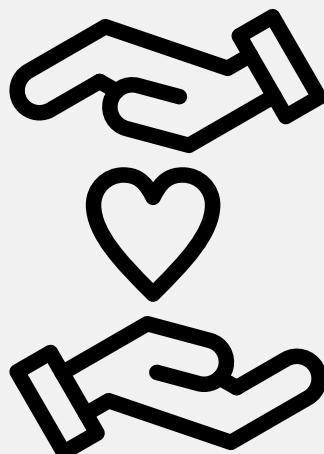
That's when it hit, revelation that is — I can forgive myself and it's okay you can't fit everyone in and do everything. But in forgiving myself for doing that, I realized how much you loved me and had showed me so many times that love. Thank you, I love you all too.

One more thing, sharing this because Linda has taught me to share my life — it might help someone else.

I am doing prayers in the evening from Resilient, the book we read and studied. It's about Jesus taking us deeper, closer to Him — Christ in me.

Many times I get visions in my head during this time, and I saw us wading in the water, then going deeper into the water. He was just ahead of me, but He never left my sight. I started to get afraid — we were very deep in the water. I suddenly realized I was surrounded by light and I felt His presence and His protection; that peace that passes all understanding. I could go further and deeper with Him without fear, calling on Him at any time.

So know, when you go deeper in the Lord, He is always there protecting you and bringing you peace.



# Passing of the Peace

By: Karen Grether



A hug in church, a physical connection with believers.  
Jesus leaving His peace, receiving that calm internal  
Resting in Christ, while turmoil is in the world external.  
Being led to doing the right thing  
Work coming to completion, joy that it brings.  
Peace remaining not fleeting, we sing  
Praising God, His heart we are seeking.  
The passing of the peace is continually increasing.  
Beautiful grace always receiving; what healing.  
Christ's return we wait with His revealing.  
Amen

# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD:

## SHARING GOD'S LOVE AROUND THE WORLD

### A MINISTRY OF SAMARITAN'S PURSE

Operation Christmas Child (OCC) is a powerful outreach of Samaritan's Purse, bringing the Good News of God's love and salvation to children in need in over 170 countries. For more than 30 years, this ministry has reached children living in areas affected by war, poverty, abuse, or the loss of parents, offering them tangible gifts and the eternal hope found in Jesus Christ.

#### What's in a Shoebox?

When you pack a shoebox, you're doing more than giving a child a gift —you're opening the door to life-changing opportunity:

- Every child who receives a gift-filled shoebox also receives "The Greatest Gift" booklet, introducing them to the story of Jesus.
- Children are then invited to join a 12-lesson discipleship course called "The Greatest Journey." Those who complete the program receive a New Testament Bible in their own language.
- These simple gifts and messages have resulted in churches being planted, families restored, and entire communities transformed.

Shoeboxes include school supplies, hygiene items, toys, and a personal letter—all lovingly packed by someone like you. (See the "How to Pack a Shoebox" brochure available in the FPC Social Hall for details.)



#### Two Ways to Pack a Shoebox:

##### 1. Build Your Own Shoebox (Physical):

- Boxes are available at FPC.
- Fill them with fun and meaningful items.
- Include **\$10 per box** to cover shipping, training, and materials.
- **Return boxes to FPC by Sunday, November 16th.**

##### 2. Build a Shoebox Online:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/>

- Samaritan's Purse offers an easy online option—\$30 per box.
- Boxes are filled and shipped for you.
- Online boxes can be sent year-round!

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (CONT)

### Want to Get More Involved?

If God is stirring your heart to do more, consider becoming a year-round volunteer with the Silicon Valley OCC Team. You'll help spread the Gospel even further through training, organizing, and outreach.

Contact: Tess at [tess328@aol.com](mailto:tess328@aol.com) for more information.

### Important Dates:

- **National Collection Week:** 3rd Week of November
- **FPC Shoebox Deadline:** Sunday, November 16th
- **Shoeboxes will be delivered to local drop-off locations, packed into cartons, and shipped to the Fullerton Processing Center before reaching children in time for Christmas and beyond.**



**SEND  
GOOD NEWS  
AND  
GREAT JOY**

**PACK A SHOEBOX**

**Countries served: Phillipines, Thailand, Vanuatu, Cook Island, Madagascar, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea**

Thank you for being a part of this global ministry. Every shoebox you pack brings hope, joy, and the message of Jesus to a child in need. Your faithfulness is changing the world—one box at a time.

# Closing Letter From Pastor Dennis

By: Rev. Dennis Woodsmall

This month we are looking at the concept of Peace and how we can have Peace of God Through Jesus Christ

St. Augustine confessed, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Every generation must rediscover that truth anew. In a world consumed by noise, competition, and anxiety, peace seems a fragile luxury, the internet, and all social media. Yet the New Testament declares something it is the very atmosphere of the Kingdom of God, made accessible to humanity through the person of Jesus Christ.



When St. Paul wrote to the Philippians from imprisonment, his cell he penned, "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). The Greek verb means "to garrison" or "to stand watch over," as a sentinel guards a city. Paul thus portrays divine peace not as fragile tranquility, but as a military strength—God's active defense around the believer. In the biblical sense, peace means far more than the absence of conflict. It signifies wholeness, harmony, and flourishing under God's gracious rule. To possess shalom is to be rightly related: to God, to one's neighbor, and to creation itself. But sin shattered that harmony. Humanity's rebellion introduced estrangement, both vertical (from God) and horizontal (from one another) and especially within ourselves. Into this broken order stepped Jesus of Nazareth who did not simply preach peace but became peace itself. As Paul proclaimed to the Ephesians, "He himself is our peace, who has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14).

## Closing Letter cont...

Here lies the genius of Christian theology: peace is not a mere sentiment to be achieved through discipline ; it is a Person to be encountered, a relationship restored. Christ reconciles humanity to God through the Cross, and that reconciliation spills outward into every sphere of life. The early Fathers called this *pax Christi*, a peace not negotiated by empires but wrought by blood—the peace of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

Yet the possession of peace remains a spiritual mystery. How does one live within it amid chaos? The answer lies in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As Paul writes to the Galatians, peace is one of the fruits of the Spirit—not self-generated but Spirit-breathed (Galatians 5:22).

Theologians have long observed that this divine peace is both objective and subjective. Objectively, through Christ's atonement we stand justified before God—there is peace with God (Romans 5:1). Subjectively, the Spirit cultivates in us the peace of God—an interior serenity that transcends outward circumstance. As Karl Barth noted, "The peace of God is not a natural condition, but the miracle of reconciliation renewed every morning.". This living reality is available to all who have through faith become followers of Jesus

Thus, Christian peace is both status and state—a judicial reality and a lived experience. It anchors the soul amid the shifting tides of human affairs and enables the Church to become what it proclaims: a living sacrament of reconciliation in a fractured world.

Jesus blesses the peacemakers, "for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). The Church, therefore, cannot hoard divine peace as private solace; it must incarnate it in the world's wounds. Every act of forgiveness, every gesture of compassion, every community that resists the logic of vengeance becomes a small embassy of heaven.

N. T. Wright observes that when Christians live out the peace of Christ, they become "advance signs of God's future new creation." To live peacefully is to live prophetically—to signal that the new world has already begun in Christ.

Ultimately, the peace of God is eschatological. It points toward that day when, in Isaiah's vision, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb" and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:6–9). Until that day, believers live as pilgrims of peace, carrying within them the foretaste of eternity.

## Closing Letter cont...

So when Paul concludes his letters with "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," he is not uttering mere formality. He is pronouncing the central gift of the Gospel—the restoration of all things in the Prince of Peace.

May this same peace—unearned, unbreakable, and unending—guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, until the day when all striving ceases and we find our total peace.

As we begin to enter the time of Advent, and celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, let us bring Peace to all we meet on this adventure called life.

Blessings,  
Dennis



# NOVEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, November 27th

**Thanksgiving Lunch FPC Social Hall**

**11:30 am- 2:00 pm**

FPC is collecting donations of socks, hats, gloves, and non-perishable food items to bless our neighbors at the Thanksgiving Community Luncheon. These gifts will be shared with community members in need who join us for the meal. Safeway gift cards are appreciated. Donation boxes are located in the Social Hall.



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# 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](mailto: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!

## Call for Submissions

