



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALAMEDA



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS: 1865-2015

ALWAYS: A FRIENDLY CHURCH WHERE JESUS CHRIST IS HONORED
AND PEOPLE ARE CARED FOR IN HIS NAME

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALAMEDA

150 YEARS

PREPARED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF ALAMEDA 150TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Andrew Saltzman – Editor
Jennifer Sacramento – Production

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Church member Nancy Hird edited a loving 2004 book celebrating the centennial of our church sanctuary. It contained valuable and reliable information on every page. Mrs. David P. Russell edited another fine book in 1965 celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of our church. There was a booklet from 1940, commemorating the church's 75th anniversary. An undated (late 50's, early 60's) church Directory prepared by a now unknown person was in the church archives. There was a 2001 Alameda Women's Association, First Presbyterian Church booklet, faithful and edifying, that listed members and past and present officers of the Association. These two items have inspiring information about our church that goes beyond the nominal lists they contain. In addition, the church's archives contained correspondence, news articles, and other ephemera – very touching indeed – that provided help.

Mark and Louise Cronenwett spearheaded our current celebration. They are members of our 150th Anniversary Committee. Nancy Hird is the able facilitator of the committee. Our other tireless, dedicated members are: Carol Cantrell; Sylvia Hudson; Susan Jeffries; Nancy Lewis; Andrew Saltzman; Deborah Saltzman. Jamie Cortes and Stacey Rodrigues helped the Committee throughout.

Pastor Christopher Peterson, our kind church leader, our Teaching Elder who guides us in the name of Jesus Christ provided inspiration, as did our wonderful Congregation.

All these good people – including the anonymous person – contributed to this book and are forever loved children of God. First Presbyterian is really "a friendly church where Jesus Christ is honored and people are cared for in his name."

PREFACE



The Church is described in the Bible not as structure, but as a people – the Body of Christ. What this means is that the church is a living and growing body. At First Presbyterian we have a 150-year legacy of serving Jesus Christ throughout the generations with laughter, study, in supporting one another and keeping our friends in the church and community in prayer. This book is a celebration of our heritage, of how God has blessed us and how we have been a blessing in a church where people have been equipped to be followers of Jesus in their family lives, jobs, schools, and anywhere God may lead them. We can't wait to see what God will do next.

Pastor Christopher Peterson

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' and 'P'.

Pastor Christopher Peterson

HISTORY

Our church is affiliated with Presbyterian Church (USA), the largest Presbyterian denomination in the United States. We are a lot older than PCUSA. It was founded June 10, 1983, the result of a merger between the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America organizations. We go back to September 25, 1864, when the Presbyterian Society was organized in Alameda. First Presbyterian Church of Alameda was established November 5, 1865 with 12 charter members.



*Church building at the corner of
Versailles and Central Avenues*

Most accounts give the dedication date of First Presbyterian's initial church building as March 8, 1869. The charming building was located at the corner of Versailles and Central Avenues, an important hub in early Alameda. Rev. F. L. Nash was the first pastor.

Our “new” building at the corner of Santa Clara Avenue and Chestnut Street was dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 3, 1904. Henry H. Meyers, a local architect and a First Presbyterian member, designed the Greek style neoclassical Sanctuary Building.



*Church building at the corner of
Santa Clara Avenue and Chestnut Street*

PASTORS

Rev. F.L. Nash	1867- 1869
Rev. S.W. Webb	1870- 1872 (Interim)
Rev. Rodney Tabor	1875- 1885
Rev. E.Y. Garrette	1886- 1893
Rev. Dr. Frank S. Brush	1894- 1914
Rev. H.L. Thompson	1914- 1921
Rev. E.P. Cochrane	1921- 1926
Rev. R.E. Cooper	1927- 1934
Rev. E.K. Feaver	1934- 1935 (Interim)
Rev. G.E. Petrie	1935- 1942
Rev. J.A. Glasse	1943- 1949
Rev. R.L. McFarlane	1949- 1953
Rev. R.D. Bulkley	1954- 1959
Rev. H.W. Van Delinder	1960- 1971
Rev. Raymond Currie	1972- 1991
Rev. Dean Ellern	1991- 1993 (Interim)
Rev. Jack Buckley	1993- 2012
Rev. Tom Waddell	2012- 2014 (Interim)
Rev. Christopher Peterson	2014- Present

THE WINDOWS

First Presbyterian has fourteen beautiful windows that powerfully express our Christian spirit. Windows were built thanks to the loving contributions of people and groups, in celebration of church leaders and memorializing persons who helped further the church's Christian goals. Here is a list of the people memorialized and of the individuals and groups who contributed to the making and installation of the windows, with a brief description of what each window depicts. A live viewing of these windows goes beyond description!

Facing the front of the Sanctuary, left bank, starting from the front.

Window in memory of William Burton Barber. Mr. Barber was Captain of the Boys' Brigade from 1898-1905. The window depicts an anchor and bears the motto, "In All Things Faithful."

Window in memory of Rodney L. Tabor, Pastor 1875-1885. From Heinrich Hofmann's "Gethsemane." Heinrich Hofmann – full name, Johann Michael Ferdinand Heinrich Hofmann – was a German painter (1824-1911). The window shows Jesus Christ praying in the garden.

Window presented by the Ladies Aid Society. "Easter Morning," showing the first appearance of Christ to Mary after the resurrection.

Window in memory of Christian Brock and his wife Johanna Brock by P.C. Brock and Hannah Brock Shannon. From a painting by the German artist, Gottlieb Peter Bierman (1758-1844), "Ascension."

Window in memory of Samuel Haslett and Winifred Haslett Tyson. From Hofmann's painting, "Christ Blessing Little Children."

Window in memory of Mrs. Caroline Webster. Christ with extended hands.

Window given by the Sunday School. Bears in the center a representation of an open Bible.

Facing the front of the Sanctuary, right bank, starting from the front.

Window in memory of George Knight and Carolyn Knight. Depicts a harp.

Window in memory of Reverend and Mrs. Edmund Y. Garrette, Pastor and Wife 1886- 1892. The subject is Christ knocking at the door.

Window in memory of Edward K. Howe. Jesus Christ walking on water; Peter, beginning to sink, cries for help.

Window in memory of David G. Alexander. Resurrection.

Window in memory of Mrs. S.A. Hastings; donated by her son, Mr. Will Harnden. Christ leading the soul through the dark valley.

Window in memory of Joshia Hand; presented by the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, organized by Mr. Hand at the beginning of the 20th century. From Hofmann's "The Good Shepherd."

Window in memory of Mary Frances Thornton, Edward A. Thornton. Grapes!

The four windows that contain no persons are of rich, inspiring design.



Groups, People, and Activities

Session

The Session is the elected governing body in a Presbyterian church. It is made up of Elders, also called Ruling Elders. The Pastor, the Teaching Elder, is the Session Moderator.

The definition of "Ruling Elder" in the *Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order*:

"As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's spirit and governance of God's people."

Joseph D. Small, from the Office of the General Assembly, writes, "The designation ruling elder is easily misunderstood ... The historic understanding of the 'ruling' exercised by elders has less to do with managerial governance than with ruling out or measuring the work of ministry, the fidelity of communal and personal lives, and the progress of the gospel in the church."

At First Presbyterian our Elders move our church forward with decisiveness, skill, friendship, referring always to God's loving lessons.



Kathy Smith, Clerk of Session, and family

Board of Deacons

Booklets of this type were issued in 1940 and 1965, in commemoration of our 75th and 100th anniversaries. Both of them contained the same good description of Deacon purposes and duties, quoted from an unknown source:



"It is part of our faith that Christians are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion ... in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. To fulfill this obligation, following the pattern of the Early Church, the Constitution provides that any particular church desiring to do so may have a board of deacons which shall minister to those in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress in accordance with the Scriptural duties of the office. The Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the Church."

Stacey Rodrigues, Deacon Moderator, and family

The Congregation elects Deacons and Elders, who all serve three-year terms.

Our Deacons love to be of help to our congregation and to our community in the name of Jesus Christ, through such programs as supplying dinner to abused women and their children at Alameda's Midway Shelter the second Sunday of every month. "Angel Tree" is one of several other programs that the Deacons facilitate. During the holidays a little "Angel Tree" situated in the Fellowship Hall displays requests from prison inmates. Each describes a gift (\$30 or less) the incarcerated persons would like their children to receive. People in the church donate the gifts; the Deacons and others deliver them. Rob Ade, one of our terrific Deacons, has worked hard in the last several years to keep this fine program a great success.

We are all grateful that our church has such a continuously effective Board of Deacons confidentially and with discernment helping people resolve powerful issues and problems in Jesus's name, through channeling funds, making visits, providing lifts, and praying. The Deacons bring peace, love, and joy to people. Our parishioners' financial contributions and loving encouragement are the most important part of this good process, providing the way. "Loving" is an operant word describing life at First Presbyterian Church of Alameda.

Women's Breakfast

Deb Saltzman is active in the Women's Breakfast and in many other phases of our church life and work. She writes:

In 2013 the First Presbyterian Women's Association had dwindled in membership and disbanded. It was replaced by the Women's Breakfast that is held on the third Saturday of the month at 9 AM. The fellowship is available to all women and shows good attendance. Five teams rotate, providing the breakfast once a month. Often there are speakers or a social activity. There is a donation basket, and those funds are held in reserve for service opportunities. This ministry has proved popular and it allows the women to socialize with each other and pray together.

Men's Breakfast

First Presbyterian men and their male friends gather the fourth Saturday of most months, 9 AM in the church Parlor, and have a good breakfast that several of them prepare; there is talk and prayer. Friendship and fellowship are always part of the Men's Breakfast. Michael Helbush has been the stalwart President of what is still known as the Men's Fellowship several years. We are grateful he has worked long and well in this and other endeavors.

The current Men's Breakfast configuration can be traced back to the 1990's. Founder Ralph Joseph's perseverance resulted in a group of men gathering monthly around a breakfast table for camaraderie, food, and fellowship.

There is no charge for the breakfast. The passing of the basket pays the food bill; proceeds left over go to worthy church activities, such as our Youth Program.

Youth

Our new Youth Program Director, Paul Scholz, writes:

The youth are a blessing to the whole church! We are represented by grades middle school through seniors in high school, from 6 different schools. All different walks in life and yet connected through Jesus Christ. Every week, the youth take time to focus on God's word and how it applies to their lives, creating Christ-centered relationships, as well as living out their calling in the world. We are excited to see how God is developing these young men and women, and will continue to walk alongside them in their spiritual journey. Our prayer is to raise up godly men and women who love His Word, love His church, and even more importantly love Him! In the words of the Apostle Paul written in the Book of Ephesians, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)



Paul Scholz, Pastor to Youth & Young Adults, and Youth Group

Older Adults Ministry

Deb Saltzman, Chairperson, Older Adults Ministry, writes:

In 2009 Roberta Jung transferred from a Pennsylvania presbytery and established the Older Adults Ministry (OAM) at our church. The goal was to provide for the interests of "older adults," and the OAM has become one of the most active ministries of the church. Barbara Wildman took over leadership when Roberta moved back to Pennsylvania, and continued leading the team for five years. Deborah Saltzman has recently been elected to chair. The group has an Ice Cream Social at the end of summer as its only fundraiser. The other activities sponsored throughout the year are field trips, Blessing of the Animals, Christmas party, and Spring Luncheon. The goal is to keep in touch with the needs of the Older Adult community, with cards and distribution of prayer shawls when appropriate. The OAM coordinates with the Deacons when help is needed to resolve older (and disabled) adults' problems. There is also an associated group called Coffee, Tea, and Company that meets for fellowship on the second Thursday of the month, 11 AM, at the Café in the Public Library to chat and stay in touch.



Deb Saltzman & Andrew Saltzman

Music and Worship



Jackie Barker

Jackie Barker is a church leader who has served so capably and helpfully in many capacities. She is currently a member of our Choir and an Elder. She writes:

The Music and Worship Committee's role is to do whatever we can to help the Pastor provide you with the best worship opportunity possible. We like to say that we are responsible for everything from the time you enter the Sanctuary until you leave it. We try to take care of the details – bulletins, hymnals, pew Bibles, prayer cards, offering supplies – to allow you to focus on worshipping God. We hope to remove or fix anything that could detract from your joyful experience of God's grace.

Music

The ministry of music has been an integral and loved part of FPCA all 150 of our years. Our current pipe organ is approximately 111 years old. It was built by Austin Organ Company, founded in Boston Massachusetts and still going strong in Hartford, Connecticut. Important as our pipe organ is, most important to us are our excellent Choir and Music Director. George W. Davis, familiar to long time First Presbyterian attendees, has been filling in since late 2014, when our beloved former Music Director, David Zechman, left to work at a new job. George plays the organ beautifully; the Choir continues to perform splendidly, and it all truly inspires our already great love of our Lord. Several musicians in our Choir ably assist George: Damon Rodrigues, recorder; Barbara Acosta, flute; Jackie Barker, trumpet. On some happy occasions, Greg Klein and Evan Rodrigues ably help out on piano. Barbara Acosta we all agree is special – she is a world-class flautist and soprano. The Choir simply sounds great!



Organist and Choir Director George W. Davis and choir members Greg Klein, Damon Rodrigues, Louise Cronenwett and Barbara Acosta

Christian Education



We know First Presbyterian Church of Alameda has had a great Sunday School program since its founding. This year, through the truly tireless efforts of long-time Christian Education Director Bruce Johnson, we

adopted "Godly Play," a program based on Montessori principles. Godly Play serves children through early, middle, and late childhood. It recognizes that children have an innate sense of the presence of God, helping them to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language and to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. Godly Play, in the hands of our dedicated and kind Sunday School teachers, is a godsend to our church and its future adult parishioners and leaders.

Infant Care

Bailey Rodrigues and Nikki Eggett are young parishioners who capably and reliably care for the infants in our congregation. Parents drop off their little ones before the service begins and pick them up afterwards.



Bailey Rodrigues



Nikki Eggett

Boy Scouts

Under the sponsorship of First Presbyterian Church, Boy Scout Troop 2 was chartered in April 1917 as the second troop organized in the City of Alameda. Because of the church's continued generosity and support, the troop has thrived throughout the years. It is the only troop in Alameda that has 86 years of continuous registration. The church continues its support of Troop 2. The Boy Scouts have a true spiritual relationship with FPCA and further Jesus Christ's purpose with activities such as Pancake Breakfasts and special participation in church services. Our church provides a meeting place to the troop. The young men of Troop 2 are fine citizens of Alameda and are an inspiration to us all.

Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church

Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church shares the First Presbyterian Church of Alameda building. Reverend Jinwook Yang was installed as its Pastor July 1, 2009. The churches' relationship began on October 3, 1983 when the Korean church, a fellowship at the time, asked to hold services in the church Parlor and use the church kitchen. Reverend Joseph Chang (sometimes seen as "Chung" in certain documents) was the fellowship Pastor then.

The sharing agreement became formalized in 1984; by 1987 both churches held their services in the First Presbyterian Sanctuary. In 1987 Reverend Myeong Bae Choi was the Pastor of the Korean church and Reverend Raymond Currie was the First Presbyterian Pastor. The initial name of the Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church was Alameda First Korean Presbyterian Church.

Over the years the churches have had a friendly and productive relationship in which joint activities, such as a Christmas Sing-Along, and joint worship have taken place. Pastor Yang tells us that he would like our 150th Anniversary celebration to point the way to a spiritually closer and more active association where we all "explore creative ways" of increasing the good contact between our groups.

Pastor Yang has kindly provided us with a Mission Statement of the Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church and a supplement to the above, adding:



Pastor Jinwook Yang

"We are unique individuals who share the same desire to develop a mature relationship with God through engaging worship, compelling Bible study, personalized discipleship, and care for our community through outreach."

- April 29 (Sun) 2012 was the first Praise Festival of the Korean Presbyterian Churches in Northern California.
- July 25 (Sun) 2010 Rev Myeong Bae Choi honorably retired.
- July 1, 2009, Rev. Jinwook Yang started serving AKPC.
- Since May 20, 2007 (Pentecostal Sunday) FPCA & AKPC have had a Dove Release Event.
- The 203rd General Assembly 1991, meeting at Baltimore, Maryland, celebrated and commemorated the organization of Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church, Alameda, California.
- December 6, 1987 Rev. Myeong Bae Choi was ordained as the Pastor of AKPC.
- October 7, 1987 the SF Presbytery approved New Church Development of AKPC.
- As of August 3, 1986 Rev. Sung Jin Park left and Candidate Myeong Bae Choi started serving.
- In 1984 Rev. Joseph Chang or Chung left and Rev. Sung Jin Park started serving.
- October, 1983 a Korean Fellowship started gathering at FPCA with Rev. Joseph Chang or Chung.
- There is some confusion about the exact start of AKPC.

Pastor Jack Buckley



Pastor Jack Buckley

Beloved Pastor Jack served First Presbyterian a goodly portion of our last 50 years, from 1993 to 2012. His wonderful wife Joanne Buckley was active during those years in many phases of the church's functioning. We asked Pastor Jack to write down memories of what he loved and enjoyed during his time here. What he write provides an enriching view of activities, persons, and events in the life of this church:

Newsletter – From the beginning of my pastorate we published a monthly newsletter, which early on became the *Good News*. At first, my wife Joanne served as editor, then for several years Sue Earlywine fulfilled that role. One of my more pleasant challenges was to write the Pastor's column for every edition's front page.

Website/God Blog – Elder Randi Carlson Hinkle got the church up and running on the internet in the late 1990s. She and Michael Swartz created the website. I wrote a weekly blog all the way through my retirement in September 2012.

Annual Retreat at St. Dorothy's Rest – The first one occurred in 1995 or so. Elder Jan Toepfer pulled together a team of 10-12 people to make it happen. The event had separate programs for adults and children, but all ages gathered at the start of every session for singing and fun, and for all meals. I was the teaching leader the first year.

Vacation Bible School – A new effort came about in the late 1990s, thanks to middle school student Maggie Lewis asking her mom why our church didn't have one (remembering VBS joys in their previous church). It was a great success and the first of several annual programs. Leaders included Maggie, her mom Nancy Lewis, Bruce Johnson, Music Director David Zechman, Cynthia Hovermale among many others.

Health Ministries – When Nancy Hird joined the church her vision for wholeness led to a new set of ministries covering a wide spectrum of interests: Sunday morning blood pressure checks; a lending library of health-related materials; classes on physical, emotional, spiritual well-being, on nutrition, aging, relationships, and more; articles in the monthly newsletter.

Seminary Interns – From my first year we were blessed to have seminary students assist me in pastoral duties and work with youth and younger adults. Some of them continued working very part time for us after their official internship programs ended. I remember with great thanksgiving: Mark Newton, Don Ashburn, Debra Davies, Tom Harris, Ginger Johnston, and Dolores Nice-Siegenthaler.

Partnership with Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church – For several years Pastor Myong Bae Choi and I met with selected elders from each congregation to share news, joys and concerns, and business matters, and to plan shared worship and service activities. Among others, Zino Conners and Hugh Tebault were helpful participants in those meetings. In time, Pastor Choi and I drew up a formal document delineating our churches' relationship as partners in ministry, as opposed to more traditional models of landlord/tenant or hosting church/nesting church.

United Communion – In 1998 we celebrated the Presbyterian Church (USA) covenant for intercommunion with the United Church of Christ and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by hosting a five-church Communion service. Other participants included: First Congregational, Immanuel and Trinity Lutheran, and Alameda Korean Presbyterian Church. Standing room only!

Presbyterian-Catholic Prayer – Thanks to Jenny Cronenwett 's initiative (she was then in high school) we hosted Father Rick and members of St. Joseph Basilica for an evening of prayer and worship. This meeting harked back to ecumenical efforts between the two churches in the 1980s, praying together for ecumenical peace in Northern Ireland. Jenny's parents Mark and Louise were major players in those good efforts.

Mark Cronenwett

A word from our wonderful friend and parishioner Mark Cronenwett is appropriate. Mark has been with First Presbyterian since way before our church celebrated its centennial year in 1965! He writes:

Mark A. Cronenwett, son of
Dr. Paul H. Cronenwett and Betty Cronenwett

My parents became members in 1941. I was born January 26, 1942, and was baptized in First Presbyterian in March of 1942. I have been a lifelong member of the church. I went through the Sunday School program and was confirmed as a member of the church in 1955 at age 13.



Mark and Louise Cronenwett

I have met many wonderful people and have received guidance on my faith journey from them. One of my fondest treasures is the Bible that I received from the church in 1949 with my name imprinted in gold on the front cover. I still have it and refer to it from time to time.

Since my marriage in 1981, my wife Louise and I and our children Jenny and Michael have been involved in many activities in the church. As many of you know, Louise is Catholic but considers herself a loving friend of the First Presbyterian family and is an active participant in our Sunday liturgies. She is also a member of the 150th Anniversary Committee.

I care deeply about the church and want it to continue to grow and be a center of Christian faith.

Afterward, and Forward

Compiling this book was a delightful experience. It was edifying, spiritual, and social. This church is simply filled with wonderful people, friends who – to a person – love Jesus Christ. God enriches us all and really does help us become in turn a helpful church community, in relationships with one another and in relationships with friends and neighbors in many places.

It was great to look at some history: precious mimeographed (had forgotten about mimeographs!) documents, newspaper articles, old photos obviously taken with view cameras, and objects such as beautiful 1950s First Presbyterian Church plates manufactured by the Homer Laughlin China company – itself still in Newell, West Virginia U.S.A. and almost as old as our church itself.

This labor of love pointed out that we have more work to do in compiling a detailed history of the church and its people, and have a future filled with God's Peace, Love, and with helping work in our great First Presbyterian Church of Alameda.

Andrew Saltzman



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