



## A Special Report from Our First Pres Elders

We are grateful for your prayers for us and for the body of Christ here at First Pres. Please continue to pray for us to hear and obey the guidance the Lord provides.

We took some time in the worship service on June 20 to update you on some important matters. Knowing some prefer to read it as well, we offer this summary.

Craig Blodgett will assume the position of Youth Director, overseeing both high school and junior high ministries. A two-year, part-time internship position will be added to assist with the junior high youth in addition to the one that exists already for the senior high youth.

Sarah Meisner will remain as the High School Intern and we will hire a new Junior High Intern. We believe this will provide much needed continuity and stability for our youth ministries.

We are grateful for the great volunteers in both our junior and senior high ministries. Please keep these volunteers in your prayers as well as our youth staff.

Our pastors will be staggering some leave time this summer after they attend the EPC General Assembly June 23-26.

After he returns from General Assembly on June 27, David Abdo will be away for three weeks and will return the week of July 19.

Lana Roberts will then be away for three weeks starting August 9 and returning August 30. Please

pray for deep refreshment for them both.

Kevin Reimer has been and will continue to consult and support the pastoral and program staff. His pastoral and psychological training and experience is a great resource and we are grateful for his availability in this consultant capacity for 15 hours a week.

The Jamie and Kristy Evans Children's Educational Trust is in effect. This gives Kristy access to funds for the care and education of Nate and Kelly.

Please know that additional gifts can be added to the trust indefinitely. We will forward your gifts into that trust fund for as long you continue to give.

We did not mention these things in the service on June 20, but want to remind you of the following:

There is an Interim Pastor Nominating Committee working to find the right person to fill that role. The members are: Andy Bergstrom, John Ellenberger, Emily Dull and Lisa Goodell. Mark Ford is serving as an ex-officio member.

Dennis DuPertuis is the Chair of Nominating Committee forming a Senior Pastor Seeking Committee. We hope to soon have that slate to put before you for a vote.

*Related articles about Kevin Reimer and Craig Blodgett appear on this page and on page 2.*



## Introducing Rev. Dr. Kevin Reimer

Rev. Dr. Kevin S. Reimer is professor of psychology at Azusa Pacific University and research faculty in the Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary. Educated in the United States and Canada, he holds degrees in developmental psychology, biological sciences, theology, and literature.

Reimer's research program explores the interface of virtuous exemplarity and religion in human development. Research funding sources include the Fetzer Institute, the John Templeton Foundation, the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, and Council for Christian Colleges and Universities.

Reimer is widely published in academic journals and volumes of

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**Kevin Reimer:**  
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collected works. His books include *The Reciprocating Self* (InterVarsity, 2005), *A Peaceable Psychology* (Brazos, 2009), and *Living L'Arche* (Continuum, 2009).

Reimer is ordained to ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He previously served on the pastoral staff of North Park Community Church (Ontario, Canada), Lake Avenue Congregational Church (Pasadena, California), and Northminster Presbyterian Church (Salinas, California).

## Paul Prayed; We Pray By Lana Roberts

In his letter to the church at Phillippi, Paul begins with thanks and prayer. Here's what he says about this early church in Phillippians 1:3-6.

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

And then in verses 9 to 11, Paul pours out his heart before God on behalf of those Phillipian Christians:

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*



Paul, writing his letter to the Phillipian church, is in prison in Rome and his personal future is uncertain. Yet, far from praying for his own concerns, he pours himself out in prayer for the health and growth of the believers and the churches. This is part of the reason that we have the "Prison Letters" to the churches in Philippi, Ephesus, and Colossae.

Right now, we have quite a few unanswered questions about our fellowship here. I'm encouraging us to come before the Lord together in a fellowship of prayer for the health and growth of the congregation and the church as a whole.

This is not intended to replace your personal prayers, and it isn't a program. It is intended to set the people of God at First Presbyterian Church, Fresno, praying to-

## Craig Blodgett Named as First Pres Youth Director



While growing up Craig attended North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church with his family. During those years he went to Tenaya Middle School and Imman-

uel High School.

Craig attended Fresno Pacific University where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Contemporary Christian Ministries.

It was at Fresno Pacific that Craig met Amber, whom he married in March of 1998.

After graduating from Fresno Pacific University he began working at St. Luke's Community Church as the youth pastor and was there for almost five years.

Craig started here at First Pres. in August of 2002 and has enjoyed working with the junior. high students and the Networker program.

During his free time Craig loves playing with his two sons, Joshua and Nathan, reading books by J.R.R. Tolkien, Tim Keller, and Eugene Peterson, and playing video games.

gether for God's hand upon us. Here are some ideas for praying together as the church, and for the church:

1. Pray for the pastors and teachers to encounter and connect with God. Pray that they will have wisdom to guide, lead and nurture.
2. Pray for Kevin Reimer as he assists us, for Craig Blodgett and other youth leaders, and for our future Interim Senior Pastor.
3. Pray for individuals and teams with hearts to reach out to others with the love of God.
4. Pray for stewardship of the time, money and resources that God has given his church.
5. Pray for perseverance to grow and serve in global and local ministries.
6. What do you think Christ's desire for our church is? Pray out of this desire. One good place to begin is John 17.

## *An Unlikely Memoir* By Bob Avery

On my desk is a small chunk of granite half the size of my fist, rough and natural as when I picked it up on that clear chilly morning in Yosemite Park. Just an ordinary rock, of a dirty white color, studded with dark obsidian, but the flatish bottom lends itself nicely as a paperweight.

I don't know why I picked it up, knowing that the act was probably a misdemeanor, but as Bill Thornbury strummed the final chords of "Amazing Grace" and the encircling group sang quietly, I noticed its edge protruding through the debris on the forest floor. The date was May 22, 2010. Our small gathering was saying a final goodbye to our friend Bill Wiggins.

Before his death on November 19, 2009, Bill requested that his body be cremated and his ashes scattered in the Sierra Nevada mountains. We, his friends, chose the beautiful valley in Yosemite as his final resting place and waiting until the warmer days of May had melted the winter's snow from the valley floor, we set out.

We gathered in the shadows of



tall cedar and fir trees which formed a small cathedral within the forest. Through the trees the morning sun brightened the spring green of the meadow grass be-

yond the road where we had parked. Above the meadow, yet obscured by the towering trees, could be heard the muted voice of Yosemite Falls announcing its wild plunge.

Each in our own way, we shared with the group our memories of Bill and how through our involvement in his life God had strengthened our faith. Yet each withheld deep personal thoughts sensing an inability to adequately verbalize and not wishing to depreciate the treasure they represented.

Bill grew up, attended school, launched an active real estate career, married, divorced and died just 19 days beyond his 69th birthday.

Following the death of his parents, Bill sold off his real estate holdings in order to retire their accumulated medical debt and thereafter, hampered by depression and alcohol, his life crumbled and collapsed until finally he found himself living on the streets of Fresno, where he existed for three years.

Bill's friends did not consider abandoning him an option, but continued to stay in touch, arranging food and shelter and giving encouragement where they could. Bill eventually made his way back into the edge of society, re-established fellowship with the church and joined a weekly Bible study group.

Chatting quietly, singly and by



couples, we moved among the trees scattering Bill's ashes; once a physical presence with needs and cares, hopes and dreams; now returning to the elements with little sign of passing — no dusty footprints, no loitering voice.

As our singing of "Amazing Grace" concluded and the final notes from Bill Thornbury's guitar made their way over toward the meadow, I bumped the small protruding edge of rock with the toe of my shoe and popping out of the ground, it lay exposed atop the forest debris. On a whim, I bent and picked it up.

As a paper weight, this rock has a low rating, but as a memoir I rank it high indeed. Certainly, it reminds me of Bill's struggle in life and his tenacity to succeed, but even more, it reminds of faithful friends who came alongside to encourage, to hug and to cheer.

More than human effort was involved here. The very spirit of Christ residing within each heart prompted and pushed at every turn, at every new disaster, keeping Bill secure within His grasp, and providing the community of Fresno a wonderful picture of what Christ intended His church to be.

Lastly, this old chunk of rock reminds me that Bill is at peace in Christ and my final picture of him is not of being holed up in that dismal little cubicle, room 709, in the California Hotel but as resting quietly in the forest alongside the meadow within the sound of Yosemite Falls.

## First Pres Couple Receives “Key to the City” Award

*First Pres members Marty and Joanie Martin recently received the “Key to the City” award from Mayor Ashley Swearingen. The following quotes from the Mayor’s “State of the City” address are reprinted with permission from the mayor’s office.*

The Martins are residents of the Lowell neighborhood. As you know, unprecedented efforts are underway to revitalize Fresno’s downtown and our historic neighborhoods. The Lowell neighborhood just north of downtown is “ground zero” for the City’s revitalization efforts. ...

When we asked the Lowell residents about the Martins and their positive impact on the neighborhood, the stories came flooding in...



Joanie grew up in the Lowell neighborhood and moved back there with Marty 18 years ago. Since then, they’ve demonstrated time and again what it looks like to embrace a community that had experienced terrible neglect.

People in the neighborhood, particularly the young people, are very familiar with what they call “Martin’s Park” – which is really the Martins’ side yard. There is great playground equipment there that the Martins make available to all the kids in the neighborhood with park benches for moms and dads to sit and watch their children play.

I’m told that Dr. Martin has cooked so many hot dogs at neighborhood barbecues where literally hundreds of kids would line up at a time, that he has singed all the hair off his arms.

The Martins have made their home available for years for cooking and English language classes for neighborhood families. They’ve reserved one of

their apartments for use in the Wise Old Owl tutoring program for more than a decade, and another one of their apartments is used as an art room, where Joanie teaches summer art classes to neighborhood children.

And they put on a safe Halloween carnival for the neighborhood every year.

Joanie has a love of art. She volunteered to do the murals in the back yard of the Neighborhood Resource Center and the Lowell school library. Because of her talents, she could have done them herself, but she decided to involve the neighbors in the process.

As a result, they got to know each other better. Everyone had a sense of urgency over the murals, and people felt they could make a difference in their own neighborhood.

Her love of art is exceeded only by her love of people — especially those who are at the margins because of language barriers. For almost two decades, she has reached out to refugees living in Lowell through her cooking and English classes.

The classes have helped many gain jobs in the food service industry. When the women started bringing their children to the English classes, Joanie responded by providing another service — she set up a tutoring program for the children.

Dr. Martin brings a quiet, steady presence to the neighborhood. He has a servant’s heart and is more comfortable working behind the scenes. As a physician, Marty has been known to treat many children in the neighborhood at any time of day or night, and he’s always there to provide advice and mentor young people.

One Lowell resident, Nancy, writes this about Dr. Martin: “He has willingly seen patients on his day off or evenings to look in

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**Martins:** (Continued from page 4) painful ears, at rashes, listen to lungs and to check the overall health of distressed neighbors. When needed, he will often provide the antibiotic or inhaler for the person that is in need of it free of charge.

Nancy writes, "One particular story stands out to me. I had a teen mom living with me for a while. Her baby often had a cough and respiratory wheezes and rattles that we could hear when he breathed. One day when the baby really wasn't doing well, we took him up to see Marty. It was on a weekend. He stopped what he was doing when we got there and fully

examined the baby. When he was finished, he clearly explained to the mom what was going on and what needed to be done. He gave the mom an inhaler and chamber to use with her child. The peace Marty gave this young mom with a sick baby was as good as the medication he gave her. Given the fact that the ER is the only place one can go on the weekends with MediCal, this was a real blessing."

Nancy goes on to say, "A few weeks later we were in the car driving by the Martin's home. Marty was out in the yard doing yard work. This teen mom rolled down the window and yelled out

to him as we passed by. At that moment, I was so grateful for Joanie and Marty choosing to live in the Lowell neighborhood. Marty had become more than a pediatrician. He was now a friend, a role model and a neighbor."

Finally, Nancy says, "They have sought the peace of this neighborhood, and they have done it well."

Joanie and Marty, you've touched the lives of so many who will always remember what you've given them. On behalf of a grateful city, I thank you for the work you've done to improve the lives of residents of the Lowell neighborhood.

## Enjoying the Golden Years By Paula Darden

*On May 22 in the "Valley Voices" column of the "Fresno Bee," Jerry Fisher wrote a humorous story about problems people encounter as they enter the "Golden Years." Our own Paula Darden wrote a letter to the editor in response, which was printed on June 1. Her letter is reprinted here with permission.*

We "girls" all enjoyed Jerry Fisher's column in "The Bee" on May 22. We're all there in our lives.

But, I would like to respond to the other side of getting old. We are given the gift of extra time.

I have time to volunteer and help others according to my abilities.

I can sit outside daily and watch the trees bud in the spring. I can watch a sunset from beginning to end. I can watch the clouds drift by changing shapes and patterns.

I have time to be with friends that are still alive. We can remember our rich lives together when we were young. I can be patient

with my friend who has become ill-tempered and feel sad because she is unhappy inside. I can give a hug to the ones that need it. I have time to listen, because we all need a good listener.

I have time to enjoy my children and more important they have time to feel the satisfaction of responding to my needs and have time to spend with me.

I have time for my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren. My great-grandson said, "Grandma, you're getting old." I responded, "If I hadn't gotten old I would have never known you." I have time to read the same special books to three generations. I have time to play finger games and receive hugs.

My life is full of joy. Every day I have time for a quiet walk with my Lord.



## Session Briefs By Scott McCallum

### Accounting Summary

- \* Giving as of 5/31/10 was 3.48 percent below budget.
- \* Spending as of 5/31/10 was 7 percent below budget.
- \* As of 5/31/10, cash available for operations is estimated at 2 3/4 months of budgeted spending.

### Satellite Sunday

Adult Nurture has established a program intended to nurture relationships among our church family. Please contact Chris Rosik, Phil Ross or Jay Pope for information on Satellite Sunday, or if you have any ideas for small group fellowship opportunities

### Important Dates

- \* Men's Breakfast is scheduled for 7/24/10.
- \* Elder Ordination and Installation is scheduled for both services on 7/25/10.
- \* NetWorker Goodbye will be 8/8/10.

Deadline Information

**The deadline for the September Challenger is Friday, August 20. It will be mailed out on September 1.** Please contact Daphne Saul by calling her at 252-4064, or e-mailing her at [daphne4926@sbcglobal.net](mailto:daphne4926@sbcglobal.net). You may also leave articles in the newsletter box in the church office.

**The deadline for “A Place for You” is each Monday at 5 p.m.** Please submit announcements to: Cheryl Eaker at 485-6460 or [staff@fpcfresno.org](mailto:staff@fpcfresno.org) and put Cheryl Eaker’s name in the subject box.

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# For Your Information



Crater Lake, Oregon (Photo by Walter Saul)

# This is my Father's world



Mt. Shasta, California (photo by Daphne Saul)

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