

((fp)) First Presbyterian Church *Bakersfield, California*

Inviting people into meaningful life
through knowing Christ, loving one another,
and blessing the world.



2024-2025 Annual Report

Brothers and Sisters of First Presbyterian Church,

One year ago, at our congregational meeting, you called me to be the Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church. It was a powerful moment for me and for our family. Your welcome and support is beyond anything we anticipated, and I have learned over the last months what an incredible privilege it is to serve this church.

I have found our congregation to be warm and loving, filled with men, women, and children who love to serve and encourage one another in the Lord. It is a privilege to serve alongside a session willing to have hard and complex conversations with grace and an overwhelming unity of love. Our deacons go above and beyond in their service to our congregation. The dedication and skill of our staff is unparalleled in my ministry experience. They make coming to work every day a real joy. And the partnership I've developed with Pastor Dave continues to strengthen each of us as we serve as your pastors.

Now that I've been one of your pastors for nearly a year, you and I have begun getting to know each other, to love each other, and to trust each other. I think that's been the most enjoyable part of my first year here: sitting in your dining rooms or backyards, hearing your stories, and seeing the work of God in your lives. It's a privilege to have a front-row seat to the amazing work of Christ in each of your lives and the life of our congregation.

Over the last year we've seen an increase in attendance and in our financial health; both are gifts from God who is the one who provides the growth. To capture that momentum and help us grow in breadth and depth, we have also introduced some changes into our life together—some big, some small—that are settling into place in the coming weeks and months. Change can be scary, but the Lord is our Shepherd. He will guide us through.

I can't wait to see how our Discipleship Hour will strengthen our bonds with one another while providing everyone with the opportunity to grow in their love for Jesus. And our community partnerships are strengthening, particularly in regard to youth and children, which will (Lord willing!) inject even more energy into our already-excellent Family Ministries.

We want First Presbyterian Church to be an oasis in an otherwise desert-like culture. What if we recaptured the concept of "sanctuary", where families and singles, the youngest to the oldest, can find refuge and rest and true peace? I believe we're well on our way. I can't wait to see what the next year holds for us!

I love you all,

Rev. Marcos Ortega, TE
Senior Pastor

To my beloved First Pres Family,

As I write this report, I am days away from beginning my sabbatical. Let me start by saying thank you. Everyone has been exceptionally kind and encouraging as I prepared to take some much-needed time off. It is an incredible gift to be able to go on a sabbatical, and it is only possible because of your overwhelming generosity. I am eager to dive into my studies in the book of Acts and the life of Paul. Laura and I are excited to travel to Greece and experience biblical stories in the places where they occurred. I am already anticipating the joy of our return in August when we can share our experiences with you.

My role has changed considerably over the years. For these reports, I used to be able to focus on the state of our discipleship and our young families. Last year, I felt compelled to give you an update on the state of the entire church because it was at last year's congregational meeting that we approved Pastor Marcos to become our Senior Pastor. The dust has settled a bit, but this year, I still have so much that needs to be shared. I am going to do it through the lens of my three primary committees, but make sure to read their reports for a better view of what is going on.

Deacons: We have continued to develop programs that better care for our church family. Several families have been helped in times of crisis and financial need. I am especially proud of how our deacons have grown in their care of the homebound. One of my favorite memories was when a deacon came to a meeting with a printed-out picture of one of our homebound and started gushing over the time they had spent together. I can confidently say that our deacons reflect Christ's love for His church.

Discipleship: We continue to offer quality children, youth, and adult discipleship programs. My favorite was the year-long Dave's Matthew Study, but I may be a little biased. I am proud of my whole team--Carol has loved the families of our church and our community well. She put on an Easter event where over a hundred people responded to Christ. Preston has continued to deepen relationships with our teens and takes advantage of outreach opportunities like the one that has him on BHS's campus every week with Youth for Christ. Susan Worley and her team continue to show tremendous love for God's Special People. Behind the scenes, we've been working on what you now know as Discipleship Hour. We look forward to what the Lord will do in the fall.

Membership & Fellowship: This team has rallied around their call to member care. Although we have always taken the covenant we've made with our members seriously, they are raising the bar. They desire that no one falls through the cracks, get left behind, or fade into obscurity. They are making phone calls to the members whom we haven't seen and have been instrumental in relaying needs to our deacons and pastors and making sure that our church family is well cared for.

I said it last year, but I will say it again: "Well done, First Pres Family." I'm proud of you and look forward to our next year together.

Your Brother in Christ,

Rev. Dave Constance, TE
Associate Pastor

CLERK'S REPORT

We are a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church within the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest. The session for the 2024-2025 program year was composed of seventeen ruling elders who met in ten regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month to seek God's direction as they conducted the business and spiritual leadership of First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield, California. Exceptions were the second Tuesday of December, and no regular meetings in July and November. In addition, called meetings were held to conduct specific business, like the reception of new members.

Rev. Marcos Ortega, TE is our Pastor and Moderator of the Session.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation was held in June 2023 in accordance with the By-Laws. An officer training class was held for newly elected elders and deacons in July. The session was organized into working committees as follows:

Standing Committees

Discipleship
Finance
Membership and Fellowship
Missions
Personnel
Property & Maintenance
Worship & Music
Trustees
Foundation Board
Congregation Nominating Committee

Chairs

John Bair
Sally Herald
Dan Cronquist
Lisa Elliott
John Rodgers
JB Hay
Kimberly Andresen
Brian Conner
David Chesney
John Bair



Committee membership is on the following page.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on the first Sunday of each month. We welcomed six of our family into God's family through the Sacrament of Baptism.

This past year began with great joy as we welcomed our new Senior Pastor, Rev. Marcos Ortega, his wonderful wife, Erin, and their two daughters, Aria and Ellie. During Pastor Marcos' installation, we as a congregation were asked this question from the EPC Book of Order:

“Do you promise to support Rev. Marcos Ortega with your prayers, to give encouragement and assistance in every way as Marcos seeks to instruct you in the things of the Lord and to lead you in the building of the Kingdom of God in this place?”

With one voice, we responded: **“We do!”** What a powerful affirmation of our shared calling. As Paul reminds us in *1 Corinthians 3:9*: **“For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.”** Together, we are invited to participate in the ongoing work of the Gospel here in Bakersfield.

I hope you're as encouraged as I am to be part of what God is doing in and through our church family. Under Pastor Marcos's leadership, we're already experiencing meaningful instruction and renewed vision. As we move forward, may we grow deeper in faith, broader in love, and bolder in our witness to the world around us.

Blessings,

Jim Conners, RE
Clerk of Session

Session and Congregation Committees 2024-2025

Discipleship

Elders	John Bair (C), Tyson Witcher
Congregation	Barry Lillie, Tracie Monroe, Kendra Green, Susan Worley
Staff	TE Dave Constance, ** Carol Scheevel, **Preston Henry

Finance

Elders	Sally Herald (C), Brian Conner, Grover Waldon
Congregation	Cathy Cummings, George DeBoer, Jay Ericsson, John Stovall
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, **John Bilotta

Membership & Fellowship

Elders	Dan Cronquist (C), Jane Galbreath, Alice Abril
Congregation	Delani Bair, Boyd Binninger, Karrie Camp, Marci Fleischer, Sharon Knowles
Staff	TE Dave Constance

Missions

Elders	Lisa Elliott (C), Mitchell Coleman
Congregation	Bob Green, Beth Kuney, John McFarland, Shanna Treanor Fan, Jeff Smith, John Rodgers
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega

Personnel Committee

Elders	John Rodgers (C), Sally Selby, David Chesney
Congregation	John McFarland, Jana Peters
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, **John Bilotta

Property & Maintenance

Elders	JB Hay (C), Scott Kuney
Congregation	Brian Branquinho, Duane Keathley, Steve Magar, Archie Smith
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, **John Bilotta

Worship & Music

Elders	Kimberly Andresen (C), Tracie Monroe
Congregation	Robert Cleveland, Owen Constance, Cathy Cummings, Nancy Hess, Stacey Loubey, Jana Peters
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, **Kevin Brisco

Trustees

Session RE	Brian Conner (P), Sally Selby (VP)
Bylaws Officers	Sally Herald (Treasurer), Jim Conners (Secretary)

Foundation Board

Elders	David Chesney (P), Brian Conner, Grover Waldon
Congregation	Ginger Lane, Bob Collier
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega

Congregation Nominating Committee

Elders	John Bair (C), Dave Chesney
Deacon	Sharon Knowles
Congregation	Pam Conners, Vicky Hay, Greg Johnson, Aileen Miller

** members without vote

General Fund Budget 2025

Fiscal Year ending December 31

	2024	2024	2025
REVENUES	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
GIVING	1,391,000	1,400,030	1,395,000
INCOME	59,660	53,124	83,150
OTHER (Invest gain / loss)	2,400	7,147	14,400
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	156,000	170,015	168,180
Total REVENUES	\$ 1,609,060	\$ 1,630,316	\$ 1,660,730
EXPENSES			
MISSIONS	90,000	78,880	90,000
PERSONNEL	1,017,154	958,615	1,056,184
DISCIPLESHIP	84,550	72,800	94,000
MUSIC AND WORSHIP	33,990	31,559	35,220
MEMBERSHIP	21,300	18,750	21,692
PROPERTY	294,728	324,491	282,229
FINANCE	53,319	48,425	58,670
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	66,848	80,110	71,095
Total EXPENSES	\$ 1,661,889	\$ 1,613,630	\$ 1,709,090
Net Operating Total	\$ (52,829)	\$ 16,686	\$ (48,360)

Membership Statistics

Jan 1, 2024 to Dec 31, 2024

Total Active Members December 31, 2024 383

Gains:

Profession of Faith	1
Transfer	3
Reaffirmation of Faith	19
Reactivation	3
Total Gains	26

Losses:

Transfer	0
Death	12
Moved to Inactive Roll	25
All other losses	0
Total Losses	37

Total Membership at December 31

<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
452	402	383	372

New Members Joining

(during 12 month period ending December 31)

<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
14	16	14	23

Average Attendance at Sunday Worship

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
In Person	229	232	232	252
Online	128	118	103	111
Total	357	350	335	363

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

The purpose of Discipleship is to equip and support all ages in our formation as fully developed followers of Jesus Christ. We accomplish this through our dependence upon the Holy Spirit, founded on the unchanging truths of Scripture, and committed to addressing the spiritual, intellectual, physical, relational, and emotional needs of every participant in our church. In short, we exist to help others know Christ in such a way that leads to loving one another and blessing the world.

PROGRAMS/LEADERS & STAFF

JHM and HSM/College: Preston Henry
Family Ministries: Pastor Dave Constance

FP Kids: Carol Scheevel
Foundation Scholarships: John Bair

2024-2025 EVENTS

2024 Summer Camp for 4th – 6th graders at Forest Home

2024 Summer Camp for JH/HS at Hume Lake

2024 Foundation Scholarships: \$20,000 was allotted for scholarships and we were able to disperse that to 18 recipients, ranging from graduating high school seniors to post-grad students.

2024 Harvest Festival: 1300+ attenders and 100+ volunteers. It was a great turnout for the Trunk or Treat and the carnival games/booths.

2025 Easter Family Fun Day: We followed up on a new event with a successful 2nd year. We had around 400-450 people attend, and 90 people said they accepted Christ when the gospel message was shared.

2024-25 Adult midweek classes including Dave's Matthew Study, Teach Us to Pray, Galatians, The Essentials, and Activate.

2024-25 Successful small group program, including placing 25 new people into groups after the January campaign.

YEAR IN REVIEW

There were many additional children's and youth events, from pool parties to on-campus events and games. Every time, there is a message and invitation to a relationship with Christ. We are encouraged to see our young people inviting friends into fellowship and families returning to regular participation in church life. Our discipleship team humbly asks for your continued prayers for wisdom & discernment as we seek to understand and respond to what God is calling our church to in the coming year. We also look forward with excitement to the launch of our new Discipleship Hour and all the opportunities for growth and connection it will offer.

This past year has brought many changes, and yet we are filled with hope and anticipation for what God has in store for us. We encourage each of you to reflect on how your unique gifts might be used to serve and strengthen our church family. We remain deeply grateful for our incredible staff and volunteers—true thoughtful leaders who continue to guide the vision and direction of our church with faith and dedication.

Respectfully submitted,

John Bair, RE
Chair

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review financial statements and investment performance, review and recommend funding options for non-budgeted projects, and monitor the overall financial well-being of the church. The committee is responsible for reviewing the annual budget and presenting it to the Session for approval.

2024 was a much better year financially than 2023 for our church. While giving continued to decline during the first part of the year, once we hired our permanent senior pastor and the direction of the church stabilized, giving began to rebound. Again, through the congregation's faithfulness and prudent planning, we ended up ahead of budget for 2024. We ended the year with operating income exceeding expenses by \$16,686.08, which we did not anticipate. This was almost \$69,000.00 better than our budgeted loss of \$52,629.17 and approximately \$41,000.00 better than our operating loss of \$24,491.46 for 2023. 2024 giving of \$1,400,030.00 was approximately \$31,000.00 more than giving in 2023. In addition, the number of giving units increased by 12 over the number of giving units in 2023, which the committee views as a very encouraging sign. Our investment in the office building on the corner of Truxtun Avenue and F Street continues to generate net income that is used for the operations of the church. In 2024, we generated a net income of \$89,905.29 from the rental of the building. This net income is included in our overall financial results for 2024.

The Finance Committee has completed the revision of the Financial Policy and Handbook for the church. This policy and handbook provide guidance and information regarding the financial management policies and procedures of First Presbyterian Church of Bakersfield (FPC) and applies to the staff at all levels of employment and our volunteers. The Finance Committee worked tirelessly and was committed to ensuring that the policies presented ensure proper handling of FPC's financial transactions, and that these policies and expectations are adequately communicated to staff and volunteers. The Session approved this revision in August 2024.

As of April 30, 2025, our giving is increasing. We are approximately \$58,700.00 ahead of our giving from the same period in 2024, and our operating loss of \$4,552.24 is \$63,700.00 better than our budgeted loss of \$68,263.81 through April 30, 2025. We believe that all of these trends are a positive sign in the financial health of our church and that the Lord will continue to bless this church and its members. We ask that each and every one of you continue to prayerfully consider your tithes and offerings to First Presbyterian Church for the remainder of 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Herald, RE
Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership and Fellowship Committee serves as a pathway for inviting members, friends, and visitors into knowing Christ, loving one another and blessing the world. The committee's at-large members ordinarily serve to represent specific groups like Marci Fleischer (Women's Ministry), Boyd Binninger (Men's Ministry), Karrie Camp (Schooners), Sharon Knowles (Welcome Team), and Delani Bair.

John 15:12 "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." This verse epitomizes what our committee seeks to do through food, fun, and fellowship. Here is a brief summary our year.

- Part of what our committee does is care for church members who have been absent. We have referred those needing care to our Deacons and Pastors. We have been encouraging absent members to come back and over 50% have returned. Praise God. If you get a call from one of our volunteers, it is because we care. Remember to fill out your yellow cards.
- We did several membership classes and welcomed new members. It is exciting to welcome those members during the church service. Make sure you get to know our new members.
- **Women's Ministry** hosted many events this year, including a retreat at Hume Lake, monthly coffee socials, a craft night, and bunco. They also have welcomed a new fellowship group for moms. This group looks into creative ways to show hospitality to mothers and their children.
- **Men's Ministry** has continued holding a weekly Bible study and serving a monthly breakfast. Volunteers from the Men's Ministry also served at the various church events. This is a longtime fellowship that endeavors to invite new men to its events.
- Our **Schooners** hosted fun fellowship events this year that included the *Hawaiian Paradise Party (Hula on over to Paradise)* in September, *Progressive Dinner* in December, and the *Kentucky Derby* in April.
- Many thanks go out to Jane Galbreath, her committee, and the volunteers who made the **Father Daughter Dance** a reality in February.
- Our **welcome team**, thanks to all the hard work of Sharon Knowles and her team, have done a great job in greeting members, attendees, and visitors.
- **Married People Events** held *Hot August Night* in August and the *Be Mine* in February. Thanks so much to Pastor Dave and Laura Constance for hosting these fun events!

Thank you for a great year and we look forward to serving with you next year. All the praise and glory be to God!

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Cronquist, RE
Chair

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee continues to support our mission partners who are dedicated to growing the Lord's Kingdom by shining light in a dark world. Over the past year, First Pres giving has allowed us to bless the world in many ways.

Local: Our FP food pantry continues to be a bright spot in the heart of downtown. Youth for Christ has been partnering with our youth program to help teens deepen their Christian walk. The Bakersfield Pregnancy Center continues to offer medical, emotional, and spiritual support to expecting mothers and fathers.

Other local partners have been busy, including Paul Benthin with InterVarsity. He and his team bring Jesus to college campuses throughout the county, including CSUB, BC, and San Joaquin Valley College.

National: Gleanings for the Hungry in Dinuba, CA is a long-time mission partner. This spring, we sent a 4-person adult team to pack dried soup mix. They bagged pallets of soup mix that will help feed people all around the world!

Also, through funds provided by First Pres, Completion Global was able to print and distribute a book to men and women preparing for release from incarceration. The book was given to those who completed a Bible study course while incarcerated.

International: In November 2024, 10 First Pres members went to Ensenada, Mexico to build a home for an elderly woman through YUGO Ministries. The recipient's son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren also participated in the build. Everyone was blessed by the experience.

Hands-on opportunities and other partner support included:

- Bakersfield Pregnancy Center Baby Bottle Drive – First Pres raised nearly \$1,500 for BPC!
- Gleanings for the Hungry (Dinuba, CA) – we provided support that helped them complete a new warehouse, allowing them to feed even more people!
- Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes – First Pres packed 131 boxes that will show God's love and provision to children around the world!

Your generous gifts to Missions allowed us to support the work of great missionaries and organizations that act daily as the hands and feet of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Elliott, RE
Chair

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee is comprised of three elders, two at-large church members, our Senior Pastor, and the Director of Operations. We meet monthly and serve in an advisory capacity.

Our tasks are: 1) to oversee Human Resource policies, procedures, and decisions affecting FP staff; 2) ensure compliance with federal, state, and local labor laws and regulations, referring to professionals when necessary; 3) review and approve health insurance packages and workers' compensation insurance, and 4) recommend and approve salary changes, including recommendations to Session concerning compensation packages for Pastoral and Executive staff.

In fulfillment of the above, the Personnel Committee reports the following for 2024: The elders of the committee oversaw the annual pastoral performance reviews which occurred in May. Pastor Dave and transitional Pastor Don were evaluated by all of the elders and feedback was provided to them by the personnel elders and Jim Conners. A proposed 2025 personnel budget was submitted to the Finance Committee. To comply with California minimum wage requirements, minimum wage employees were increased to \$16.50 per hour effective 1/1/2025. No known increases in state minimum wage exist at the time of this report; however, minimum wage is under continued review by both Federal and California legislatures and as such, is subject to change. Additional merit increases were implemented effective 1/1/2025 and holiday bonuses were provided in December 2024.

First Pres experienced a season of change among our clergy team in 2024 with our new Senior Pastor, Marcos Ortega, accepting the call. Our transitional pastor, Don Baird, left in June of 2024 and Pastor Dave oversaw the pastoral duties until Pastor Marcos started in July. Normal attrition and hiring in non-leadership staff positions continued, heavily concentrated within our Custodial and Nursery Worker positions. We converted the Youth & Children's Administrative Assistant to a full-time role and revamped the position to a Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. With this move we eliminated the Marketing Coordinator position.

The personnel expenses ended the year \$68,539 under budget for 2024 and better than 2023 by \$17,623. As of this writing, the personnel expenses are tracking under budget for 2025 by \$20,000.

Other tasks completed by the personnel committee over the last year were creating a Remote Work Policy, updating the Employee Travel Policy, finishing the draft of the updated Employee Handbook, updating the Committee Guidelines, and approving numerous job description updates.

The Personnel Committee remains grateful to the Director of Operations for providing detailed information regarding personnel needs so the committee can make prayerful and informed decisions.

We truly appreciate our amazing staff who remained focused, collaborative, and persevered during our clergy transitions. They not only served each of the committees that relied upon them for support, but they also assisted each other when called upon while simultaneously continuing to minister to those who frequented FP looking for a beacon of hope in downtown Bakersfield. The FP staff continues to exemplify Knowing Christ, Loving One Another, and Blessing the World.

Respectfully submitted,

John Rodgers, RE
Chair

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

The Property and Maintenance Committee is responsible for the campus, vehicles, security, and safety. Monthly we review operating and capital spending, maintenance needs, campus use, and crime and vandalism activity.

2024 church campus operating costs were \$324,500 vs. a \$293,000 budget. Costs in 2023 were \$296,000. Electricity, insurance, and inspection/compliance fees were the primary drivers of higher costs. The electricity cost increase is the result of increased campus use. Recent operating costs are lower than or equal to our costs from over 15 years ago.

Rental income from the Truxtun office building offset the budget overrun, generating \$89,900 net income vs. \$85,300 budgeted. We increased rental rates roughly 5% (first increase in 5 years). Tenants are various Christian groups. Rents are at the low end of the market.

Capital projects and repairs are paid from designated long-term funds and are detailed below.

We bought out the solar power lease (\$390,000). This will result in roughly \$65,000/year net savings.

2024 Capital Projects totaled \$92,000. Significant projects are listed below:

- Repainted exterior of 17th Street side, last painted >20 years ago: \$23,600
- Replaced two HVAC units: \$24,600
- Upgraded sanctuary sound equipment and musical instruments: \$20,700
- Expanded the stage and recarpeted the senior high room: \$17,900

2025 Capital budget is \$134,000. Significant projects are listed below:

- Paint administration building exterior: \$30,000
- Paint and recarpet 1st floor of Children's Ministry Center: \$30,000
- Upgrade sanctuary soundboard, other sound equipment, and lighting: \$25,000
- Upgrade computer network equipment and computers: \$20,000
- Replace two HVAC units: \$17,000
- Remodel two 2nd floor classrooms in the Children's Ministry Center for adult classes: \$10,000

Vandalism issues persist. We have spent \$8,200 this year to harden the church against vandalism. We may have to spend an additional \$22,000. These costs are not part of our capital budget.

Thanks to John Bilotta, we received a \$150,000 federal security grant. Funds will be used for high resolution security cameras (interior and exterior) and additional keypad entry controls.

We are finalizing a lease with the Central Academy of Arts and Technology (CAAT) to rent the 1st floor of the Children's Ministry Center for weekday school instruction. This will not interfere with First Pres children's programs and gives us the opportunity to present a Bible class once a week to the CAAT students. We are extremely excited for this opportunity to introduce Jesus to over 200 children who may not yet know Him.

We have a beautiful campus to maintain for our current and future members. We thank God for the privilege of worshipping at First Pres and want all to have an effective and attractive place to worship.

Respectfully submitted,

JB Hay, RE
Chair

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to help develop the congregation into an active, vital worshiping community, as well as coordinate the different aspects of the worship ministry and work on short and long-range planning of worship services.

Sunday Service Highlights

- First Pres continues to hold two Sunday morning worship services in the sanctuary. Both the 9:00 Traditional service and the 10:45 Contemporary service are live streamed for those unable to participate in person.
- Congregational leaders continue to participate in leading worship through reading scripture weekly and leading the Apostle's Creed monthly. Children and youth lead the congregation in scripture reading on the first Sunday of each month.
- Our worship team volunteer participation continues to grow. For this ministry year, 118 volunteers participated in leading music and 8 volunteers served on the tech team (counting Sunday mornings and special events).
- Sunday morning attendance has increased in the past year by an average of 14%.

Special Events and Services

Under the leadership of our Director of Worship Arts, Kevin Brisco, II, First Pres has hosted several special events including:

- The second annual worship team gathering was held to build community and develop a vision for the ministry year.
- Community members were invited to attend Jazz Night in November, as well as Advent and Lenten Organ Recitals.
- An Ash Wednesday service marked the beginning of the Lenten season.
- Holy Week Services included Maundy Thursday dinner and Good Friday service.

Looking Toward the Future

- Our committee, spearheaded by Kevin, is working to welcome more people into the life of our church through inviting people into the choir and building intentional connections with the music departments at local schools.
- We are also preparing for the new service times of 8:30 and 11:00 with a Discipleship Hour in between starting August 31, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Andresen, RE
Chair

BOARD OF DEACONS

The word “deacon” means helper. The Deacons carry on a rich ministry that touches the lives of many people. Deacons minister to those who are in need — to the sick, friendless, homeless, hungry, and to any who may be in distress. Visitation of the sick, infirm, elderly, and those in crisis is an important part of the ongoing ministry. Deacons are entrusted to be the hands and feet of Jesus and come from various backgrounds, lengths of service, and life experiences which help us to serve the unique needs of our FP family.

The Board of Deacons currently consists of 22 members serving a three-year term of office and participating in one of three Ministry Service areas. The officers for 2024-2025 are: Clerk-Jana Peters; Asst. Clerk-Jill Rodriguez; and Treasurer-Matt Andresen.

Ministry to Congregation (Chair: Kerry Badertscher; Secretary-David Diosi) Ministry Areas: 1) Welcome Center (Coordinator: Sharon Knowles) ensures staffing for the Welcome Center in the courtyard before and after the worship services. 2) Communion Prep and Clean-Up (Coordinators: David & My Le Diosi) prepares and cleans up the communion items for both worship services and the homebound kits. 3) Maundy Thursday dinner (Coordinators: Kerry Badertscher & Sharon Knowles) coordinates the dinner and décor for Maundy Thursday. 4) Blood Donation Bank (Coordinator: Vicki Billington) puts together and provides information on blood donation contributions to the First Presbyterian account at Houchin Blood Bank.

Ministry to Families (Chair: Barry Lillie, Secretary: Karen Lillie) Ministry Areas: 1) Family Aid & Crisis (Coordinators: Barry Lillie & Karen Lillie) evaluates requests and gives financial aid to congregants; also provides care to those in crisis. 2) Meals to Bless (Coordinator: Sandy Hughes) coordinates providing meals for those in need. 3) Memorial Service Receptions (Coordinators: Marci Fleischer & Jana Peters) coordinates the reception for congregant’s memorial services.

Ministry to Individuals (Chair: Delani Bair, Secretary: Brenna Viskovic) Ministry Areas: 1) Homebound Visitation (Coordinator: Delani Bair) provides contact and care for homebound members (a member who cannot attend church on either a permanent or temporary basis). 2) Prayer & Praise Correspondence (Coordinator: Jill Rodriguez) prays for and sends written correspondence in response to yellow card prayer requests. 3) Flowers for Holidays (Coordinator: Jana Peters) provides flowers for Advent and Easter. 4) College Student Care (Coordinator: Leslie Harvath) connects with FP college students twice/year, sending notes and gift cards. 5) Care for Special Worship Event Music Team (Coordinator: Delani Bair) provides care for music team participants for special worship services. 6) Care Packages (Coordinator: Leslie Harvath) provides care packages to congregants in crisis.

The Deacons’ financial account balance over the last year went from \$39,964.11 on March 31, 2024, to \$35,709.43 on March 31, 2025. \$4,254.68 was spent. The income the Deacons receive is derived from church offerings and family donations.

It has been a pleasure for the Deacons to provide as much assistance for congregants as we could throughout this past year, especially in their time of need.

Respectfully submitted,

Jana Peters
Clerk

BAKERSFIELD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

The specific objective of the Foundation is to provide a vehicle through which gifts, donations, contributions, and bequests can be received for support of specific and general goals of the First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield as they relate to missions, ministries, capital improvements to the church facilities, scholarships, and pastoral education. These distributions are determined, authorized, and made by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

The board members each serve a term of five years with a replacement of one board member each year. The current board members are Grover Waldon, Ginger Lane, Bob Collier, David Chesney, and Brian Conner. Members of the Board are nominated by the Board of the Foundation, affirmed by the Finance Committee, and approved by the Session of First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield.

Since March 1, 2019, investments have been managed by Mestmaker & Petry. Proceeds from investments are distributed for scholarships, church ministries, capital improvements, pastoral training scholarships, mission projects, and foundation corpus. In calendar year 2024, \$20,000 was distributed for scholarships to the First Presbyterian Church. Note: It has been the general policy of the Foundation to not use foundation corpus funds, only the proceeds; in the event of exceptional projects or requests, corpus funds may be used upon approval by the Board.

The Foundation provides scholarship funds to the First Presbyterian Church Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Committee reviews applications for the scholarships and determines the scholarship amount awarded to each individual. The Foundation has no participation in the individual amounts of the scholarships or the selection of the recipients.

Since 1996, the Foundation has distributed \$465,719 for Capital Improvements, \$134,361 for Missions, \$371,000 for Scholarships, and \$49,985 for Pastoral Training Scholarships, for a total distributed amount of \$1,001,065. In calendar year 2024, the FP Foundation received contributions totalling \$165,200. The total value of the Foundation's assets as of 12/31/24 was \$1,315,423, which is comprised of current year earnings plus designated uses for:

○ Missions/Ministries/Pastoral Ed	\$286,717
○ Capital Improvements	\$162,584
○ Scholarships	\$441,224
○ Undesignated	\$221,357

The Foundation President for the term July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 is David Chesney.

Respectfully submitted,

David Chesney
President