

((fp)) First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield, California

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



Dear Brothers and Sisters of First Presbyterian Church,

It's been another wonderful year of worship, fellowship, and growth at First Presbyterian Church. We've encouraged one another in our discipleship journeys and cared for one another in times of sorrow and trial. Through every program, every service, every conversation; through laughter or tears, we've been the Church. I praise God for that.

The 2025-2026 program year has been filled with exciting changes. Our new Discipleship Hour has added a fresh dimension to our Sunday mornings, creating space for deeper relationships with one another and greater knowledge of Jesus. The change has also shifted our Wednesday Evenings, centering on our fellowship meal rather than classes and providing space for meaningful spiritual conversations and the building of strong friendships.

Throughout this report you'll hear facts and figures as well as stories about the work God is doing here at First Pres. The Spirit has been moving in the hearts of young and old, impacting those new to our church family *and* those who've been worshiping here for decades. So I encourage you to look through this report with expectation, allowing the Spirit to thrill you with this snapshot of our life together.

Before you turn the page, allow me to share an important moment in the life of our church that will help us move into the future with purpose and joy. In January, I shared a brief, three sermon series called "What's Next?" looking at the beginnings of an identity re-establishment. God has cared for us for nearly 140 years and our impact in Bakersfield is immeasurable. So, what's next? Who are we going to be as we prepare for the next 140 years of our church? Three words came to mind: Sanctuary, Sabbath, and Shalom. I'll share a lot more about these in the fall, but I want to summarize them here.

Sanctuary – First Pres is a Church where people encounter God and are transformed. We're not here just to sing songs, listen to sermons, or catch up with friends. All of those things are elements of a greater desire, a desire to experience God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. When we're together, the Spirit is moving! He's transforming us more and more into the image of Christ! Our Church is a Sanctuary because God is there, he is alive, and he is at work.

Sabbath – When God created the world, he established a 6-1 pattern that we still observe today. For six days we work and take care of worldly concerns, and we dedicate one day to worshiping God and enjoying the manifold gifts he has given us. It's a day of rest, not only resting *from* something, but resting *in* something—the finished work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, First Pres is a Church where people rest in the good reign of Jesus Christ. We serve with joy, not stress, because Christ is our King and we are citizens of his kingdom.

Shalom – While we ordinarily translate this ancient word as "peace," it actually means more than that. Think of shalom as "relational wholeness." Shalom means that we're at peace with God because of what Jesus did through his death and resurrection. Once our relationship with God was broken because of our sin, but now that relationship has been made whole. Because of that, our relationships with one another can also be made whole. Yes, this takes work and constant nurturing; but because we are at peace with God, we can also be at peace with one another. And finally, God develops in us

personal wholeness, healing the parts of our souls that sin had broken. First Pres is a Church where we practice shalom.

To sum it all up we could say that First Pres is a sanctuary where we experience true sabbath and shalom in Christ. What a beautiful identity! We'll keep teasing out what that means throughout the rest of the year.

God has done exciting things since we last met for a congregational meeting. And as you'll hear today, some exciting things are on the horizon. All of it is designed to help us embrace our identity and live out God's purpose and mission for his Church: worship and making disciples. As members, you're already a part of what God is doing here at First Pres. You're a valuable part of this family!

I can't wait to see how God builds us up in the coming year.

Pastor Marcos, TE
Senior Pastor

Beloved First Pres Family,

About this time last year, I was preparing for my sabbatical. Those three months (May - July) were truly a gift. I spent time studying the book of Acts and the life of the Apostle Paul, created meaningful moments with my family, even caught a few good naps and had space to engage in some of my favorite hobbies.

The highlight, of course, was the trip Laura and I took to Greece, following in the footsteps of Paul. We experienced a seven-day bus tour through mainland Greece and a four-day cruise around the Greek Isles. We are deeply grateful to the First Pres Foundation for making this journey possible, and to our First Pres family for giving us the time to rest, renew, and be refreshed.

Returning from sabbatical, life picked up quickly. In August, Laura and I hosted the *Married People: Homecoming* event, where couples had the chance to reminisce about their early years together while strengthening their relationships in the present. I truly love creating spaces where couples can connect both with one another and with others—and it's a joy to see how wholeheartedly people engage. If you're married, I encourage you to join us at the next event.

In September, we launched the Discipleship Hour, the fruition of a vision that has been more than a decade in the making. Through the faithful work of the Discipleship Committee, this initiative is designed to engage all ages in both discipleship and worship. We recently completed a 35-week study in Acts and have seen greater Sunday engagement than we historically experienced on Wednesdays. Even more encouraging has been the way children and youth have been meaningfully included in worship. (Don't forget to ask those family time questions!) The kids' corner in the narthex has become a visible reminder and well-used expression of our desire to welcome children into worship, and we've heard it has helped new families feel at home.

October marked the final month of Carol Scheevel's time with us as our KidMin Director. After nearly 14 years of faithful, loving service to our children and families, she followed God's leading to be closer to her own family and stepped into a new role at St. Andrews Presbyterian in Newport Beach. As of now, our search team continues to look for the right person to step into this important role. In the meantime, our KidMin volunteers have continued to serve faithfully. I am so thankful for their time, energy, and kindness as they care for our kids each week.

I also want to highlight the wonderful work of our Membership & Fellowship (M & F) Committee and our Deacons. Over the past year, they have cared deeply and consistently for our church family. The M & F team has been reaching out to those we haven't seen in a while, and alongside the Outreach committee, they helped launch a "Reach" call team to provide friendly check-ins. Through these efforts and other connection points provided by the team's various ministries, we've seen encouraging growth.

Our Deacons have been faithfully serving those in time of need—whether facing financial or medical challenges, grieving loss, or unable to attend church regularly. They've hosted memorial receptions, delivered hospital kits, provided meals, and maintained regular contact with our homebound members. If we unintentionally missed someone, we welcome your help in letting us know so we can continue to care well for the entire First Pres family.

I could go on but let me close with this: over the past year, I have seen you draw closer to Jesus, go deeper in your faith, and love others well. It is a joy to witness what the Holy Spirit is doing in our church, and I look forward with great anticipation to what the Lord has in store in the years ahead.

Love you all,

Pastor Dave, TE
Associate Pastor

This past year has been marked not only by our weekly worship services, but by a noticeable and encouraging increase in congregational engagement across every area of our worship life. What stands out most is not what was produced on Sunday mornings, but who was involved—more voices, more hands, and more hearts contributing to the worship life of our church.

We have seen meaningful growth in participation and discipleship across all worship teams. New members have stepped into active roles, strengthening both the musical and technical foundation of our choirs, praise team, tech team, and other ensembles. This growth reflects a culture that is increasingly invitational and ownership-driven. Even more encouraging, there has been a rise in expressed interest. We regularly receive inquiries from individuals seeking to join worship teams, and even one individual actively discerning a call to worship leadership or pastoral ministry. These points not only signal increased participation but the nurturing of discipleship and callings through worship.

One of the most impactful developments this year has been the intentional integration of our children and youth into weekly worship. Rather than remaining siloed in their individual ministries, they have become active participants in the worship life of the church. This has strengthened our multi-generational identity and continues to shape a culture where worship is something we grow into together.

Throughout the year, we were blessed to host a variety of special services and events beyond our regular Sunday gatherings, including Jazz Night, Christmas Caroling, Maundy Thursday Service, Good Friday Service, and the Ascension Day Service. Most notably, we had the honor of hosting services for the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest (POPS) meeting in January.

Our worship ministry has also grown through meaningful partnerships within the broader Bakersfield Christian and arts communities. We've collaborated with local organizations such as Independence Through Grace, The Garden Church, and Church of God Bakersfield, along with many others. Additionally, partnerships with local arts organizations—including the FOX Theater, Bakersfield Jazz Orchestra, Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra, and the American Guild of Organists (Kern County Chapter) have enriched our worship expression and expanded our presence in the community.

We have been blessed with significant updates to our lighting and livestream systems over the past year. These improvements have enhanced both the in-person worship experience and our ability to connect with those joining online. Alongside this, the growth of our tech team has helped create greater consistency and sustainability behind the scenes, ensuring that excellence in worship is well supported.

As we look ahead, the goal is to continue this momentum by developing leaders, welcoming new participants, and deepening the spiritual impact of our worship. With growing engagement, we are in a unique position to cultivate both excellence and accessibility in ways that reflect the fullness of our church family. I am deeply thankful for the pastors, staff, volunteers, musicians, and each member of this congregation who continue to invest in this ministry. The increased participation we are witnessing reflects a church that desires to worship fully and serve faithfully.

Kevin Brisco II
Director of Worship Arts

Dear First Pres,

This past year marked an exciting and strategic transition within our Student Ministries. We formally separated Middle School Ministry (MSM) and High School Ministry (HSM) in order to provide more age-specific teaching, discipleship, and fellowship opportunities. This structure has allowed each group to receive developmentally appropriate biblical instruction while also building stronger community with peers—particularly those attending camp together.

Both MSM and HSM attended winter camp and summer camp at Hume Lake Christian Camps. Through these experiences, we witnessed a number of first-time commitments to Christ as well as recommitments from students desiring to grow in their faith. It has been especially encouraging to see students take active steps toward spiritual maturity by serving in various ministry areas across the church, embodying what it means to “be the Church.”

Middle School Ministry (MSM)

The MSM group (grades 6-8) has seen growth on Wednesday nights, leading to new leaders and students alike. On Sunday mornings, they have been going through Tim Keller’s “New City Catechism,” a 52-week course that teaches the foundations of faith. This strong biblical teaching will help students build a strong foundation of faith.

High School Ministry (HSM)

This year, HSM had a student-led teaching series in which students were trained to prepare and deliver biblical messages to their peers. This initiative provided hands-on discipleship in biblical literacy, communication, and leadership development.

Our HSM student worship band recorded a cover of a Christian song in a professional recording studio and is currently writing an original worship song, with plans to record it this coming summer.

We also continued our partnership with Youth for Christ, hosting monthly outreach events on our campus. These gatherings created consistent evangelistic opportunities and strengthened our connection to students in the broader community.

Additionally, during our bi-annual Student Membership Class, five high school students formally became members of the church.

College Ministry

Over the summer, our College Ministry partnered with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship to host weekly Bible studies. We are continuing this partnership this coming summer to provide ongoing discipleship and fellowship opportunities for college students.

While the college group pauses programming during the academic year, we intentionally reconnect with students during holiday breaks, culminating in our annual Christmas party.

Preston Henry
Director of Student Ministries

FP Kids has experienced a truly significant year of change. It began, as it often does, with Rise Up Sunday in June, when we celebrated moving our kids into new grades and, for some, new classrooms. As summer came to a close, we made an important shift from Jr. High to Middle School ministry, welcoming sixth graders into our youth program and reshaping our preteen ministry into a 4th-5th grade experience.

As school began, we started a Bible club at the Central Academy of Arts and Technology (CAAT). This is a public charter school that rents space on our campus, giving us the opportunity of leading an after-school program once a week for the younger and older elementary children.

At the end of August, we launched the new Discipleship Hour. This has given our kids the opportunity to grow in faith alongside their peers in age-based groups, while also inviting some of our older children into the worship service. This multigenerational worship experience helps them become more familiar with the rhythms of church life as they grow.

The season of change continued when Carol Scheevel, our longtime Children's Director, shared that she would be moving to be closer to family. October marked her final month with us, and we are deeply grateful for her many years of faithful and loving service. Since then, a search team has been prayerfully seeking the right person to step into this important role. Over the past several months, FP Kids has relied heavily on our incredible volunteers. We are so thankful for their commitment, the love they show our children, and their willingness to serve faithfully week after week.

Even in the midst of all this transition, many wonderful things have remained constant. We had a fantastic group of 4-6th graders attend Summer Camp at Forest Home, where seeds of faith were planted, and friendships were deepened. In October, we hosted another joyful Harvest Festival, welcoming over a thousand attendees with the help of more than 100 volunteers. This event continues to be one of our most meaningful connections to our city. Then in March, we gathered for our Easter Family Fun Day, where around 250 people came to celebrate and hear the story of Easter together.

These moments are only possible because of the dedication of our volunteers, for whom we are deeply grateful. I also want to especially recognize Aileen Miller, whose leadership and tireless effort have helped make these events possible—particularly during these past months without a Children's Director. Please join me in thanking Aileen and all of our volunteers for their time, energy and faithful service.

As we continue and finalize the search for our next director, I am filled with hope and anticipation for what the Lord will do in the lives of our children. I believe the Holy Spirit is leading us into a season where kids will encounter Jesus in meaningful ways, experience the love of His church, and have a lot of fun along the way.

Please join me in praying for the kids of First Pres as we step into this next year together.

Pastor Dave
On behalf of Children's Ministries

Small Groups continue to help our congregation grow in faith and connection. We currently have 19 small groups that meet regularly with almost 200 people involved. A four-week leader's training was held that helped equip seven new and current leaders. A few stories from the field include:

- One small group has been increasingly spending time outside of their weekly meetings to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and even Easter together!
- A couple of other small groups have invited new members into their midst and have seen growth not just in numbers, but in depth of faith and fellowship as well.
- Another small group works together in the food pantry, serving the poor; and still another group recently took up a collection for a student of one of their members whose home had burned down.

This is just a small picture of the wonderful things God has done (and is doing) in our midst through small groups this year.

Kendra Green
Director of Small Group Ministries

My role as Director of Operations is to oversee human resources, finances, information technology (phones, computers, etc.), property maintenance, the Truxtun rental building, and all other administrative aspects of the church, such as maintaining our website, app, social media, and advertising. It probably sounds like a lot; however, we have a terrific team of employees who work together to accomplish this. The best analogy I have is that I'm the coach, and we have great players on the field who make the plays.

The last 12 months have been filled with both successes and challenges. I'll start with successes as it's always good to start on an upbeat. (As an aside, this doesn't include all the projects we completed and numbers for the areas I oversee, as those are listed on the committee reports that I encourage you to read.) We have an awesome Administrative Assistant team, Megan Loveridge and Aileen Miller. Aileen has taken over all the video production for the church. Not only does she film and edit the video announcements every week, but she's taken on the Discipleship Hour Acts videos, as well. This requires a lot of coordination with our staff, and she has done an awesome job (and the videos have been amazing). Along the same lines, this year we created training videos for many of the volunteer positions on Sunday mornings (greeters, ushers, etc.), which was a huge win. Our office staff was reduced about a year ago and we had to make some adjustments; one of which was getting volunteers to help perform some of the weekly tasks that staff once did. This took not only recruiting volunteers but training them and ensuring tasks were scheduled and completed on time. Megan has overseen all of this and done a great job. We have so many volunteers to thank (too many to mention here), but we couldn't accomplish what we do without them.

Our custodial duties jumped this year with the addition of the CAAT TK – 1st grade classes, as well as P.E. and lunch service using a good portion of our facility Monday – Friday. Angel Rodriguez and his team have had many additional spaces to clean every day, as well as taking on the many repairs that are needed with kids on campus (think plumbing issues) and turning over rooms three times a week so that the spaces can still be used by our FP kids and volunteers. It is quite the workload, and Angel and his team have done a great job making it happen.

I'll mention a few challenges as there are always some. Finding volunteers is an everyday job. Aileen, who is also our volunteer coordinator (and doing a wonderful job), is tasked with filling and tracking volunteer roles and often it takes all our staff pitching in to get things done or find volunteers. Another challenge was losing Carol, our Children's Director. This has left a hole in our staff for quite a while, and we have all had to take on new duties during the search process. For example, the nursery staff now is under my watch with regards to scheduling and employment issues. They are a great group and have been very helpful in this interim period. Finally, we hosted the January Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest (POPS) meeting. Though it was a success, it was a lot of work on the team to pull it off...and we couldn't have done it without all the wonderful volunteers and Larissa Reynolds, our Kitchen Coordinator.

On behalf of our staff, I want to thank the Personnel Committee and Session for their generosity and support; all our volunteers who really have taken a big burden off our team; and the congregation for your support of our entire staff.

John Bilotta
Director of Operations

CLERK'S REPORT

We are a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church within the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest. The session for the 2025-2026 program year was composed of sixteen active 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 2025 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
Outreach
Personnel
Property & Maintenance
Worship

Chairs

Grover Waldon
Sally Herald
Dan Cronquist
Lisa Elliott
Alice Abril
Scott Kuney
JB Hay
David Chesney

Congregation Nominating Committee
Foundation Board
Trustees

David Chesney
David Chesney
Sally Selby



Committee membership is on the following page.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on the first Sunday of each month. In 2025, we welcomed 6 of our family into God's family through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Serving as Clerk of Session this past year has given me yet another opportunity to witness the faithfulness of God at work through the life of our church family. Through times of joy, challenge, service, worship, and fellowship, we have continued to grow together in faith and in our calling to be the body of Christ. I remain deeply grateful for the dedication, compassion, and quiet faithfulness shown by so many within our congregation. As we look ahead, may we continue to seek God's guidance with humility and hope, trusting that He is still leading and strengthening this church for His purposes. It is a privilege to serve alongside each of you in the ministry and mission of Christ.

Blessings,

Jim Conners, RE
Clerk of Session

Session and Congregation Committees 2025-2026

Discipleship	
Elders	Grover Waldon (C), Bob Green
At Large Members	John Bair, Kendra Green, Barry Lillie, Susan Worley
Staff	TE Dave Constance (**Preston Henry)
Finance	
Elders	Sally Herald (C), Brian Conner
At Large Members	Cathy Cumings, George DeBoer, Jay Ericsson, John Stovall, Grover Waldon
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, (**John Bilotta)
Membership & Fellowship	
Elders	Dan Cronquist (C), Jim Duncan
At Large Members	Delani Bair, Boyd Binninger, Karrie Camp, Marci Fleischer, Jane Galbreath
Staff	TE Dave Constance, (**Aileen Miller)
Missions	
Elders	Lisa Elliott (C), Mitchell Coleman
At Large Members	Bob Green, Beth Kuney, John McFarland, John Rodgers, Jeff Smith, Shanna Treanor
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega
Outreach	
Elders	Alice Abril (C), Sally Selby
At Large Members	Boyd Binninger, Julie Chesney, Cheri Ezell, Sharon Knowles, Dillon O'Donohue, Raymond Rodriguez (**Kelly Binninger)
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega
Personnel	
Elders	Scott Kuney (C), John Rodgers
At Large Members	John McFarland
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, (**John Bilotta)
Property & Maintenance	
Elders	JB Hay (C), Darrell Miller
At Large Members	Brian Branquinho, Duane Keathley, Steve Magar, Archie Smith
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, (**John Bilotta)
Worship	
Elders	David Chesney (C), Tracie Monroe
At Large Members	Robert Cleveland, Owen Constance, Cathy Cummings, Nancy Hess, Stacey Loubey, Jana Peters
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega, (**Kevin Brisco)
**members without vote	
Congregation Nominating Committee	
Elders	David Chesney (C), Bob Green
Deacon	Jana Peters
At Large Members	Doug Heitman, Aileen Miller, Shanna Treanor, Esmeralda Tully
Foundation Board	
Session RE	Grover Waldon (30), David Chesney (28), Brian Conner (29)
At Large Members	Ginger Lane (26), Bob Collier (27)
Staff	TE Marcos Ortega
Trustees	
Session RE	Sally Selby (P), Scott Kuney (VP)
Bylaws Officers	Sally Herald (Treasurer), Jim Conners (Secretary)

General Fund Budget 2026

Fiscal Year ending December 31

	2025	2025	2026
REVENUES	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
GIVING	1,395,000	1,557,769	1,410,000
INCOME	83,150	125,139	131,879
OTHER (Invest gain / loss)	14,400	68,720	11,400
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	168,180	180,458	175,440
Total REVENUES	\$ 1,660,730	\$ 1,932,086	\$ 1,728,719
EXPENSES			
MISSIONS	90,000	87,292	90,000
PERSONNEL	1,056,184	1,040,433	1,053,440
DISCIPLESHIP	94,000	82,392	88,310
MUSIC AND WORSHIP	35,220	29,203	35,220
MEMBERSHIP	21,692	15,652	24,940
PROPERTY	282,229	323,611	306,756
FINANCE	58,670	48,040	73,641
OUTREACH	--	--	20,000
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	71,095	61,724	78,281
Total EXPENSES	\$ 1,709,090	\$ 1,688,347	\$ 1,770,588
Net Operating Total	\$ (48,360)	\$ 243,739	\$ (41,869)

Membership Statistics

Jan 1, 2025 to Dec 31, 2025

Total Active Members December 31, 2025 359

Gains:

Profession of Faith	0
Transfer	2
Reaffirmation of Faith	15
Reactivation	3
Total Gains	20

Losses:

Transfer	0
Death	9
Moved to Inactive Roll	24
All other losses	0
Total Losses	33

Total Membership at December 31

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
402	383	372	359

New Members Joining

(during 12 month period ending December 31)

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
16	14	23	20

Average Attendance at Sunday Worship

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
In Person	232	232	252	266
Online	118	103	111	98
Total	350	335	363	364

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

MSM, HSM, and College: Preston Henry
Family Ministries: Pastor Dave Constance

FP Kids: [Open]
Foundation Scholarships: John Bair

FP Kids – We are awaiting the search committee’s results in the search for Carol Scheevel’s replacement.

2025-2026 MAJOR EVENTS

2025 Summer Camp for 4th – 6th graders at Forest Home

2025 Summer Camp for JH/HS at Hume Lake

2025 Foundation Scholarships: \$20,000 was allotted for scholarships, and we were able to disperse that to several recipients, ranging from graduating high school seniors to post-grad students.

2025 Harvest Festival: 1000+ attenders and 100+ volunteers. It was a great turnout for the Trunk or Treat and the carnival games/booths.

2026 Easter Family Fun Day: We had around 250 people attend

2025-26 Adult Discipleship Hour initiated with outstanding initial attendance and fluctuating attendance thereafter.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Exciting children’s and youth events continued. In September of 2025, we introduced the Discipleship Hour between 8:30 am and 11:00 am church services. Carol Scheevel departed as our Children’s Ministry Director, and the search committee continues to interview for her replacement. Your discipleship committee continues in its efforts to provide programs and experiences that reveal Christ to those who attend First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield. We continue to humbly ask for your prayers for wisdom and discernment as we seek to understand and respond to what God is calling our church to pursue and prioritize.

In navigating the constant changes and challenges, 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,

Grover H. Waldon, 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.

2025 was a fabulous year financially for our church. The Lord has truly blessed First Presbyterian Church (FPC). Our giving totaled \$1,557,769.24, which was \$162,700.00 more than budgeted for 2025. Our congregation continues to be generous and faithful in their giving to the Lord. We ended the year with operating income exceeding expenses by \$243,739.33, which is an unprecedented amount. This was almost \$292,100.00 better than our budgeted loss of \$48,360.74 and approximately \$227,000.00 better than our operating income of \$16,686.08 for 2024. In addition, the number of giving units increased by 39 over the number of giving units in 2024, which the committee believes is a sign of a growing church. 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 2025, we generated a net income of \$118,733.87 from the rental of the building. This net income is included in our overall financial results for 2025.

The Finance Committee oversaw the completion of an Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) examination that was conducted by an independent firm of Certified Public Accountants. The report was very positive in its findings and found few exceptions in our procedures. The church has taken steps to tighten up its procedures in those few instances where exceptions were noted. In addition, the committee recommended to the Session changes to the Financial Policy Handbook that were needed as a result of the findings from the AUP.

The Finance Committee consolidated many of the designated accounts used by the church. Several of the accounts had not been used in years and may never be again. The committee combined many of these into new or existing designated accounts. Those that were combined were added to accounts that retained the spirit of the original donation or fundraiser.

As of March 31, 2026, our giving is below budget. We are approximately \$26,000.00 below our budgeted amount for this year and \$35,200.00 below our giving from the same period in 2025. It may be a sign of our uncertain financial times and the escalating cost of living. As we have learned, much of our giving comes in the last few months of the year, so the committee does not believe this should cause too much concern currently. We believe that the Lord will continue to bless this church and its members as He has done for over 100 years. 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 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Herald, RE
Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership & Fellowship Committee exists to support First Pres' mission to *invite people into meaningful life through knowing Christ, loving one another, and blessing the world*. During the 2025–2026 program year, our committee sought to live out this mission by creating welcoming spaces for connection, strengthening relationships within our church family, and helping members take meaningful steps toward deeper engagement in the life of First Pres. Guiding our work was Jesus' command in John 15:12, "*Love each other as I have loved you*," a verse that continues to shape our emphasis on hospitality, care, and fellowship.

This year, the **FP Reach Team** played an important role in caring for our congregation by reaching out to members who had been absent from worship. These contacts—made in a spirit of encouragement rather than obligation—reinforced the value First Pres places on worshipping together and remaining connected as the body of Christ. Through phone calls and personal touches, volunteers reminded members that they are seen, missed, and valued.

The committee facilitated **two adult membership classes and one high school membership class** during the year and rejoiced in welcoming 24 new members into the First Pres family. These moments, celebrated during worship services, were a visible reminder of First Pres' ongoing commitment to invitation and belonging.

The 29th Father-Daughter Valentine's Dance was held in February. We welcomed hundreds of dads and daughters to our church campus, providing memory-making moments and opportunities to connect.

Our fellowship groups continue to provide diverse opportunities for connection:

- **Women's Ministry** hosted a full calendar of fellowship opportunities, including monthly coffee socials, a *Crafternoon* pottery event, and a *Fork & Film* movie night. This year also saw the continued growth of our Mama Meet-ups, offering creative hospitality and meaningful community for moms.
- **Men's Ministry** maintained a faithful rhythm of weekly Bible study and a monthly breakfast, while also providing volunteers for church-wide events. This longstanding ministry remained intentional about inviting new participants into study, service, and fellowship.
- **Schooners** enriched church life through signature events such as *Taste Your Way Around the World* in September and the *Progressive Dinner* in December—both of which emphasized relationship-building and joyful community.
- **Married People Events** hosted *Homecoming* in August, providing couples with an opportunity to gather, reconnect, and strengthen relationships within the broader church community.

Looking Ahead

Across all these activities, the common thread was a commitment to hospitality and belonging that reflects the heart of First Pres—a church with a long legacy of loving God and loving people in downtown Bakersfield. We are grateful for the many volunteers who gave their time and energy to make these moments possible and look forward to continued fellowship and ministry in the year ahead. All praise and glory be to God!

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Cronquist, RE
Chair

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

This year, the Missions Committee invested a lot of prayer and time into fine-tuning what missions means at First Pres. By spring, we narrowed our focus to two areas: mercy missions and educational spaces. While most of our partners already fit into one of these two categories, having this clarity provides us with a clear path forward. Using these parameters, we will continue supporting partners who are working daily to expand the Kingdom, as well as provide opportunities for congregation members to get involved locally and internationally.

First Pres supports a number of ministry partners, including those located in Bakersfield, in other areas of the United States, and around the world. Below are some of the highlights from the past year.

Local:

While First Pres supports several local ministries, this year, for the first time, we hosted an Embrace Grace group for single and pregnant women. In partnership with the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center, the weekly meetings educated and equipped expecting moms for parenthood and gave them the opportunity to connect with a church.

Kern InterVarsity purchased a Ministry House! Located near CSUB, the house will serve as a hub for Bible studies and is designed as a place for discipleship and fellowship for college students. It has long been the dream of local InterVarsity leaders to have a dedicated space to transform lives, and First Pres was part of making that dream a reality.

National:

Gleanings for the Hungry in Dinuba, CA, is a long-time mission partner. This spring, we sent a 5-person adult team to pack dried soup mix. They bagged enough soup mix to fill several pallets, which will be shipped around the world to feed those in need!

International:

YUGO Ministries in Ensenada, Mexico, hosted a 10-person adult team from First Pres in November, as well as a team of high school students in the spring. Each team built a home for a family and enjoyed fellowship time with that family while working on their house.

As a first-time endeavor, our church members provided Christmas gifts for youth living at Children to Love's Grace Boarding House in Thailand. In the photos of the young people opening their gifts, there was so much joy on their faces. Thank you to all who participated in making those young people feel cared for despite the distance between us!

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

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee is newly formed and has completed its first year as a Session Committee. Outreach exists to share the good news of Jesus and encourage membership in a local church, where people can grow their relationship with our Lord & Savior. We are not encouraging membership transfers but want to grow our church through new believers. We are looking for ways we can be present in our local community to share the gospel and invite those without a church home to First Pres, where they can belong and feel welcome. We are looking for ways to step into events already taking place at our church and community, where we can easily join. In the past year, we focused on reviewing a local calendar of community events, looking ahead to determining what we could join or participate in in future years, and discussing how we can gather contact information and follow up with interested people when possible. The most positive move has been to embrace that we are "The Big Pink Church Downtown!"

We spent very little of our budget this year. Most of the budget was spent on printing. In the future, we may need to make the initial large purchase of FPB T-shirts that will be available for purchase by our membership.

Our committee's main challenge was being new and working to create a good pattern for involvement. We need to be careful that it is not only the committee members participating. We will work next year to involve more of the church membership in our planning and ideas. We also want to create attractive FPB merchandise that people will enjoy wearing and using. Another goal is to be creative in our ideas by looking for opportunities to connect with our community.

Events

FPB Harvest Festival-October, Community Baby Shower (Bakersfield Pregnancy Center)-November, Bakersfield Christmas Parade-December, FPB Father-Daughter Dance-February, Bakersfield Marathon-March, First Impressions, Review of Church Building Signage, Reviewed Volunteer participation, Desired to create a Parking Lot Crew

Events/Opportunities to Consider Adding to the Above List for Next Year

Via Arte-October, Veteran's Parade-November, CASA Fun Run-February, The Great American Cleanup-April, Volunteering to participate in other large community events, Flood Resource Fair-May
Being more intentional with downtown businesses. CAAT is an example.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Abril, RE
Chair

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee is intended to be comprised of three elders, two at-large church members, our Senior Pastor, and the Director of Operations. Presently, the Committee has only two elders and one at-large church member in addition to staff. The Committee is actively searching for additional members.

The Committee meets monthly and serves 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: Elders Scott Kuney and John Rodgers oversaw the annual pastoral performance reviews in August and held meetings with Pastors Marcos and Dave to share the results with them. To comply with California minimum wage requirements, minimum wage employees were increased to \$17.00 per hour effective 1/1/2026. Additional merit and cost-of-living increases were implemented effective 1/1/2026, and holiday bonuses were provided in December 2025.

Other tasks completed by the Committee over the last year were updating the Employee Handbook and several job descriptions, and providing a staff appreciation lunch.

First Pres experienced the first full year under Pastor Marcos' leadership, and it was a notable success. We added new services, like Blue Christmas and Ascension Day, established the Outreach Committee, and saw new families join our congregation. Pastor Dave likewise assumed new pastoral assignments, including development and implementation of the Discipleship Hour, along with creating content inspired by his studies and experiences during his Sabbatical. Carol Scheevel resigned her position as Director of Children's Ministry, and the committee has initiated a plan for hiring a new Children's Director.

The personnel expenses ended the year \$35,461 under budget for 2025; however, expenses were more than in 2024 by \$61,509. As of this writing (March 2026), the personnel expenses are tracking under budget for 2026 by \$7,136.73.

The Personnel Committee greatly appreciates the additional responsibilities managed by the Director of Operations in the last year regarding preparation for the Discipleship Hour, as well as facilitating CAAT's use of FPB facilities. We are grateful to John Bilotta for providing detailed information regarding personnel needs so the Committee can make prayerful and informed decisions.

We truly value our amazing staff who remain focused, collaborative, and persevered as we expanded FP programming with reduced staffing. The FP staff continues to exemplify Knowing Christ, Loving One Another, and Blessing the World.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott K. Kuney, RE
Chair

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

The Property and Maintenance Committee is responsible for maintaining the campus, ensuring its security, and safety. We have a significant asset, consisting of two entire city blocks in downtown Bakersfield. First Presbyterian Church has been at 1705 17th Street since 1889.

2025 campus maintenance and operating costs were \$281,800, substantially less than 2024's \$324,500. Reduced costs came from buying out the solar power lease (over \$6,000/month). The savings are remarkable, considering the increased janitorial and maintenance costs associated with leasing parts of the campus to the Central Academy of Arts and Technology (CAAT), a charter school near our church. We allowed them to rent the Activities Center gym and kitchen, and the 1st floor of the Children's Ministry Center for their TK–1st grade classes. The arrangement allowed us to reach out to 125 children and their families, introduce them to Christ, and generate a modest profit for FP.

The committee also oversees the Truxtun office building, which is a blessing, generating \$65,000 net income in 2025. Tenants are mostly non-profit groups.

Capital projects and repairs are paid for by designated long-term funds and are detailed below. We are blessed by a generous saint of our church who has gone home to be with our Lord, whose trust provides for many of these capital expenditures. With the size of our campus, there are significant capital costs incurred each year to maintain its beauty, security, and improve the worship and discipleship experiences.

2025 Capital Projects totaled \$139,000. Significant projects are listed below:

- Upgraded security (gates, enclosures, AEDs, access control pads): \$33,000
- Repainted administration building exterior: \$32,000
- Recarpeted 1st floor of Children's Ministry Center: \$28,000
- Upgraded sanctuary sound and lighting equipment: \$27,000
- Upgraded computer network equipment: \$13,000

The 2026 Capital budget is \$205,000. Significant projects are listed below:

- Exterior painting/renovation: \$50,000
- Chapel renovation: \$50,000
- Exterior signage program: \$50,000
- Computer, network equipment, and communications equipment: \$21,000
- Westminster Hall sound system overhaul: \$18,000
- Smoke and fire alarm upgrade: \$10,000
- Capital contingency fund \$250,000 (not part of the \$205,000)

The chapel renovation consists of modifying the chapel by installing windows looking into the sanctuary so it can serve as a cry room and children's area for Sunday services. The capital contingency fund is for major expenditures such as potential HVAC unit and elevator replacements. We have 40+ HVAC units on campus, with an average age of over 20 years. So far in 2026, we've had to replace two failing units.

It takes significant funds to maintain our campus and make it a welcoming place to worship. We are blessed with the generosity of our congregation in their giving, which is necessary to maintain and improve First Presbyterian Church.

Respectfully submitted,

JB Hay, Ruling Elder
Chair

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Our purpose is to help develop the congregation into an active, vital worshiping community and to coordinate all aspects of the worship ministry and worship service planning.

In August 2025, Sunday service start times were modified to 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. to accommodate the renewed Discipleship Hour. Attendance trends have shifted since that change, although exact causes are difficult to determine. Attendance at the traditional service is showing a declining trend, while the contemporary service attendance is showing an increasing trend. The committee has discussed these trends at length. First Pres is committed to including a high-quality traditional worship service. The decision point in continuing to offer that worship style is the attendance at the second service which would have to exceed 300 before evaluating a change in Sunday Morning worship service offerings. Until that time, First Pres will lean into both traditional and contemporary worship styles, appealing to multiple generations.

High-level attendance trends (excluding online viewing) for the first and second services are as follows:

Traditional 8:30 Service

Average Attendance January – June 2025	125 persons
Average Attendance July – December 2025	109 persons
Average Attendance January – April 2026	102 persons

Contemporary 11:00 Service

Average Attendance January – June 2025	146 persons
Average Attendance July – December 2025	151 persons
Average Attendance January – April 2026	167 persons

While the Committee understands the Holy Spirit to be our worship leader, developing us into a vital worshiping community, we continue to discuss approaches to elevating our worship. These include praising God for all his attributes, service content and length, the need for corporate confession, etc. Along these lines, contemporary service attenders will likely see some minor modifications, such as more songs after the sermon on many Sundays, and a service length ranging from 60 to 75 minutes.

The first Blue Christmas service was offered during Advent 2025 to provide a worship opportunity tailored to those experiencing a range of emotions or challenges during the holiday season. It was a great first offering, and we expect some refinement when we do it again in 2026. Christmas Eve offered two identical services with excellent music and message, both well attended.

Holy Week 2026 included a unique Maundy Thursday worship service incorporating the family meal (sponsored by Deacons), a contemplative Good Friday service, and two identical encouraging and challenging Easter services. Drama has been included in multiple services to expand on themes. Many thanks to Cathy Bishop for her accomplished writing and direction.

Special thanks also to Kevin Brisco, Director of Worship Arts, for his exceptional versatility and creativity in designing and leading a multitude of worship styles. His work every week, and especially for our special services, is exemplary.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Chesney, 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 21 members serving a three-year term of office and participating in one of three Ministry Service areas. The officers for 2025-2026 are: Clerk-Jana Peters, Treasurer-James Loubey, and non-voting Treasurer Trainer- Matt Andresen.

Ministry to Congregation (Chair: Kerry Badertscher; Secretary: Bill Abel) Ministry Areas: 1) Welcome Center (Coordinator: Sandy Hughes) ensures staffing for the Welcome Center in the courtyard before, during, and after the Worship Services and Discipleship Hour. 2) Communion Prep and Clean-Up (Coordinators: Kerry Badertscher and Vicki Billington) prepares and cleans up the communion items for both worship services and the homebound kits. 3) Maundy Thursday Planning Committee (Coordinators: Bill Abel and Roger Hess) coordinates the dinner and décor for Maundy Thursday service.

Ministry to Families (Chair: Karrie Camp, Secretary: Robert Cleveland) Ministry Areas: 1) Family Financial Aid (Coordinator: Kevin Snyder) evaluates and grants financial aid requests to congregants. 2) Critical Health Care (Coordinator: Rhonda Dickson) provides care and support to those in critical health. 3) Care Packages (Coordinator: vacant) provides care packages to congregants in crisis. 4) Meals to Bless (Coordinator: Sandy Hughes) coordinates providing meals for those in need. 5) Memorial Service Receptions (Coordinators: Karrie Camp & 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: Marci Fleischer) prays for and sends written correspondence in response to yellow card prayer requests. 3) Flowers for Holidays (Coordinator: Eliza Green) provides flowers for Advent and Easter. 4) College Student Care (Coordinator: Paula Woodard) connects with FP college students twice/year, sending notes and gift cards. 5) Care for Volunteer Worship Service Participants (Coordinator: Delani Bair) provides refreshments to worship service participants when there are two consecutive special services within one day (i.e. Christmas Eve and Easter).

The Deacons’ financial account balance over the past year started at \$35,709.23 on March 31, 2025, and ended at \$30,241.48 on March 31, 2026. After a year of providing for the needs of many of our church family and receiving generous donations, we have a difference of \$5,467.75.

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 Bakersfield FPC Foundation's founding objective was to hold title to the property associated with First Presbyterian Church. The Foundation's enduring objective is to provide a vehicle through which gifts and bequests can be received in support of First Presbyterian Church ministries, missions, and capital improvements to the church facilities. College scholarships to FP youth and pastoral education opportunities are also funded through the Foundation

The board members each serve a term of five years, with one board member replaced each year. The current board members are Ginger Lane, Bob Collier, David Chesney (President), Brian Conner (Treasurer), and Grover Waldon (Secretary). 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.

In 2025-26, the Foundation re-acquired the title to the First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield property and approved a new lease with First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield being the lessee.

Since March 1, 2019, investments have been managed by Mestmaker & Petry. Proceeds from investments are distributed for scholarships, church ministries, capital improvements, pastoral training, mission projects, and the foundation corpus. In calendar year 2025, \$25,000 was distributed for college scholarships, and \$20,000 for pastoral education. (Note: It has been the general policy of the Foundation to not spend corpus funds, only the earnings; in the event of exceptional projects or requests, corpus funds may be utilized upon approval by the Board.)

Each year, the Foundation provides scholarship funds to the First Presbyterian Church Scholarship Subcommittee. The Scholarship Subcommittee 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, \$396,000 for scholarships, and \$69,985 for pastoral education scholarships, for a total distributed amount of \$1,066,065. In calendar year 2025, the FP Foundation received cash and stock contributions totalling approximately \$41,000. The total value of the Foundation's assets as of 12/31/25 was \$1,440,091, which is comprised of current year earnings plus designated uses for:

- Missions/Ministries/Pastoral Ed \$301,761
- Capital Improvements \$173,503
- Scholarships \$532,108
- Undesignated \$308,050
- Income Pending Fund Designation \$124,669

Note: Approximately \$40,000 in stock and cash contributions were received in 2025, designated by donors to start a new Camp Ministry designated fund. That fund will be delineated on Foundation financials beginning in 2026.

The Foundation continues to evaluate additional special ministry funding opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

David Chesney
President