



# Presbytery of San José

## January 9, 2026

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbytery of San José,

I'll keep things short this week since there is plenty to share about what the Spirit is doing in, through, among, and beyond the Presbytery as you'll see in this edition of the Digest.

Here's my simple message: keep loving, keep serving, keep praying. Be kind to one another. And be kind and gentle with yourself.

In Joy and Peace,  
Neal

Rev. Neal D. Presa, Ph.D, Executive Presbyter  
(408) 763-5004 | [Neal@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Neal@sanjosepby.org)

#CalledToCommunity  
#CommittedToJustice

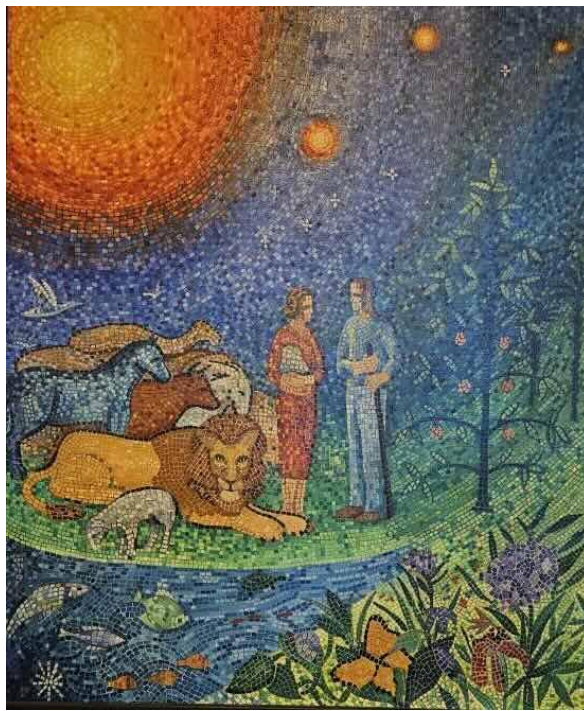
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### Upcoming Travels/Preaching of our Executive Presbyter

- January 10, 2026 (10:45am): Attending installation of The Rev. Jason Barraca as Designated Pastor, Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church-Salinas
- January 26-28, 2026: Lead, Presbytery Clergy Retreat at Villa Maria Del Mar, Santa Cruz
- January 29-February 1, 2026: Strategic Planning Meeting and Installation of the General Secretary, World Communion of Reformed Churches at Hannover, Germany

*If you would like to invite the EP to guest preach, facilitate a class, lead a retreat, help with strategic visioning/planning, or grab a cup of coffee, email [Neal@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Neal@sanjosepby.org) or call/text (408) 763-5004*

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## 2026 Lent-Easter Devotional Booklet

We just finished the Christmas season, now into Epiphany, and Ash Wednesday is soon upon us, which will begin the sacred Lenten season from February 18th through Easter Sunday on April 5.




All members of the Presbytery are invited once again to contribute your creative writing through a brief reflection and prayer based on one of the Scripture readings from the Revised Daily Lectionary-Year A. This has been a blessing to many throughout the Presbytery and around the world as we journey together to the cross and to the empty tomb.


The photo above will be the cover image of the devotional booklet. It is a mosaic from Trinity Presbyterian Church-San José.

You may sign up at [this link](#)

Please submit your 250-word piece to [Neal@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Neal@sanjosepby.org)

PARTICIPATE IN A FAITHFUL RESPONSE TO I.C.E. ACTIVITY WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF SAN JOSÉ



MAXIMIZE YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRESBYTERY'S

Legal Aid Relief  
Free Will Offering

FIRST \$15,000 MATCHED!

LEGAL REPRESENTATION GIVES PEOPLE A CHANCE.

WESTHOPE.ORG/LEGAL-AID

A report issued November 20, 2025 by the American Immigration Council indicated that without the benefit of an attorney at immigration court proceedings, people in our Presbytery have a 70% chance of being deported, often erroneously.

In response to this, the Presbytery's Peace and Justice Working Group has worked with EP Neal Presa to establish a free will offering initiative to support crucial legal counsel for people facing the threat of deportation. The Working Group and Presbytery staff have identified Peacemaking Offering and other related special funds that can provide up to \$15,000 in matching funds. This initiative will run through Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2026.

We invite you to give generously to two organizations in urgent need:

- Amigos Center Rapid Response Network of Santa Clara County
- The Santa Cruz Community Action Board
- Your support helps ensure access to legal counsel and a fair day in court for our immigrant neighbors.

How To Contribute:

- Amigos de Guadalupe Rapid Response Network Legal Services of Santa Clara County [amigoscenter.org](http://amigoscenter.org)
  - Click in the drop-down menu underneath "My donation is for\*" and select "Presbytery of San José Donor - RRN Legal Services/ Family Support"
- Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County ([cabinc.org](http://cabinc.org)) Please check "SCCIP-IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES—Presbytery of San José Donor".  
Or:
  - Cash dropped off at 406 Main Street to 2nd floor reception
  - Checks sent to 406 Main Street Ste 207, Watsonville, CA 95016
  - Stock Donation: Please email CFO directly [lorettaz@cabinc.org](mailto:lorettaz@cabinc.org)

If you have questions about this initiative, please contact EP Neal Presa, Westhope Presbyterian Church pastor The Rev. Erik Swanson ([esfishrev@gmail.com](mailto:esfishrev@gmail.com)), Peace and Justice Working Group co-chairs The Rev. Julie Porras-Center ([pastorjulie@somoswatsonville.com](mailto:pastorjulie@somoswatsonville.com)) and Beth Wylie ([bethwylie21@gmail.com](mailto:bethwylie21@gmail.com))



## **TOMORROW! Attend the Installation of The Rev. Jason Barraca**

You are cordially invited to celebrate the installation of our longtime colleague, The Rev. Jason Barraca, as the Designated Pastor of the Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church-Salinas tomorrow (Saturday, January 10) at 10:45am at the church sanctuary located at 536 Lincoln Avenue in Salinas. Jason, who has until this point served faithfully for more than a decade as the part-time Stated Supply Pastor of Lincoln Avenue, was officially approved by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry and called by the congregation of Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church to serve as the full-time Designated Pastor. All are welcome to attend as we bear witness to this



important milestone in LAPC's history, Jason's ministry, and our Presbytery community.

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**Presbytery Meeting (in-person only)  
Saturday, February 7, 9:00am  
Trinity Presbyterian Church-San José**

This is an official business meeting of the Presbytery. Please register [at this link](#)  
Please indicate if you will join us for lunch.

The docket for the meeting will be posted at the Presbytery website when it is available and ready. We will gather for worship with Communion and install our Presbytery Moderator-elect CRE Tim Parmentier, consider several items of business, hear a report from the Stated Clerk Search Committee, celebrate the ministries of our outgoing Stated Clerk and Accountant, consider reports from various committees, and so much more!

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**Save the Date! Thursday, March 26 at 6:00pm  
NEAR Gathering 3 hosts:  
General Assembly Co-Moderator Cece Armstrong**

Our third NEAR Gathering will be Thursday, March 26 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, San José, where we will welcome The Rev. Cece Armstrong, Co-Moderator of the 226th General Assembly (2024-26).

This will be a time for worship, dinner fellowship, and to hear the dynamic preaching and wise insights from one of our General Assembly co-moderators.

We are hosting this event, with participation from the Presbytery of San Joaquin, and in partnership with the Presbyteries of North Central California, San Francisco, and Redwoods, all of which are hosting events March 24 and 25.

Early registration is at [this link](#)

*NEAR is an in-person gathering of the members, friends, and guests of the Presbytery of San José held twice a year (Winter/Spring and Autumn) for Nurturing our faith, Equipping for ministry, Advocating for justice, Resourcing for support. This is done through worship, food fellowship, networking, learning, reflection, conversations, and prayer. NEAR 1 was at First Presbyterian Church-Monterey. NEAR 2 was at First Presbyterian Church-Palo Alto.*

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## **Presbytery Unity Candle**

**Sunday, January 11:**

**Westhope Presbyterian Church-Saratoga**

This coming Sunday, January 11, please pray for the members of Westhope Presbyterian Church in Saratoga, and their pastor, The Rev. Erik Swanson.

Westhope Presbyterian Church is a "sacred community of contemplation and sacred action." Through a Spiral Garden to birthing the Contemplative Center of Silicon Valley, the Church provides intentional space and resources for spiritual

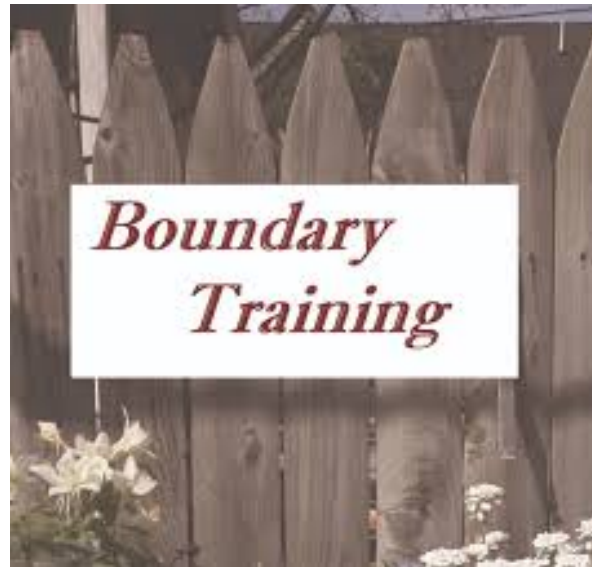
discernment and formation. Westhope Church lives out and embodies God's transformative justice as a leader in immigration justice in the Presbytery, gender justice as a More Light congregation, environmental care, social justice, and in other dimensions and arenas of working for and praying towards a more just world. Westhope's Session spearheaded the authoring of an overture which our Presbytery approved last October and which has been transmitted to the 227th General Assembly (2026) on addressing Christian Nationalism.

Weekly worship is on Sunday at 10:00am in the sanctuary and via Zoom.

For more information about Westhope Presbyterian Church, visit their website at [this link](#)

Follow the path of the Unity Candle: <http://tinyurl.com/SJUnity2025>

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### **Announcing Dates for Required Boundary Trainings**

The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow (member at-large) will again facilitate required Boundary Training for ruling elders and teaching elders on Saturday, April 18 and Saturday, November 7.

The pattern both days are:

9:00am-10:00 | Online for ruling elders

10:00-11:00 | Break

11:00-1:00pm | In-Person for teaching elders (with lunch included)

Registration information is forthcoming.

Boundary training is mandatory, required by the Book of Order (G-3.0106), focusing on sexual misconduct, harassment, and child abuse prevention for clergy, session members, and church leaders to maintain safe, healthy ministry relationships. This training, usually every three years, covers professional conduct, technology use, and clear roles

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**Film Screening for Immigration Justice  
hosted by Westhope Presbyterian Church  
12850 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga  
Thursday, January 15, 6:30-8:30pm  
(doors open 6:00pm)**

Westhope's Social Justice Team decided to dedicate January's Third Thursday Film Event Ministry to raising awareness of the Presbytery Legal Aid Relief effort, and the issues which drive the need for the initiative. The film, "From Here/From There: De Aquí / De Allá" will focus on the experience of being undocumented, the family impacts of deportation, and the crucial need for legal representation.

The screening will be followed by a discussion with local immigrant rights leaders from [Amigos de Guadalupe](#) and the [Community Action Board of Santa Cruz](#)

For tickets: click [here](#)

About the film: click [here](#)

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# Gathered in Faith: Empowering Hearts, Changing Lives

2026 Winter Gathering of Asian Presbyterian Women, Northern California Chapter

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Matt 18:20

Saturday Jan 31  
2026



9:30 REGISTRATION & COFFEE  
Westhope Church  
12850 Saratoga Ave. Saratoga  
Large parking lot,  
Close to Highway 85.

9:45 INTRODUCTIONS  
9:50 OPENING PRAYER AND HYMN



**REV. RUTH KUO 10:30 – 11:45**  
Reclaiming Who I Am. Offering Here I Am.

Pastor Ruth's morning workshop on 'Empowering the hearts,' will begin with sharing her story. She will empower participants to reflect and share their own stories and gifts/callings. Then on offering who they are to God's mission and ministries.



11:45 – 12:45 LUNCH  
from Dim Sum King, Sunnyvale  
a chance to visit and walk the grounds  
12:45 REGATHER



**REV. DEBORAH LEE 1:00 – 2:30**  
On Immigration and Accompaniment

Rev. Lee, ordained in the United Church of Christ, is the Executive Director of Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, which has made recent news. She is an engaging preacher and speaker on immigration, human rights, and the role of faith communities in social justice.



Registration ends Jan 24

2:30 CLOSING AND EVALUATION  
3:00 END

Registration Link: <https://tinyurl.com/GatheredinFaith-Jan31>

apwnoca@gmail.com

[www.sanjosepby.org](http://www.sanjosepby.org)

[View as Webpage](#)

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