



# Presbytery of San José

## February 20, 2026

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbytery of San José,

Grace and peace to you in the midst of our life together as the Church. For this week's Digest, Colin Richardson, our Communications Coordinator, offers the following reflection:

Greetings to you all as we enter this first week of Lent — a season that invites us to slow down, open our hearts, and return to prayer. Lent is more than forty days on the church calendar. It is a sacred time to reflect on how we are being shaped as disciples and as a presbytery for Christ's reconciling work in the world.

These weeks ask us to consider what we will carry forward and what we will release. What draws us closer to God's heart? What habits or distractions pull us away? Across our congregations, ministers and elders are stepping into this season through worship, study, and service. Lent does not call us to dramatic displays. It invites honesty and promotes solidarity. The journey toward Easter begins with a willing spirit and trust that God is already at work within us.

This week also marked the beginning of the Lunar New Year — the Year of the Horse — often associated with strength, endurance, and steady progress. That image offers a helpful companion for the Lenten path. The work of renewal is not rushed; it is faithful and deliberate. As we move toward Holy Week and Easter, may we walk with intention, allowing God to deepen our faith and renew our common life together.

In Joy and Justice,  
Neal

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

#CalledToCommunity  
#CommittedToJustice

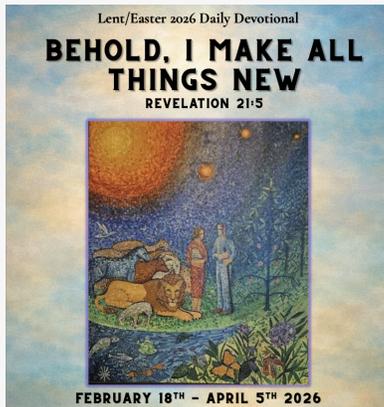
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### Upcoming Travels/Preaching of our Executive Presbyter

- March 1: Preaching at First Presbyterian Church-Mountain View, 10:00 am
- March 2-5: Study Leave - Center for Pastor Theologians at Oak Park, Illinois

- March 8: Preaching at Gilroy Presbyterian Church, 10:00 am
- March 8: Preaching at San Martin Presbyterian Church, 1:00 pm
- March 26: 3<sup>rd</sup> NEAR Gathering at Westminster Presbyterian Church-San José, 6:00 pm

*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 or call/text (408) 763-5004*



## Lenten Devotional 2026 Now Available

The 2026 Lent/Easter Devotional Booklet is now available to view and download. This year's theme, "**Behold, I Make All Things New**" (**Revelation 21:5**), invites readers to journey through Lent with hearts open to God's renewing grace, and to enter Holy Week and Easter grounded in Christ's promise of new life.

[View Booklet Here](#)

We give thanks for the many contributors from throughout the presbytery — ministers, ruling elders, and members — whose prayers and reflections embody the breadth and faithfulness of our shared ministry.

## Lent & Easter Calendar

Services, Holy Week Events & More

### Palm Sunday – March 29

Daesung PC – 6:30 AM  
 FPC Monterey – 9:00 & 11:00 AM  
 FP Church Mountain View – 10:00 AM  
 FPC Santa Clara – 10:00 AM  
 Los Gatos PC – 9:15 AM (Donuts); 10:00 AM  
 AM Worship; 11:00 AM Petting Zoo  
 Santa Teresa Hills – 10:00 AM  
 Trinity Pres SJ – 9:30 AM  
 Westhope – 10:00 AM  
 Gonzales CPC – 5:30 PM

### Maundy Thursday – April 2

Daesung PC – 7:30 PM  
 FPC Monterey – 5:30 PM  
 Los Gatos PC – 7:00 PM  
 Santa Teresa Hills – 7:30 PM  
 Trinity Pres SJ – 6:30 PM  
 Westhope – 7:00 PM

Good Friday – April 3

Holy Saturday – April 4

Daesung PC – 6:30 AM  
FP Church Mountain View – 7:30 PM  
FPC Monterey – 7:30 PM  
Trinity Pres SJ 12:00 & 7:30 PM  
Westhope – 7:00 pm

Daesung PC – 6:30 AM  
Westhope – 7:00 PM

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### **Easter Sunday – April 5**

Daesung PC – 11:00 AM  
FPC Monterey – 9:00 & 11:00 AM  
FP Church Mountain View – 6:00 AM  
(Sunrise); 10:00 AM  
FPC Santa Clara – 10:00 AM  
Gonzales CPC – 10:00 AM  
Los Gatos PC – 7:00 AM (Sunrise); 10:00  
AM  
Santa Teresa Hills – 6:30 AM (Sunrise);  
10:00 AM  
Trinity Pres SJ – 9:30 & 12:00 PM  
Westhope – 10:00 AM

### **Additional Lent Events**

Daesung PC – Passion Week Prayer,  
Mar 30–Apr 4, 6:30 AM  
Los Gatos PC – Shrove Tuesday  
Pancake Supper, 5:30–7:00 PM  
Santa Teresa Hills – World Day of Prayer,  
March 21, 10:00 AM  
Westhope – Lenten Series (Zoom),  
Wednesdays, 6:00 PM

To view the updated list of Presbytery-wide services & events, [visit here](#).

To add or update your church's services/events for Lent, Holy Week, or Easter, fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/PuZSZHm6uuLRQ7geA>

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### **3rd NEAR Gathering hosts: General Assembly Co-Moderator Cece Armstrong Thursday, March 26 at 6:00 pm**

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.

Registration is available at [this link](#).



This event is free. Your per capita and mission dollars at work through the Anne Penke Fund of the Synod of the Pacific.

*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, and 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-Mountain View.*

## Celebrating Faithful Service

Mindful and heartfelt that many of you have had memorable moments with our outgoing Stated Clerk **Erica Rader** and our retiring Accountant **Diane Case**, and that there wasn't sufficient time at the Presbytery meeting for everyone to offer a word of thanks and appreciation, we invite you to submit your word of blessing and appreciation.



You can do so through this form and Presbytery staff will compile them and share it with Erica and Diane. You are welcome to submit a written piece, or if you have a drawing/image/photo, or if you would like to do a brief video/audio recording, you can submit that at [this link](#).

## Welcoming New Commissioned Ruling Elders: Dr. Wayne Shen & Chrystopher Sahgal

The Committee on Ministry has recently approved two new Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE) to serve within our Presbytery: Dr. Wayne Shen of El Estero Presbyterian Church and Chrystopher Sahgal of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Clara (left to right). As they step into these new ministry roles, we joyfully welcome them and give thanks for the gifts and perspectives they bring to their congregations and to our broader presbytery community.

Details regarding their commissioning services are included below. We invite you to hold Dr. Shen and Mr. Sahgal in prayer and, if you are able, to attend and show your support as they are commissioned for this important season of service.



**Dr. Wayne Shen** will be commissioned this Saturday, February 21 at 11:00 a.m. at El Estero Presbyterian Church.

For those interested in viewing the Commissioning Ceremony virtually, the Zoom Information can be found below:

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 847 4133 5674  
Passcode: 384189

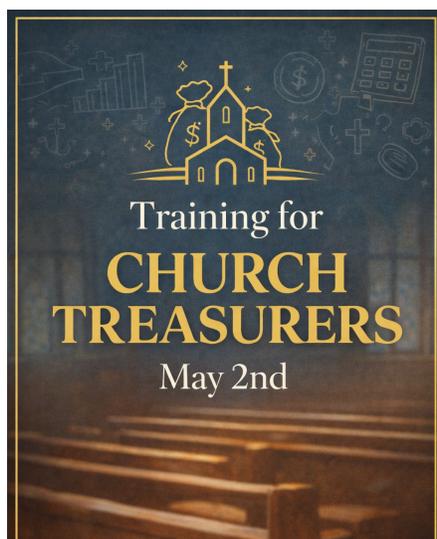


**Chrystopher Sahgal** will be commissioned on Thursday, March 26 during the NEAR Gathering at Westminster Presbyterian Church, San Jose.

More information to come.

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## ***Clergy Reminders***



**Training for Treasurers and Finance Chairs  
May 2nd, 9:30am-12:00pm**

Our Presbytery Treasurer, Rev. Edd Breeden, will facilitate an annual workshop that covers the fundamentals of serving as a church treasurer, a finance chair or on a church finance committee. The workshop will be held in-person on Saturday, May 2

from 9:30am-12:00pm at the chapel of the Presbytery Office/Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley at 890 Meridian Way in San José.

Register Early at [this link](#).

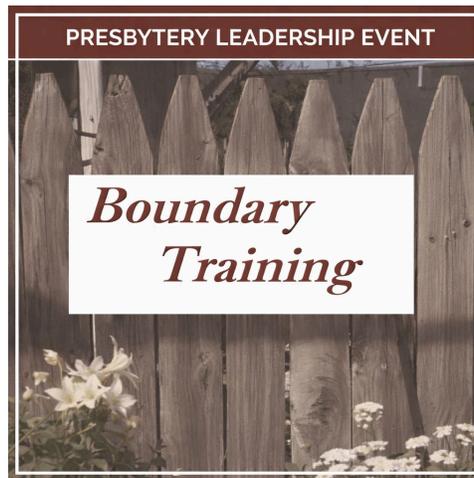
*The event is free. Your per capita and mission dollars at work.*

This training offers an opportunity to strengthen financial leadership within congregations by reviewing current developments in church finance and reinforcing core responsibilities of church treasurers and finance committees.

Designed to be both practical and informative, the session is open and beneficial to pastors, church treasurers, elders, and finance committee members throughout the presbytery.

For more information, contact by email [Edd@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Edd@sanjosepby.org) or (831) 239-6817

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### **Required Boundary Training for Elders** ***Healthy Ministry Relationships***

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 for 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) held at the Presbytery Office/Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley chapel at 890 Meridian Avenue in San José

Registration is free & available now at [this link](#).

This boundary training addresses maintaining safe and healthy ministry relationships, with such topics as power dynamics, financial boundaries, social media, pastoral care and counseling relationships, self-care and well-being.

#### **Reminder:**

Teaching elders (clergy) must complete either the Presbytery's in-person training with Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow or the online SafeGatherings training. Ruling elders may attend the Presbytery training or complete another Session-approved boundary training, as Sessions determine how to meet that requirement.

**Please Note:**

In addition to the Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder Boundary Training, all elders are also required to complete **Child Protection Training**, as mandated by the Book of Order (G-3.0106). While child protection is certainly a critical boundary concern, we distinguish between these two requirements because they address different areas of ministry responsibility and must each be completed.

Child Protection Training focuses specifically on preventing sexual misconduct and harassment, abuse awareness, and reporting responsibilities. Each Session determines how this training is delivered for leaders and volunteers. The Presbytery recommends “Darkness to Light: Stewards of Children” (in-person or online), though other approved curricula may be used. Completing one training does not fulfill the other — both are required.

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## Ministry Spotlight



### **Inaugural Worship Service First Thai Presbytery Sunday, April 12 at 2:00 pm**

We are delighted to announce a celebratory worship service marking the official launch of First Thai Presbyterian Church of San José. The service will take place on Sunday, April 12, at 2:00 PM at the McKee Road campus. All members of the presbytery and wider community are warmly invited to attend and share in this joyful milestone.



The afternoon will begin with a brief congregational meeting to elect elders and approve by-laws, followed by a celebratory worship service featuring the installation of The **Rev. Prasartpong “Paul” Pansuay** as pastor, the ordination and installation of elders, and the celebration of Communion. A fellowship lunch will follow, concluding with the inaugural meeting of the charter Session.

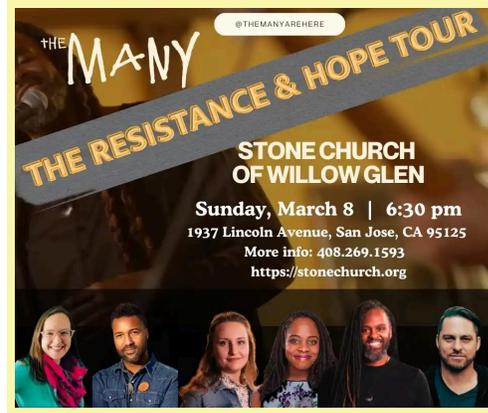
The April 12 celebration takes place on the eve of Songkran (Thai New Year), a joyful and meaningful festival in Thai culture — a fitting time to give thanks for new beginnings and the birth of this new congregation.

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### **Stone Church of Willow Glen Presents: The Resistance & Hope Tour Sunday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m.**

Stone Church of Willow Glen invites the community to an evening with The Many on Sunday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m. at 1937 Lincoln Avenue in San Jose. As part of The Resistance & Hope Tour, the gathering will center on music, justice, and shared faith.

The Many is an intentionally diverse collective creating music meant to be sung together—songs of peace, belonging, and hope for a more just world. Through music and storytelling, the evening will offer space for reflection and encouragement in challenging times, reminding participants that courage and love are cultivated in community.



All are welcome to attend. For more information, call 408.269.1593 or visit the [link here](#).

## Urban Works Santa Cruz Presents: Accessible Egg Hunt Easter Celebration

Community members are warmly invited to attend, volunteer, and support the Accessible Egg Hunt — a calm, inclusive spring celebration designed for children with disabilities and their families. The event is free to attend, and advance registration is encouraged to help keep egg hunts small, relaxed, and enjoyable.



This celebration is part of a partnership between Urban Works and SPIN Santa Cruz (Special Parents Information Network), and is hosted by the Valley Women’s Club of the San Lorenzo through the generosity of our community. Support is welcome through donations, sponsorship of supplies, or volunteer time.

Full event details, registration, and opportunities to volunteer or donate are available at the [link here](#).

For questions, please contact:  
Rev. Capt. Ryan Althaus (runningmango@msn.com)

## Board of Pensions Tips & Events

EP Neal Presa recently had a lunch meeting with our BOP regional consultant Christine Long, together with Kenneth Green, the BOP regional consultant for the Midwest and Plain states, and Kristin Leucht, the BOP regional senior consultant for Southern California and the Rocky Mountain states. They reminded three things:

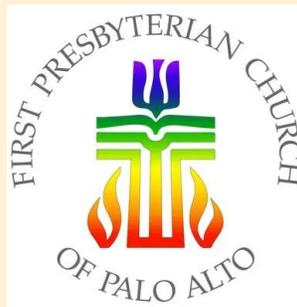


- Teaching elders and church administrators: be sure to update with the BOP any changes to effective salary. Your pension credits and other benefits, such as death and disability, are based on whatever effective salary is on

record with the BOP. The BOP does not retroactively correct or apply effective salary that has not been updated.

- Teaching elders: if you think you will be retiring in the next 10-15 years, you are strongly advise to attend a THRIVE seminar, which covers comprehensive topics, such as financial planning and healthcare options. For more information: <https://pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/lifelong-learning/seminars/thrive>
- Regional Benefits Summit: BOP regularly hosts gatherings around the country at different times of the year to discuss updates to benefits and answer questions. One of those will be hosted by our very own, Cornerstone Church of Silicon Valley, on Wednesday, April 26 from 10:00am-2:00pm. For more information or to register for this Regional Benefits Summit, visit <https://web.cvent.com/event/0bd43d06-1ebb-49a8-bd3e-5bbe5c82ef5e/summary>

If you have questions about the BOP, contact EP Neal Presa or our BOP regional consultant The Rev. Christine Long (CLong@pension.org)



### Presbytery Unity Candle

Sunday, February 22th:

First Presbyterian Church-Palo Alto

This Sunday, please pray for First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto and its pastoral leadership: Rev. Tom Harris (Pastor), Rev. Kelly Wiant (Minister for Hybrid Worship), and Rev. Dr. Diana Gibson (Pastor Emerita), as they continue their ministry in the heart of Silicon Valley.

Pray for a church rooted in deep faith, intellectual curiosity, and a courageous commitment to justice. FPCPA seeks to grow as an intergenerational, multi-ethnic, anti-racist, and economically diverse Christian community—gathered by grace through creative worship and sustained by biblically inspired learning and empathetic ministry. Their Social Justice Ministry embodies this calling in bold, tangible ways, working for positive change both locally and globally, grounded in Christ’s call to “feed the hungry and clothe the naked.”

FPCPA has long been a leader in inclusion and advocacy. As a More Light congregation, they champion the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in church and society, participate in Silicon Valley Pride as an affirming faith community, and have hosted events celebrating the dignity and diversity of all people. They have provided protection on their grounds for those seeking refuge from unjust enforcement practices and regularly host seasonal shelters for unhoused neighbors through community partnerships. Each year, they package thousands of meals through Rise Against Hunger and engage in voter outreach and letter-writing efforts to promote just public policy. As an Earth Care and Hunger Action congregation, they continue to reduce their carbon footprint while addressing food insecurity and its root causes.

Worship anchors their shared life. Sunday worship begins at 10:00 a.m., with a musical prelude at 9:50 a.m. An 8:30 a.m. Zoom gathering offers a more intimate, discussion-centered experience, and a midweek “Being Good Ancestors” group meets Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m., encouraging faithful, future-oriented discipleship. Christian Education ministries support faith formation for all ages through adult study, children’s education, and Bible study.

For more information about First Presbyterian Church-Palo Alto and its upcoming events/programs, visit their website at the [link here](#).

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

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## Employment Opportunities February 2026

The Presbytery invites prayers and attention to the following congregations as they seek to fill ministry positions:

### **Gilroy Presbyterian Church**

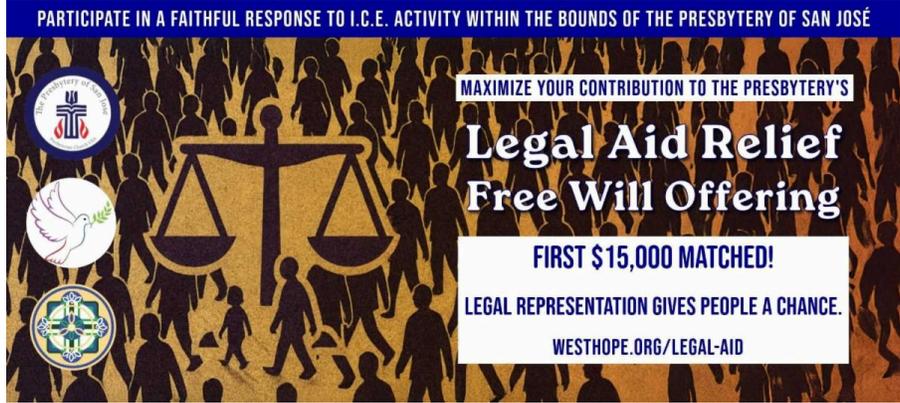
- **Family Ministry Director**

### **First Presbyterian Church of Santa Clara**

- **Nursery / Childcare Worker**

To learn more about these employment opportunities and the process to apply, please [click here](#).

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## Work Group Spotlight: Legal Aid Initiative

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.

### **Fundraising Updates:**

Thanks to the generosity of our congregations and partners, this initiative has continued to surpass expectations! As of February 10th, over **\$28,500** has been raised from **117 donors**. This remarkable outpouring of generosity reflects the shared commitment across our community to invest in meaningful, lasting impact.

The Presbytery has also committed up to \$7,500 in matching funds to the Santa Cruz Community Action Board, with the Peace and Justice Working Group gathering updated fundraising information in hopes of reaching their goal.

We give thanks for the compassion and commitment shown across our Presbytery, and we encourage continued support through May 24, 2026, as we work together to uphold dignity, justice, and mercy for our immigrant neighbors.

### **How To Contribute:**

- **Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (cabinc.org)**  
*Priority for Matching Funds*

1. Please check "SCCIP-IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES—Presbytery of San José Donor"

2. Cash dropped off at 406 Main Street to 2nd floor reception
3. Checks sent to 406 Main Street Ste 207, Watsonville, CA 95016
4. Stock Donation: Please email CFO directly [lorettaz@cabinc.org](mailto:lorettaz@cabinc.org)

- **Amigos de Guadalupe Rapid Response Network Legal Services of Santa Clara County [amigoscenter.org](http://amigoscenter.org)**

1. Click in the drop-down menu underneath "My donation is for\*" and select "Presbytery of San José Donor - RRN Legal Services/ Family Support"

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 Porrás-Center ([pastorjulie@somoswatsonville.com](mailto:pastorjulie@somoswatsonville.com)) and Beth Wylie ([bethwylie21@gmail.com](mailto:bethwylie21@gmail.com))

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

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