



# Presbytery of San José

## February 27, 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 as we enter more deeply into this Lenten journey — a season that begins with intention, and often, with struggle. The first days of fasting can feel the hardest. Whatever we have chosen to lay down for forty days — a habit, a comfort, a distraction — tends to tug at us most persistently in the beginning. We notice the absence. We feel the ache. Yet that early resistance is not failure; it is the very place where awareness begins. Over time, what once felt sharp softens. Intention steadies. What starts as discipline slowly becomes clarity.

Jesus' own forty days in the desert remind us that spiritual resilience is not formed overnight. The wilderness was not comfortable or easy, but it was formative. In hunger and temptation, Christ clarified his calling and deepened his trust in the One who sent him. Likewise, our small acts of fasting are not about self-denial for its own sake; they are about making space to remember who we are and whose we are.

As the days unfold, may you notice the quiet strengthening that comes from staying with the practice. What feels difficult now may become holy ground. The perseverance you build this week will carry into the next, shaping faith that is both steadier and more compassionate. Lent does not rush us toward Easter; it forms us for it. And through the struggle, God is already cultivating resilience, trust, and a deeper hope within us.

In Joy and Justice,  
Neal

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

#CalledToCommunity  
#CommittedToJustice

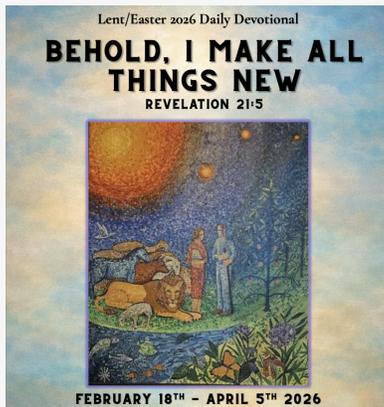
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### Upcoming Travels/Preaching of our Executive Presbyter

- 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
- April 13-15: Presbytery Execs/Clerks of Synod of the Pacific Leadership Forum, Sacramento

*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*



[View Booklet Here](#)

## 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.

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

### Maundy Thursday – April 2

Daesung PC – 6:30 AM  
 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

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### Good Friday – April 3

Daesung PC – 6:30 AM & 7:30 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

### Holy Saturday – April 4

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).

During this gathering, we will also be commissioning **Chrystopher Sahgal** of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Clara as a new ruling elder.

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, as well as to rejoice together in this moment of leadership and calling within our presbytery.

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](#).



## General Reminder

Per the action of Presbytery on February 7th, The Rev. Edd Breeden, honorably retired, will serve as Bridge Stated Clerk from March 1 to April 12. Stated Clerk-elect, The Rev. Dr. Grace Kaori Suzuki, begins her call with us on April 13. During this period, if you have any particular Presbytery-related matters, please be in touch with both Edd (Edd@sanjosepby.org) and Neal (Neal@sanjosepby.org)

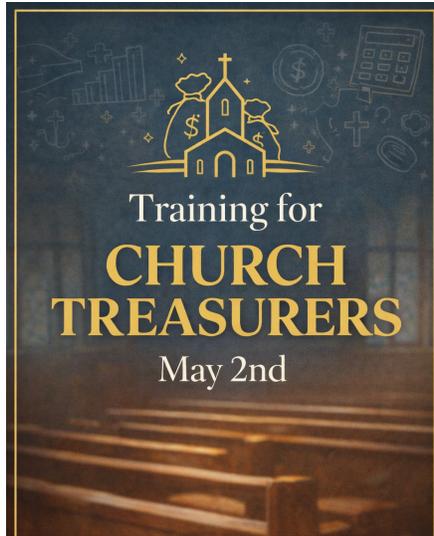
## Clergy Reminders

## Terms of Call Information

All teaching elders serving in a congregational setting are requested to send their **2026 Terms of Call information to EP Neal Presa**. This is an annual request that enables the Committee on Ministry to better resource and support clergy and congregations, and guidance offered to PNCs. Please submit 2026 Terms of Call information at the [link here](#).

If you have questions in completing this form, contact EP Neal Presa at (408) 763-5004 or [Neal@sanjosepby.org](mailto:Neal@sanjosepby.org)

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**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.

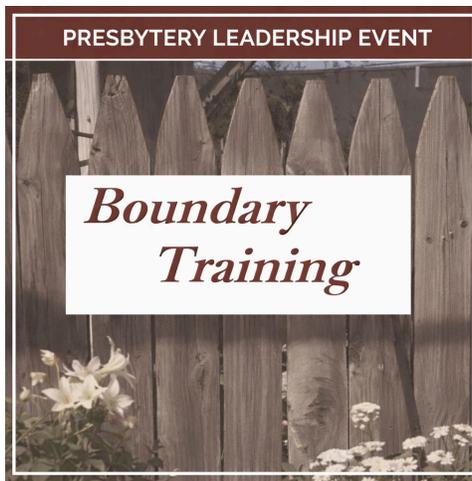
Register Early at [this link](#).

*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.

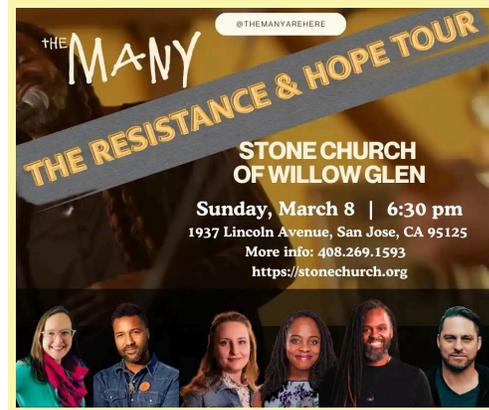
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# Ministry Spotlight



## 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](https://stonechurch.org).

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## 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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## 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)

**FREE!**  
**Accessible**  
**EGG HUNT!**  
Every Bunny Can Play!

**Sunday**  
**March 29**  
**2026**  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Highlands County Park  
8500 Hwy 9, Ben Lomond

*A Calm & Inclusive Celebration*  
Created for children with mobility, vision, and sensory challenges—and their families. A calm, welcoming space where every child can join the fun.

**Three Adaptive Egg Hunts**

- Wheelchair-Accessible Egg Hunt
- Beeper Egg Hunt
- Sensory-Friendly Egg Hunt  
*Siblings welcome!*

**Even More Fun!**  
Storytime • Sensory Play  
Photos with the Bunny  
Sensory-Friendly prizes

**Accessibility**  
Accessible parking  
Flat, easy paths  
No amplified music

Limited capacity!  
**Reserve Your Spot**  
RSVP via QR code or link below.  
Walk-ins welcome as space allows.

QR

HOSTED BY  
SUPPORTED BY LOCAL SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

MORE INFORMATION  
valleywomensclub.org

## 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>

## ***Pieces on Peace***



### **Reflections by Veronica Ota, Peacemaking & Justice Advocate**

#### ***February Edition***

I have now been serving as Peacemaking and Justice Advocate for one month. My first goal, perhaps a bit lofty but an ongoing project, is to get acquainted with the 30+ congregations, fellowships, and worshipping communities in our presbytery. If we haven't made contact yet – I hope to soon, and invite you to reach out with any peace/justice related ministries, partnerships, or events you'd like to promote, questions you might have, or concerns on your heart.

I am coming to understand my advocacy role as someone who helps create "onramps for engagement" (thanks, Rev. Bryan Franzen for the catchphrase). I'm endeavoring to learn about the diverse churches and regions of the presbytery to be able to lift up examples of congregations, nonprofits, businesses, pastors and community leaders who are doing important peacebuilding work. Each month in my "Pieces on Peace", I'll highlight something impactful that I've encountered, in the hopes that it might inspire others to learn more, collaborate, start something new, or lean into important work they're already doing.

As I myself learn more and get involved with on-the-ground peace work in our presbytery, I hope to also serve as "connective tissue" (metaphor credit: Rev. Erik Swanson), able to transmit information, relay resources, and get folks connected around justice-oriented efforts. Connective tissue must be flexible, responsive and communicative for coordination, and has to be healthy to keep other parts operating at their best. I am here to advocate, support, encourage, and participate in the peacemaking work of the children of God in thought, word, and deed – and I look forward to partnering with you in God's unfolding project of peace!

If your congregation or community is engaged in a peace- or justice-centered ministry, launching a new initiative, or has a story worth sharing, you can contact Veronica at [veronica@sanjosepby.org](mailto:veronica@sanjosepby.org)



**Presbytery Unity Candle  
Sunday, March 1st:**

**Trinity Presbyterian Church & Urban Works Santa Cruz**

This week, we invite you to pray for Trinity Presbyterian Church of Santa Cruz and their pastor, Rev. Diane Ford, as they continue their faithful witness as an open and affirming community of faith.

As a congregation, Trinity's mission is rooted in the conviction that God is still transforming lives. They proclaim a hopeful Gospel — one that trusts people and communities are not defined by their past, but are continually being renewed by grace. At the heart of their life together is a commitment to nurture one another spiritually and practically, extending belonging especially to those who have often been overlooked or excluded.

Trinity describes itself as both traditional and progressive — not as opposites, but as companions. They cherish Scripture, historic faith practices, and enduring Christian values, while remaining open to fresh expressions of worship and thoughtful engagement with faith in today's world. They are a community where differing perspectives can sit at the same table, grounded in shared commitments to honesty, kindness, justice, and deep respect for the image of God in every person. Their identity is broad and welcoming, yet anchored in a faith that runs deep.

Their shared life is centered in Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m., where prayer, music, and the Word draw the community together. Throughout the week, Trinity offers opportunities for connection and learning, including Librarian Corner on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., the Third Monday Book Club from 10:00–11:00 a.m., and seasonal Thursday Evening Suppers at 5:30 p.m. that gather neighbors around

food and conversation. In all they do, Trinity seeks to be a place where faith is lived honestly, community is tangible, and God's transforming love is made visible.

Concurrently, this week's unity candle is co-hosted by Urban Works Santa Cruz, a vibrant ministry partner supported by Trinity. Urban Works embraces art and recreation to break through faith, social, and economic barriers, creating a more enriched, diverse, and unified community for adults with disabilities. Emerging from the foundation of Salty Sheep under the guidance of Rev. Ryan Althaus, Urban Works offers a wide range of weekly classes, workshops, and recreational gatherings designed to empower adults with disabilities and their support networks.

Weekly offerings include art sessions, exercise classes (yoga & dance), as well as roller skating sessions for individuals of all abilities. These programs reflect Urban Works' mission to break through social and economic barriers through art and recreation, thereby welcoming people of all abilities to engage in community activities.

Similarly, we invite our Presbytery members to pray for Rev. Ryan Althaus & the leadership of Urban Works as they continue to fuel our ministry with opportunities of inclusion and spiritual impact.

For more information about this week's congregation(s), visit the links below:

[Trinity Presbyterian Church of Santa Cruz](#)

[Urban Works](#)

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

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## **Employment Opportunities March 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**

- **Executive Administrator** (*New Position*)
- **Nursery / Childcare Worker**

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

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**Save the Date!**

**Mission and Outreach Working Group Roundtable Gathering**

**Saturday, June 13 at 11:30 a.m.**

Save the date for a roundtable gathering hosted by the Mission and Outreach Working Group (MAOWG). Mission committee chairpersons and members from across our presbytery are invited to come together for conversation, connection, and encouragement.



Join us for a potluck luncheon and discussion time to share the joys and challenges of mission work within our congregations. It will be an opportunity to learn from one another's experiences and strengthen our shared ministry.

MAOWG also hopes to compile a current list of mission chairpersons and their contact information from each congregation. This will help us communicate about upcoming events, available grant money, and future mission trips.

For more information about the roundtable gathering, or to provide mission chairperson contact information, please reach out to Pam Siu, Chair of the Mission and Outreach Working Group, at [thesiufamily@yahoo.com](mailto:thesiufamily@yahoo.com).

**Save the Date!**

**Leaders of Color Retreat  
October 19-22, 2026  
Zephyr Point Conference Center**

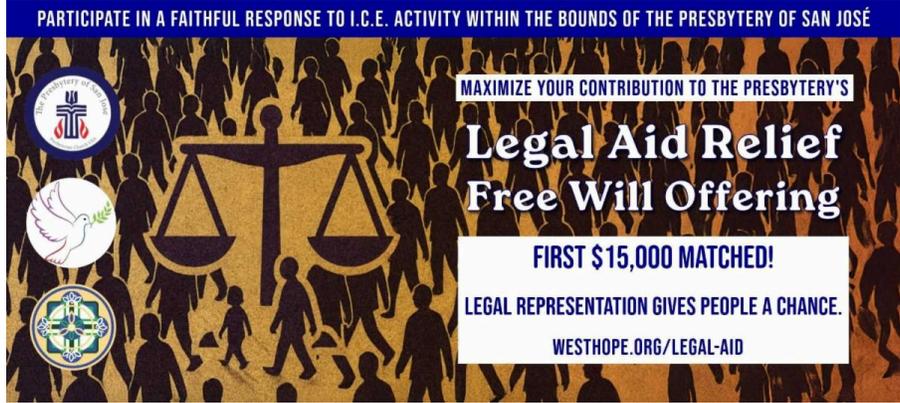
Mark your calendar for the Leaders of Color Retreat 2026, our annual gathering of encouragement and renewal, taking place October 19–22, 2026, at the beautiful Zephyr Point Conference Center.



Set along the peaceful shores of Lake Tahoe, this retreat continues an annual tradition of creating sacred space to strengthen relationships, share wisdom, and sustain one another in ministry through fellowship and reflection.

This event welcomes all clergy of color and church leaders of color within the Presbyteries of San Jose, San Francisco, Redwoods, and North Central California are warmly invited to register and take part in this meaningful time together.

Registration details and additional information will be shared in the months ahead.



## 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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