



Presbytery of San José

March 13, 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 continue along the Lenten path together. This Sunday, March 15, marks the Fourth Sunday of Lent, sometimes called Laetare Sunday. The word laetare means "rejoice," and the day has long been understood as a small but meaningful pause within the reflective rhythm of the season. In the midst of Lent's practices of prayer, fasting, and self-examination, this Sunday reminds us that the journey toward Easter is ultimately one grounded in hope.

Laetare Sunday is sometimes described as a "Refreshment Sunday," inviting us to take a moment to breathe and remember the promise that lies ahead. For many, these weeks of the year arrive during demanding seasons of ministry, work, and personal responsibility. When fatigue or discouragement settles in, this midpoint of Lent gently calls us to lift our eyes again toward the light of resurrection that awaits at Easter.

For members of our presbytery—whether serving in congregations, supporting ministries, or navigating the many responsibilities of daily life—this Sunday offers an invitation to receive grace in the midst of effort. Even small moments of reflection can become reminders that our calling is sustained not by our own strength alone, but by the enduring faithfulness of God who walks with us through every season.

As the remaining weeks of Lent unfold, may we continue forward with renewed perspective. The Presbyterian tradition reminds us that hope is not a distant idea but a lived assurance grounded in God's covenantal love. With hearts attentive to Christ's presence among us, we move toward Easter trusting that even in times of weariness, God continues the quiet work of renewal within us and within the world.

In Joy and Justice,
Neal

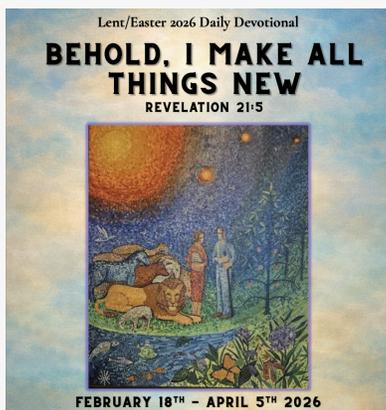
Rev. Neal D. Presa, Ph.D, Executive Presbyter
(408) 763-5004 | Neal@sanjosepby.org

#CalledToCommunity
#CommittedToJustice

Upcoming Travels/Preaching of our Executive Presbyter

- March 26: 3rd NEAR Gathering at Westminster Presbyterian Church-San José, 6:00 pm
- April 12: Preaching at Taiwanese American Presbyterian Church of San José, 10:00 am
- April 12: Preaching at inaugural worship service of First Thai Presbyterian Church of San José, 2:00 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.

*For questions regarding the Devotional Booklet, contact Communications Coordinator Colin Richardson (Colin@sanjosepby.org)

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

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

Santa Teresa Hills – 10:00 AM

Trinity Pres SJ – 9:30 AM

Westhope – 10:00 AM

Gonzales CPC – 5:30 PM

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

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>

**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.

Registration is available at [this link](#). The deadline to **RSVP for dinner reservations** is **March 20th**.

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.

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.

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)

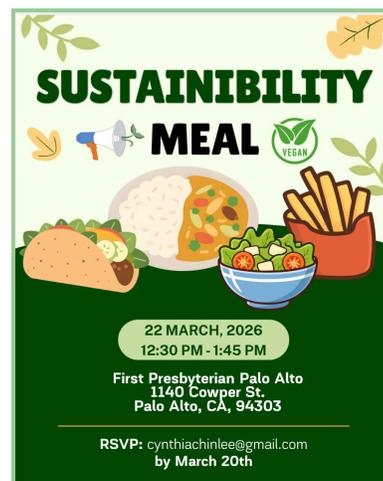
Ministry Spotlight



Sustainability Meal Event First Presbyterian Palo Alto March 22nd, 12:30 pm-1:45 pm

Community members are warmly invited to join us for a Sustainability Meal at First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto (1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto, CA). This gathering brings neighbors together to share a meal while exploring practical ways we can care for our planet through mindful food choices and sustainable living.

The event will feature a thoughtfully prepared meal and a welcoming space to connect, learn, and celebrate community efforts toward environmental stewardship.



Please RSVP by March 20 by emailing Cyndi Chin-Lee (cynthiachinlee@gmail.com). We look forward to sharing this meaningful evening with you.

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)

Inaugural Worship Service First Thai Presbyterian Church 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.



To **RSVP**, visit the [link here](#). The deadline to RSVP for the celebration meal is **April 1st**.

The afternoon will begin with a brief congregational meeting to elect elders and approve bylaws, 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

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

Save the Date!
Fall 2026 Clergy Retreat
October 28th-29th, 2026

A friendly reminder to clergy across the Presbytery of San Jose to save the date for our upcoming Clergy Retreat, taking place October 28–29 at St. Francis Conference Center in San Juan Bautista (one night, two days).

This gathering offers teaching and ruling elders a meaningful time set apart for reflection, fellowship, and shared learning in our ministries and callings.

More information and registration details will be shared soon!

Required Boundary Training for Elders:
Healthy Ministry Relationships
April 18th, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

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](#).

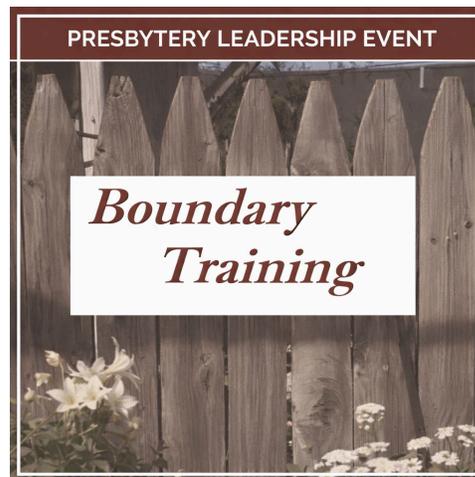
This boundary training addresses maintaining safe and healthy ministry relationships, with such topics as power dynamics, financial boundaries, social media, pastoral care and counseling relationships, self-care and well-being.

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.

If anyone wishes to use Darkness to Light (whether the online or in-person version), they should first contact EP Neal Presa (Neal@sanjosepby.org).

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

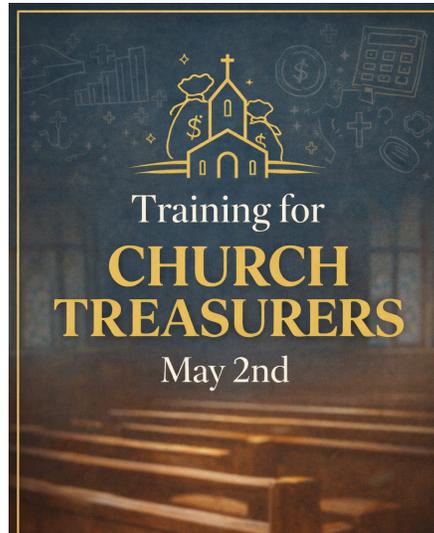
Our Presbytery Treasurer, Rev. Edd Breeden, will facilitate an annual workshop that covers the fundamentals of serving as a church treasurer, a finance chair or on a church finance committee. The workshop will be held in-person on Saturday, May 2 from 9:30am-12:00pm at the chapel of the Presbytery Office/Cornerstone 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 or (831) 239-6817



Pieces on Peace



Reflections by Veronica Ota, Peacemaking & Justice Advocate

February/March Edition

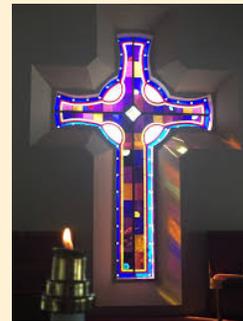
I have now been serving as Peacemaking and Justice Advocate for one month. My first goal, perhaps a bit lofty but an ongoing project, is to get acquainted with the 30+ congregations, fellowships, and worshipping communities in our presbytery. If we haven't made contact yet – I hope to soon, and invite 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



Presbytery Unity Candle

Sunday, March 15th:

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church of Aptos

This week, we invite you to pray for St. Andrew Presbyterian Church of Aptos, and for their pastoral and lay leadership — Rev. Anne McAnelly, Music Director Dr. Don Adkins, the Deacons, and all members of the Session — as they continue to nurture a welcoming and faithful Christian community along the Central Coast.

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church describes itself as a welcoming, affirming, and multi-generational congregation rooted in warm fellowship and mutual care. Their shared life is shaped by a desire to live justly, show kindness, and walk humbly with God, offering friendship, spiritual guidance, and opportunities for service to all who enter their doors. Members care deeply for one another as well as for the broader Aptos community, seeking to embody a faith that is both compassionate and active.

At the heart of St. Andrew's mission is the understanding that Christian faith is a journey — an adventure rather than a possession. The congregation gathers to worship, share the sacraments, study scripture, and celebrate God's presence through prayer and praise. Their hope is to make a meaningful difference both locally and globally by promoting peace, justice, and understanding through the love and wisdom of God.

The worshipping community gathers each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. to sing, pray, and reflect together in the presence of God, with lay leaders regularly sharing in worship leadership. The Lord's Supper is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. During Easter, the congregation participates in a beloved tradition of bringing a living cross to life as a sign of resurrection hope. Throughout the year, fellowship also grows through Lunch and Dinner Clusters — small gatherings of 8–10 people meeting in homes to share meals and deepen relationships.

As St. Andrew Presbyterian Church continues its ministry of welcome, worship, and service, we give thanks for their witness in Aptos and ask that you hold their congregation and leadership in prayer this week — that their community may continue to grow in faith, friendship, and the transforming love of Christ.

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

[St. Andrew Presbyterian Church of Aptos](#)

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



**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](#).

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.

Save the Date!

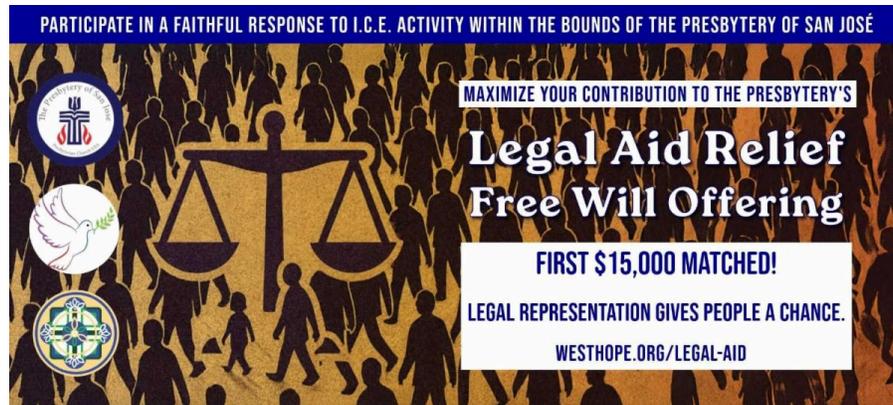
Leaders of Color Retreat October 19-22, 2026 Zephyr Point Conference Center



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.



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 exceed expectations. As of **March 3**, more than **\$30,000** has been raised from over **120+ donors**, unlocking the full \$15,000 in matching funds. The new total includes an additional \$1760 received from the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz since our last Fundraiser update. This remarkable outpouring of generosity reflects the shared commitment across our community to invest in meaningful, lasting impact.

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

- **Amigos de Guadalupe Rapid Response Network Legal Services of Santa Clara County** 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), Peace and Justice Working Group co-chairs The Rev. Julie Porras-Center (pastorjulie@somoswatsonville.com) and Beth Wylie (bethwylie21@gmail.com)

www.sanjosepby.org

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