Presbytery of San José

October 23, 2026

"The church reformed, always being reformed according to the Word of God."

— Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbytery of San José,

This Sunday, Oct. 25, congregations across our denomination observe Reformation Sunday, also known as Presbyterian Heritage Sunday. It marks the day in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in Wittenberg, Germany, and it celebrates the "reformed and always reforming" tradition that still grounds our faith.

This year, the Presbyterian Historical Society has provided a bulletin insert that tells of a later chapter of that story: the Theological Declaration of Barmen. Karl Barth and Hans Asmussen drafted it in 1934, when much of the German church was being pressured to align itself with Nazi ideology. Barmen is a brief text, but it holds lasting significance for its confession that the Church belongs to Jesus Christ alone and not to any prevailing ideology or political power. It is one of only three 20th-century additions to our Book of Confessions, and it reminds us that faithfulness sometimes means speaking up when it would be easier to stay silent.

Read the full Reformation Sunday insert:
www.pcusa.org/rf

A few years ago, EP Neal Presa took part in a Reformation Series project produced by the Presbyterian Foundation. The final video of that series focuses on this motto of the Reformed tradition. Watch it at the link below:

vimeo.com/1238627536

As we bear witness to the history of our church this Sunday, let us also remember that part of the reformed tradition has been to bear witness of our faith in a public arena. In this way, we play active roles in the transformation of society so that all may flourish. On that note: Election Day fast approaches on Tuesday, Nov. 3, and it's as vital now as ever to stay informed, make a plan and vote. Let's show up for our siblings in Christ, now and tomorrow.

Regards,

Colin Richardson
Communications and Executive Support Associate
colin@sanjosepby.org

IN THIS ISSUE

A quick look at this week's news, events, and opportunities.

FEATURED • ADVENT • • • •

Advent Devotional 2026: The God of Peace & Hope Has Come

Sign up by Fri., Nov. 6 · **Sign Up Here**



TODAY ***WEBINAR: Proposed 2027 Budget & Ethical Conduct Policy***

Fri., Oct. 23 · 6:30–8 p.m. · Join on Zoom (ID: 858 2362 7734) · Budget (XLSX) · Policy (PDF)

ADVOCACY

Interfaith Call: Pause on New Data Centers

San José · Sign the Letter Here

Hunger Blog: Soil & Roots, Finding Our Foundation

Creation Care & Discipleship · Read More Here



PRESBYTER REMINDERS

NEXT WEEK: Webinar on Proposed Covenant MOU

Thurs., Oct. 29 · 5:00 p.m. · Zoom · Proposed MOU (PDF)

REGISTER: Called Presbytery Meeting

UNITY CANDLE

El Estero Presbyterian – Monterey

Sunday, October 25 · CRE Dr. Wayne Shen

Thurs., Nov. 5 · 5:00 p.m. · Zoom · Register by Nov. 3 · Register Here



MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

Join Us • Commissioning of Rev. Veronica Toyomi Ota

Oct 31 · 10:00am · All are invited · RSVP & View Info Here



THIS WEEKEND

Harvest Festival at Trinity

Sat., Oct. 24 · 5–7 p.m. · San Jose · All are welcome · See details below



RESOURCES

Documents for Today's Webinar (Oct. 23)

Proposed 2027 Budget (XLSX) · Proposed Ethical Conduct Policy (PDF)

2027 Minimum Terms of Call

PS-1, Appendix B now updated on our website · View Policy PS-1 (PDF)

World Communion Offering Grants

Applications accepted through Jan. 15, 2027 · View Grant Resources

EP's Upcoming Travels & Preaching/Speaking

October 25: Attending/participating in the 75th founding anniversary worship service of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Palo Alto

October 28-29: Attending Presbytery Clergy Retreat at St Francis Conference Center, San Juan Bautista

October 31: Attending the Commissioning of the Rev. Veronica Toyomi Ota at Westview Presbyterian Church (10:00 am)

November 15-25: World Council of Churches Executive Committee, Manila, Philippines

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.

Save the Date



Join Us in Commissioning
Rev. Veronica Toyomi Ota

Peacemaking and Justice Minister

Sat., Oct. 31 • 10 a.m. • Westview Pres. Church

Please join friends, family, and members of the Presbytery of San José as we celebrate the commissioning of Rev. Veronica Toyomi Ota as Peacemaking and Justice Minister. This call affirms the ministry of peace and justice she has already been living out among us. Veronica will also serve as the ordained pastor of Good Growth Gardens, Watsonville's new worshiping community. It is an inclusive, intergenerational space that nurtures faith and community alongside food and nature. Come share in this joyful day of worship, and stay for the reception that follows. All are welcome!

RSVP & VIEW INFO

SEASON OF ADVENT • NOV. 29 – DEC. 25



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2026

The God of Peace & Hope Has Come

Daily Lectionary (Year B) • Sign Up by Fri., Nov. 6

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

This Advent, we invite ministers, elders, members and friends across our presbytery to help write our 2026 Advent Devotional, *The God of Peace & Hope Has Come*. Each day of Advent, from Sunday, Nov. 29 through Christmas Day, will feature a reflection from someone in our presbytery family. This year's cover features a stained glass window at Bonny Doon Presbyterian Church.

To contribute:

- Sign up for a day using our sign-up sheet: Advent Devotional Sign-Up
- Choose **ONE** Scripture text from that day's Daily Lectionary readings (Year B)
- Write no more than **250 words total**, including a brief reflection and a brief prayer
- Add one line with how you wish to be identified (name, title, ministry/church)
- Upload your piece to our shared folder: Advent Devotional Shared Folder

All submissions are due **Friday, Nov. 6**.

Need an example?

View a sample reflection that fits these guidelines:

Sample Devotional Reflection (PDF)

SIGN UP HERE

Featured

Upcoming Meetings & Gatherings

Still to Come This Fall • Full 2027 Schedule Online

STILL TO COME • FALL 2026

TODAY

Fri., Oct. 23 • 6:30–8 p.m. — Informational Webinar • Topic: Proposed Budget & Proposed Ethical Conduct Policy for 2027 • Zoom

Review the drafts: Proposed Budget (XLSX) • Ethical Conduct Policy (PDF)

Join on Zoom: us02web.zoom.us/j/85823627734 • Meeting ID: 858 2362 7734

NEXT WEEK

Thurs., Oct. 29 • 5:00 p.m. — Informational Webinar • Topic: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Covenant Relationship between First Pres. Mountain View, Menlo Church-Mountain View, and the presbytery • Zoom

Review the draft: Proposed MOU (PDF)

Thurs., Nov. 5 • 5:00 p.m. — Called Presbytery Meeting • Zoom (details to come) • Register by Nov. 3

LOOKING AHEAD • 2027

DATE ANNOUNCED

Fri., March 19, 2027 • 6:00 p.m. — Informational Webinar • Topic: Book of Order Amendments • Zoom. Previously listed for "March 2027" on our calendar, this webinar will help presbyters prepare for the April 22 presbytery meeting.

Documents for each webinar's agenda items, along with the full 2027 schedule, are available on our website:

2027 Presbytery Meeting Schedule & Resources

Questions? Contact EP Neal Presa at neal@sanjosepby.org.

This Week

Called Presbytery Meeting

Thurs., Nov. 5 • 5:00 p.m.

Zoom • Register by Tues., Nov. 3

Ministers, commissioners and friends of the Presbytery of San José are invited to register for our Called Presbytery Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 5, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom. Zoom details will be shared with registrants and posted on our website soon.

Please register by Tuesday, Nov. 3: Register Here

For questions or inquiries, contact EP Neal Presa at neal@sanjosepby.org

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Harvest Festival at Trinity

This Saturday, Oct. 24 • 5–7 p.m. • Trinity Presbyterian Church, San Jose

Trinity Presbyterian Church of San Jose invites families and friends to its Harvest Festival this Saturday, Oct. 24, from 5 to 7 p.m. Enjoy live music, games, a bounce house, cakewalk, raffle, face painting, food and free popcorn. All are welcome!

Trinity Presbyterian Church • 3151 Union Ave., San Jose, CA 95124



CREATION CARE

Sustainability Meals

Free Plant-Based Lunches • Open to the Public

Eating more plants has many advantages, including a more sustainable world: raising animals for food takes more water, fuel and land than raising plants. A plant-based diet is also healthier and can help prevent or manage many chronic diseases, such as heart conditions, diabetes and cancer.

These lunches are free and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring their own plate, cup and utensils to avoid disposables. See the flyer above for dates, times and location.

POLICY UPDATE

2027 Minimum Terms of Call

Policy PS-1 • Appendix B Updated

The 2027 minimum effective salaries for full-time pastors, by county, are now posted in Appendix B of Policy PS-1, Pastor Terms of Call. This is based on the 3.6% cost of living adjustment (COLA) the Social Security Administration announced on October 14, 2026.

The updated minimums take effect January 1, 2027. Sessions and personnel committees are encouraged to review the policy as they prepare terms of call for the coming year, and ministers are reminded to report approved terms of call by Jan. 31.

View the policy here:
PS-1 Minimum Terms of Call (see Appendix B)

For questions, contact EP Neal Presa at neal@sanjosepby.org.

This Week

ADVOCACY

Interfaith Call: Pause on New Data Centers

Sign the Letter • City of San José

With regards to AI data centers, please consider signing the letter "Interfaith Call for a Pause on New Data Centers, and Developing Community-Driven Standards in San José." Organized by GreenFaith and the South Bay Interfaith Climate Network, the letter asks the Mayor, City Manager and City Council to pause new data center projects until enforceable, community-approved standards are in place, with time for meaningful public input from every council district.

The letter notes that the impacts would fall hardest on communities in South and East San José, Downtown and Alviso. Faith leaders and individuals may sign, and signers can also indicate interest in a town hall or speaking at City Hall.

SIGN THE LETTER

HUNGER ADVOCACY • REV RYAN ALTHAUS

Soil & Roots: Finding Our Foundation

A Reflection on Creation Care & Discipleship

This week, our Hunger Advocate, Rev. Ryan Althaus, shares a reflection by Rev. Brian Fisher of Soil & Roots on the San Jose Hunger Blog. Drawing on Genesis 1, Fisher reminds us that God called creation good and entrusted it to our care, making creation care part of following Jesus. Read the full reflection below:

READ THE REFLECTION

For questions, reach Ryan directly at ryan@sanjosepby.org.







MISSION & OUTREACH • WESTVIEW PRES., WATSONVILLE

SonRise Kitchen

Breakfast Five Days a Week • Plaza Park, Watsonville

This year, our presbytery's Mission & Outreach Working Group is helping fund SonRise Kitchen, building on the support the Church Health & Growth Working Group provided in 2025. A ministry of Westview Presbyterian Church in Watsonville, SonRise Kitchen serves breakfast five days a week at the Plaza Park, offering a warm meal and a friendly welcome to neighbors who are deeply grateful for it.

Volunteers are always welcome, whether you can help regularly, one morning a week or now and then. To get involved, leave a message with your contact information at Westview, (831) 724-6222, and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING

Grants Update

GRANT REMINDER

Apply for a World Communion Offering Grant

Applications Accepted Through Fri., Jan. 15, 2027

Now that the World Communion Offering has been received, consider applying for a World Communion Offering grant! Applications will be accepted through **Jan. 15, 2027**, and PC(USA) has gathered helpful resources to guide you as you apply.

If you still have questions or need assistance, reach out to the Grant Management Office. Marla Edwards can be reached at marla.edwards@pcusa.org or 502-569-5088.

VIEW GRANT RESOURCES

Pieces on Peace ☮

PEACEMAKING & JUSTICE MINISTER • REV VERONICA OTA

This month I officially stepped into my role as our presbytery's Peacemaking and Justice Minister. Thank you to all who have shared kind words and prayers throughout my first year with the Presbytery of San José. Since this is a new position, I'll share a little about how it came to be and the hopes I have for this ministry...

CONTINUE READING

For questions or resources, contact Veronica at veronica@sanjosepby.org.

Unity Candle *SUNDAY, OCT. 25*







El Estero Presbyterian Church

MONTEREY

This Sunday, El Estero Presbyterian Church in Monterey hosts the Unity Candle once again. We invite you to pray for its ministry and leadership, including Commissioned Ruling Elder Dr. Wayne Shen, and all who give their time and care to sustain its life of worship and fellowship.

El Estero's roots reach back more than a century, to early outreach among Japanese farmers and fishermen along the Monterey coast. That same spirit continues today in a multicultural, multigenerational community gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, with a mission to glorify God through a grateful commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Sunday worship meets at 10:30 a.m., in person and on Zoom, and the life of the church carries on through the week with small group study, an Open Art Studio, Ukulele Fellowship and seasonal hikes, each a chance for reflection, creativity and spiritual nourishment.

As El Estero receives the Unity Candle this week, please hold Dr. Shen, the congregation and all who take part in its ministries in prayer, that this close-knit community of faith may continue to grow and flourish.

For more information about this week's congregation, visit the link below:
El Estero

To follow the path of our Unity Candle, visit the link below:
tinyurl.com/SJUnity2025

Employment Opportunities

Know of an opening? Help us share it! Send job postings from your congregation or ministry to Colin Richardson at **colin@sanjosepby.org**.

The presbytery and its partners/affiliates are always hiring. Visit our Employment Opportunities page or read about new opportunities below from congregation and presbytery-affiliated organizations:

First Congregational Church of San Jose (UCC)

- Assistant to Interim Minister

First Presbyterian Church of Snohomish (Washington State)

- Installed Pastor

Urban Sanctuary San Jose

- Part-Time Lead Pastor

VIEW ALL POSITIONS

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www.sanjosepby.org

View as Webpage