

OCTOBER 2023



Pacific Beach

Presbyterian Church

news

DEAR FRIENDS,

To say that PBPC holds a special place in my heart does not begin to account for the many years of faithful witness that I have been a part of during my time here. This is the community that raised me up in the faith, that gave me my first opportunities to minister and serve, that supported me through seminary, that taught me most of what I know about ministry. This is where I was baptized, where I worshipped as a child, where I gave my first sermon and many more after. You all, and many among our church family who have gone before us to the Lord and now serve as members of the great cloud of witnesses, will forever be my family in Christ, the ones who raised me up.

It is a bittersweet thing to say goodbye to people and a place that I have known all my life. I am saddened that I will not be present with you all physically, that our paths diverge here as I pursue the Lord's calling on my life. At the same time I am overjoyed that we live in an age where communication is so easy, that I will be able to stay in touch with you all and you with me. I am excited about the path that lies ahead for me, whatever the Lord has planned, and I hope that you will rejoice alongside me as God reveals what comes next.

To briefly share my upcoming plans, I will be taking a sabbatical for the first half of 2024, spending that time in Europe. While there, my hope is that with God's help I will achieve three primary goals: first, that God will help me to discern the path for my future, especially my career choices; second, that I will be able to use this time for spiritual renewal and a deepening relationship with God; and third, that I will research and begin the process of writing a book of church history. After my sabbatical, my life is a blank slate – I do not know where I will be or what I will do, but I trust that God will reveal those answers in time.

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But enough about me. It would not be an honest goodbye if I did not exercise the prophetic voice one final time to issue a challenge to you all. It is no secret that our church is in a difficult place – our membership is decreasing, and our finances to go along with it. Many are wondering how long our church will be around. As one who loves this fellowship, let me urge you all to a reconsideration of your call.

What is the church? Not a building, not a worship service, but God's people gathered together in community. We are part of this specific congregation for many reasons, but we are part of the Church for one reason: because we believe that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh, who lived, taught, died and rose again in order that we might have true life and share that with the world. Beloved, it isn't enough for us to have the best worship music in town, the nicest buildings, the most engaging sermons, the best-run programs. If we have all that, but have not love, we have nothing. It is all clanging cymbals and crashing drums.

My challenge to you is to recommit yourselves as a community to practicing the amazing, unbelievable, radical love of Jesus. Start with your fellow members of PBPC: who needs to be surrounded with love and grace? How can you serve your sister or brother in Christ who sits a few pews away from you each week? If we took that to heart, if we really embraced loving our fellow PBPC members with the kind of love that Jesus showed, what an incredible community we would be! And then, if we took that kind of love to the streets, to the people who walk by our church every day, to the people we meet at the grocery store or restaurant or the bank, well, who knows what could happen?

It's not an easy thing I am challenging you to do. But there are no quick fixes or easy answers. There is no magic program or worship song or sermon series that can miraculously bring a host of young families to PBPC. But perhaps, if we recommit to putting all our energy into living like Jesus, following his example of love and grace, PBPC might yet become the kind of community that anyone and everyone would want to be a part of.

With grace and truth, in the love of Jesus Christ, your brother,

Grant

FROM THE PASTOR

"As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

~The Apostle Paul, 2 Timothy 4:6-8

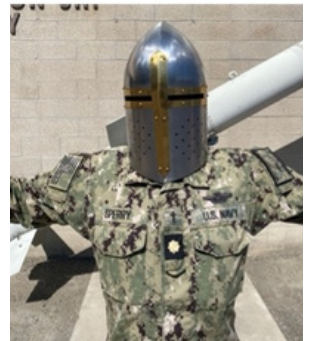
Dear PBPC Family and Friends~

Last week, I completed my 9-month active-duty Navy assignment, and I'm thrilled to once again have greater capacity to be in the church office during the week, providing leadership for the staff, and connecting with our community. The Navy experience has been a remarkable enrichment to both my life and career, and I can't thank you enough for your support and flexibility. I also can't say enough about our church staff and how well they did over the nine months to maintain a high bar of excellence in our mission and ministries. What a blessing to work with such a great team!

As an end-of-tour gift, my fellow Instructors in the Advanced Warrior Toughness Training gave me a personalized battle helmet, complete with a golden cross on the face. Lord willing, I never have to actually fight in it, because I would be dead in a matter of seconds. But, it looks awesome! And, it reminds me of the helmet of salvation and the crown of righteousness described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:17 and 2 Timothy 4:8.



When Paul wrote about the crown of righteousness, he was nearing the end of his life. He had fought the good fight and finished the race. The crown awaited, as a symbolic reward for the faith Paul had kept until the end of his "tour of duty." What a glorious hope, and what a gift to have such confidence in our salvation when our journeys are complete. Thanks be to God who has given us His grace in Christ!



This is a season of earthly transitions for us. We've recently said farewell to beloved members of our congregation, like the Hollenbecks, the Imus', and Frank Hocza, who have all moved away. Grant completes his 9+ years of ministry with PBPC on October 1, when we'll celebrate his great work and our many years of partnership in the gospel. Haley and Tony have joined us and started their great work as staff members, and we are already greatly blessed by their leadership and presence. As the saying goes, the only constant is change... but I venture to say that God's blessings for PBPC are pretty constant, too.

Friends, continue to fight the good fight! Long for the glorious appearing of our Lord. Though seasons change and goodbyes come, we take hold of the promise that we will be together again for eternity, celebrating God's salvation, and enjoying each other's crowns!

Blessings to you for the new month

~ Pastor Bill

Pastor Bill Sperry

UPCOMING SERMON AND SERVICE SCHEDULE

The Ten: A Practical Look at the Ten Commandments

October 1:	"Imitating Christ" – Grant preaching Lord's Supper Sunday; Grant's ministry celebration	Philippians 2:5-13
October 8:	"Steal Nothing"	Deut. 5:19
October 15:	"Be Truthful About Neighbors"	Deut. 5:20
October 22:	"Avoid Coveting"	Deut. 5:21

Reformation Sermon Series: The Advent Conspiracy



October 29:	"Worship Fully" Reformation Sunday; Small Group Session #1	Luke 2:8-20
November 5:	"Spend Less" Lord's Supper Sunday; Small Group Session #2	Proverbs 11:28-29; Matthew 6:19-21
November 12:	"Give More" Small Group Session #3	John 1:1-14; Matthew 1:18-23; Isaiah 7:14
November 19:	"Love All" Small Group Session #4	John 3:16-21; Matt. 25:34-40

DIRECTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

Hello everyone!

September has been a month full of all kinds of emotion: Youth Group has launched with incredible success, Haley has been welcomed into our staff team, and we've been preparing our hearts to wish Grant farewell as he prepares for a sabbatical in Europe. That's not all though: I got to link up with Stacey and start participating in our Friday morning preschool Chapel! For those unfamiliar: Every Friday Stacey and I bring the preschool students into the Sanctuary to hear from God's word, sing songs, and play silly games. It's a whole lot of fun!

Like many ministries though, I wonder just how much of what we teach they actually remember. I know they love singing, dancing, and playing but do our lessons about God's love and who he is get through at all? Believe it or not, yes! One unique blessing I get to experience is being both a preschool parent and a preschool chapel teacher. I was equal parts proud, impressed, and excited when my son Jonah would come home and remind me of the stories I told him earlier that day. Not just that, but even his mom and grandma have found him eagerly sharing about "Gods big book, the bible" and stories about "Noah's boat full of animals"!

Jonah's excitement around our Chapel program isn't unique to him either. So many students eagerly greet me when I drop Jonah off as "Mr. Tony", and parents meeting me for the first time remark "So you're the Mr. Tony from the Chapel they keep talking about!" Okay okay, what's the point I am trying to share here? These small opportunities to form positive church relationships work. I see these students for just 10-15 minutes once a week, but they are connecting with Stacey, myself, and God's word so well that they're going home to tell their parents about it!

Let this be a reminder and encouragement to all of you to find those small, consistent opportunities to connect with the communities we're in. Maybe it's not telling silly stories to preschoolers, but maybe it's making a really good impression with a cashier, or clerk! One such opportunity is coming really soon: On October 30, we're hosting our third annual Trunk or Treat for the PB community! While more details are coming, would you faithfully consider volunteering in some capacity? The Friday Chapel proves that the contagious love of Christ on display is still something these kids go home talking about... let's show our entire community that as a church!

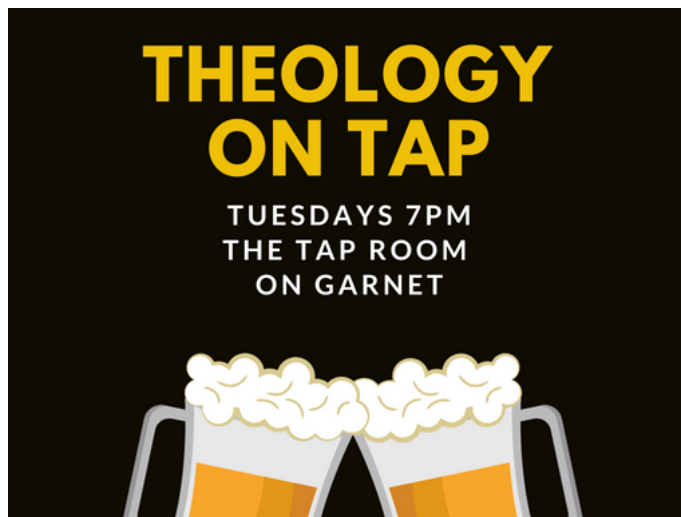
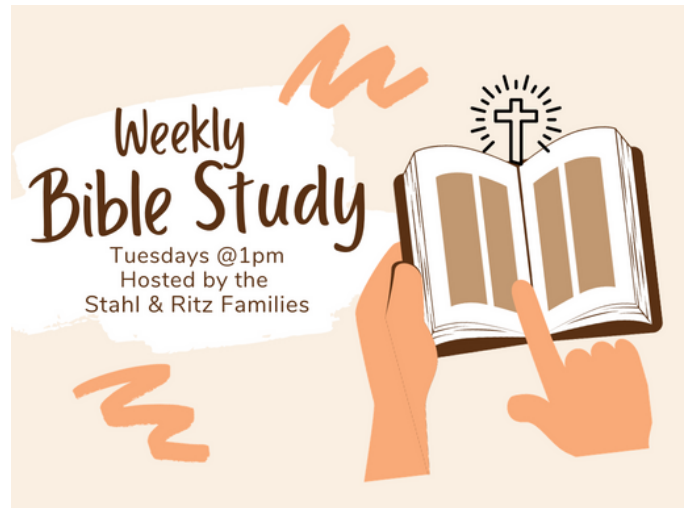
With love and prayer,
Tony Daskalakis
Director of Discipleship Ministries



Tony Daskalakis

LIFE GROUPS

WEEKLY



MONTHLY



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

September was chock full of wonderful opportunities to grow relationships with the Preschool families and staff!

We began weekly Chapels again, this time with Mr. Tony joining me. I love sharing Bible stories in creative ways with the children and letting them know that the "Big God Story" is all about how much God loves them. I'm showing Tony the ropes and he has caught on quick and gets as many hugs as I do from those precious Preschoolers.

One of the wonderful by-products of Chapel time has been the instant connecting point with some of the Preschool parents as we've introduced ourselves to them during the two Coffee Carts we hosted this month. It has felt very natural and easy to strike up a conversation as they stop to get a donut and coffee after they've dropped off their child.

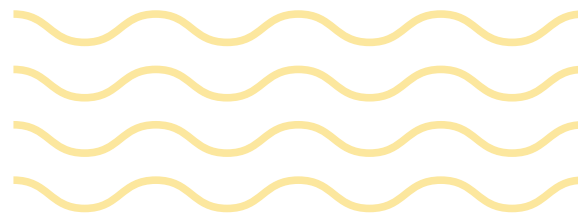
These connections led to a wonderful turn out to our first Preschool family dinner. About half of the families attended and it was exactly what we had hoped it would be - an opportunity for the parents to connect with each other in an environment designed just for them. Food provided, games for kids - and parents ;) - provided and no set agenda. We will definitely host another one.

In October, Chapels and Coffee Carts will continue and we will have another unique opportunity to connect with Preschool families, as well as other families in our community, at the Preschool Harvest Festival on October 5 and the Trunk or Treat on October 30.



TRUNK OR TREAT

Our third annual Trunk or Treat will be held on Monday, October 30, and it is a fun and easy way to connect with our community. You can help by donating candy (individually wrapped) but the most fun is had by bringing your car and hosting a trunk. Have fun decorating, bring a chair and sit back and take in and spread the joy! For more details, contact Stacey Kay or Tony Daskalakis.



October Birthdays

1st - Larry Cox
3rd - Carole Wood
4th - Helen Stahl
5th - Donna Pierce
10th - Polly Imus, Jan Myers
12th - Bill Adam, Frank Hocza
24th - Frank Aitcheson
25th - Grant Kay, Jim Stahl

PRESCHOOL NEWS

September was a month full of making new friends, water play days and learning about God in class and in the church at chapel time with Ms. Stacey and Mr. Tony.



The children love the new, large sandbox and the teachers have been busy providing provocations for the children in their care (see below).



The church sponsored a wonderful preschool dinner for all the families on Sept. 27. It was well attended and a tremendous success. Thank you to Ms. Stacey, Mr. Tony and Steve and Leslie Ritz! We are looking forward to our annual Harvest Festival next week on Oct. 5.

Amy Jones

OUTREACH & MISSIONS

Welcome and a big thank you to all of you who helped by providing supplies for our Life Packs. It may seem like a small thing, but know it can make a huge difference in someone's life, and that's what we are called to do. So, now we have 100+ Life Packs, grab one or two in the Narthex as you leave and hand them out to someone in need. For our next batch of life packs we need the following: Individual Tissue packs, small tubes of tooth paste, Band-Aids, Floss, ChapStick, fruit snack, Thermal Emergency blankets. We have plenty of everything else.

Upcoming Events:

Blessing of the Animals – Sunday October 8, 6:30pm on the patio

We are planning another Blessing of Animal Service on Sunday, October 8.

It will be held in conjunction with our 6:30pm evening service. Many of us have pets who are a major part of our family, this is a service aimed at just these types of families, so come and join us, and bring a friend or neighbor.

Harvest Festival – Thursday October 5, 4:00 – 6:00pm

This is a preschool event and we help by manning games and bounce houses. We will have two bounce houses this time, as well as a small petting corral, and several easy games. Feel like helping out, just show up Thursday Oct 5, 3:30pm and we will have plenty of places you can lend your support.

Trunk or Treat – Monday October 30 in our parking lot

We will be helping host PBPC's annual Trunk or Treat event. We will of course need candy for handing out, as well we need you to bring your car, truck, or van, and decorate it with Halloween theme or Fall theme and join the fun as we distribute candy to all the little Trick or Treater's that come to visit .

San Diego Rescue Mission – helping Friday, October 20, 9:00 – 11:00am

This is a monthly event where we go to SDRM and provide any help we can for two hours on the third Friday of each month. Pastor Bill gets Navy volunteers (20-25) and we add to that group. The things we do are whatever is needed. I sorted backpacks in the past. They needed some of us to sort through old files and shred those more then seven years old. There are many ways we can meet their needs with our abilities. I would be glad to car pool anyone who wants to help. We meet at SDRM at 8:45, corner of 2nd and Elm downtown.



Looking Ahead:

Hospitality for Heroes Date Night – Saturday November 11, 5:00-8:00pm

We are planning on hosting another "Hospitality for Heroes" date night event in November, a way to support military and first responder families in our community, so save the date. We will need volunteers to help watch kids, help play games, make and eat dinner, supervise while we watch a movie. Steve will be looking to sign up volunteers sometime early November.

God's calling you to help?

Recently, our Outreach & Missions Team has lost two longtime members, Ty Smith, who has served our O&M team for many, many years, and Grant Kay, who is leaving us to pursue his next adventure in life. That being said, the team now consists of Pastor Bill, Luke Cowell, and myself. So we could sure use some help on the committee. If you ever felt God calling you to get involved in planning, this is the Holy Spirit using this newsletter item to say, yep, this is the job I planned on you getting involved in, so come join us. We meet via Zoom once a month (2nd Monday of each month at 5:30pm). And God doesn't have age limits for sharing in His ministries, teenager or elder, God can be touching your heart to get involved, so listen closely, and join in the fun.