

Pathways

FALL 2020

COMMUNITIES AND CLASSES FOR ADULTS



Inward and Outward Together Join Us On the Journey

The landscape of our life has changed. Words long forgotten—*pandemic*—or ignored — *racial injustice*—or new—*Zoom*—now frame our collective experience. God, however, still lovingly holds and directs our journey. Beauty and purpose emerge even in the wilderness.

As people on a journey following Jesus inward and outward together, we are becoming people of compassion and mercy through a deepening intimacy with Jesus. Our journey inward beckons us to the journey outward, to serve others tangibly and radically, as agents of renewal participating in God's mission in the world—an enduring mission of hope and abundant life.

Whether you are beginning the journey with God, or seeking new vistas to enliven the well-worn paths of your travels, there is a next step for you along the pathway.

For more information about our communities and classes for adults, visit www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries or contact Michelle Vecchio-Lyzenga, Minister for Christian Formation, at michellev@fpcberkeley.org, or Janet Sanders, Director for Christian Formation at janets@fpcberkeley.org

Navigating the Journey

SUNDAYS, SEPTEMBER 13–OCTOBER 25

11:15 AM–12:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and to register by September 12:

www.fpcberkeley.org/starting_point

Every journey has a starting point.

Whether you're just getting to know First Pres, are interested in taking the next step to become more engaged here, or are ready to explore making this your home church through membership, Starting Point is for you.

Throughout this virtual seven-week conversational group gathering, you'll experience community, discover what we believe and who we are as a church, and explore the many life-giving ways you can be part of our church family. Wherever you happen to find yourself, join us in navigating your best next step on the journey.

RADICAL GRACE

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN TROUBLED TIMES

WEDNESDAYS, SEPTEMBER 23, 30

7-8 PM

Virtual via Zoom

Instructor: Kate Rankin, PhD

For more information and to register by Monday, September 21:

www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

Twists and turns, bumps and potholes are to be expected along life's journey. Our current experience of life—the pandemic, racial injustice, and overwhelming forces of nature—can distress, disrupt, and disorient us. In these troubled times, it is good to be reminded that God is at work, drawing us closer and shaping us as image bearers of Jesus. God invites us to let go of patterns of thoughts and behaviors, areas that hold us back, and to make a move of trust towards God...the One who provides true security and sanctuary.

All are invited to join this timely two-part series for a deeper understanding of our spiritual formation in troubled times and how we can extend radical grace and empathy toward self and others along the way.



**STARTING
POINT**

Journeying Together

The beloved community, now more than ever, connects and holds us in a time of disconnection. We've boldly embraced the technology that brings and keeps us together. Through the gift and grace of Christian community, in its various forms—and platforms—we are invited to be and become our authentic selves. Here we receive and give loving care, encouragement, and support for life's journey. In living among one another, even as we do so virtually, we more clearly see what God is calling us to be and do—individually and as a community—in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and beyond.



SEPTEMBER 27-NOVEMBER 14

VARIOUS DAYS, TIMES

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and to register from September 13-26:

www.fpcberkeley.org/community-groups

Community Groups (CGs) are at the heart of our life together. Fall CGs, each typically six to twelve adults, offer the opportunity for deeper connections. Within these smaller communities we are learning and becoming companions on life's journey as we make space to share our stories and care for one another.



In our conversations, guided by Questions for Reflection, we continue to explore God's story presented in the Sunday message series beginning with *Inward, Outward | The Life of the Church, a Series in Ephesians* (September-October).

These intentional First Pres Communities provide sacred space for mutual encouragement and care on the journey of life in Christian family.



BUILDING FAMILIES OF FAITH

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

DATES & TIMES TO BE ANNOUNCED

Virtual via Zoom

For more information: www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

The family is the primary place we live out our lives as followers of Jesus. Homes and families are a crucial incubator of love for God. Now even the best of our intentions to nurture the faith of our children, as well as our own, are stressed and stretched. The familiar boundaries between workplace and home, school and playtime, parent and provider, even weekday and weekend, are no longer able to give us margin. More than ever we need each other for support, encouragement, and hope!

Our community of parents of young children (birth-5th grade) gathers to explore, learn, and encourage one another on our shared journey, holding firm to our commitment to building families of faith.

MOMS TOGETHER

FRIDAYS SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 20,

10-11 AM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/womenandmen

Moms Together is a caring and supportive community of mothers with children of all ages. Hosted by First Pres moms, we gather to share life's joys and challenges in the context of faith in Jesus Christ.

Exploring Scripture in Community

Engaging with Scripture, personally and in community, is essential to the inward deepening of our relationship with God and our outward response of extending God's love and grace to others. Come journey with us and hear God speaking through the ancient texts of the Old Testament into our current context and culture—inviting us to find our place in God's mission of making all things new.

WHERE IS WISDOM FOUND? LESSONS FROM PROVERBS AND ECCLESIASTES

THURSDAYS, OCTOBER 8–NOVEMBER 12

7–8:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Carol Miles

For more information and to register by October 1:

www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

Proverbs call to us from billboards, t-shirts and coffee mugs—*Keep calm and carry on, Trust, but verify, Be the change you wish to see in the world.* Sometimes they express traditional cultural values and societal norms—*Practice makes perfect or Everything in moderation*—and sometimes they challenge the status quo—*If at first you don't succeed, time to redefine success.* The Bible is full of proverbs that reflect the values of the Kingdom of God. How do they hold up in the light of contemporary wisdom?

Rev. Dr. Carol Antablin Miles leads us on a journey as we explore the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, keeping an eye out, in particular, for wisdom on relationships, success, and economic inequality.



Rev. Dr. Carol Antablin Miles is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and Princeton Theological Seminary where she earned both the M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees. Her ministry of theological education led her to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Austin, TX, Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, MN, and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley where she taught preaching and practical theology. She is currently the designated pastor at Chinese Presbyterian Church in Oakland and is a long-time friend of First Pres.

Ongoing Communities Exploring Scripture

In community we can uncover new insights as we explore Scripture and share the excitement of discovering God at work in our lives. Now more than ever, sharing the joys of life and bearing one another's burdens, struggles, and sorrows is the beauty and blessings of community. If you are new to First Pres or looking to connect and engage with others and God's Word, join us any time. You will find us on Zoom!

SUNDAY ● WEEKDAY ○



● PRACTICES TO LIVE BY ALTERNATIVE LITURGIES FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

SUNDAYS, SEPTEMBER 13–MAY 23

11:15 AM–12:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/ec

Christ commissioned his disciples to be his witnesses—at home, in our local communities, to the ends of the earth. But what does witness look like in our current context burdened by pandemic, polarization, and the bitter fruit of systemic racial injustice? The arc of Scripture suggests that perhaps the Church's most powerful means of witness is its life together—a faith community grounded in the ways of God and growing together through the cultivation of intentional practices. These alternative practices—liturgies of our faith community—shape our hearts, fashion new ways of thinking and new patterns for behavior, and foster such a life and witness to a watching and wondering world.

This year, ECs will dwell with and embody several key counter-formatational practices of the people of God found in Scripture—vocation, hospitality, sabbath, justice, and testimony. May these alternative liturgies shape us more in the Way of Jesus and help us more fully witness to Christ's radically subversive Kingdom.

● OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY GROUP

SUNDAYS

11:15 AM-12:30 PM (immediately following worship service)

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

Following the Sunday worship service, join the Open Door Community Group for a time of connection, prayer, and conversation using the weekly Questions for Reflection based on the Sunday message. Drop-ins are always welcome.

Connect(her)

● THE DREAM OF YOU...

there's a God who sees you, loves you, knows you,
and you're already enough for him.

SUNDAYS SEPTEMBER 13-MAY 23

11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/womenandmen

Connect(her) is a gathering space for women of all ages and circumstances to deepen our relationship with Christ and one another through small group conversation and prayer. We pick-up our journey together by asking the question "Who am I?". Shaped by our roles and responsibilities, family of origin, social/cultural backgrounds and circumstances, we often stop listening to the One who tells us who we truly are.

Our guide is the 6-week video series "The Dream of You" featuring pastor, author, and speaker Jo Saxon. Reflecting on stories of God's people in Scripture and women of our own time, we will take a fresh look at our own story. Invited to turn to the One who knows us intimately and loves us deeply, we will discover how to live more fully into our true child-of-God self.

● SUNDAY MORNING STUDY

SUNDAYS

11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

We explore one book of the Bible at a time, alternating Old and New Testaments, using questions that help us to more fully understand what God is saying to us and where God beckons us outward.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP (BSF)

● BEGINNINGS | A STUDY OF GENESIS

THURSDAYS, SEPTEMBER 17 - MAY 13

6:55-8:30 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and to register: www.fpcberkeley.org/womenandmen

Men of all ages are invited to be a part of this community that pursues God –seeking God's wisdom for today's challenges through the story of God's people. In Genesis, we discover God as Creator and ourselves as His image bearers. God's gracious promise and plan to redeem and restore fallen creation through Jesus Christ gives hope and purpose.

BFS is a global, interdenominational Bible study dedicated to nurturing passionate commitment to Christ, God's Word and the Church and service in the community.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

● RACE TO GLORY | THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

FRIDAYS, SEPTEMBER 11-MAY 21

9:30-11 AM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information about the study guide and Zoom access:
www.fpcberkeley.org/womenandmen

All are welcome to join our diverse community dedicated to sharing our lives and studying God's Word. This season we explore the Letter to the Hebrews, seeking wisdom to confront life's frustrations and disappointments with courage and confidence. Perhaps we find ourselves asking, as the original readers of Hebrews might have, "What's the use?" We work and work to grow spiritually and seem to get nowhere. Maybe our relationship with God has grown distant or stale. The author of this letter cheers for them—and us—to stay on track and never quit!

As we journey together, we experience God's Word leading and encouraging us to "run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

Engaging Spiritual Practices

FIRST PRES GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

in partnership with New College Berkeley

SEPTEMBER 2020–MAY 2021, 2-HOUR MONTHLY SESSIONS

DAY & TIME TO BE DETERMINED BY GROUP

Virtual via Zoom

Fee: \$540 (for 9 sessions) which includes a \$60 non-refundable deposit due at registration

Partial scholarships are available

For more information and to register by September 15:

www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

In our faith journey, like all journeys, we encounter bumps and ruts, roundabouts and dead ends. God seems distant or not to be found. Yet God is always near. Group spiritual direction, a communal practice of spoken and silent prayer, helps us tend to our relationship with God through spiritual friendships, contemplative listening, and prayer.

FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS: A MORNING RETREAT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

9:30–11:30 AM

Virtual via Zoom

Instructor: Susan Phillips, PhD

For more information and to register by October 1:

www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

Join us for a morning spent noticing God in our lives. In this time of pandemic and change in our community, our senses may be overwhelmed, limiting our awareness of how God has been present to us throughout the day. Scripture invites us to “let the Word of Christ dwell in [us] richly” (Col. 3:16). How do we read that Word with us and in us, especially now? For centuries Christians have done so through a spiritual practice called the Prayer of Examen. We’ll explore and practice this simple prayer in community, trusting that we will, indeed, notice God who accepts us, loves us, and is with us.



A CONTEMPLATIVE ADVENT RETREAT

Co-sponsored by New College Berkeley and First Pres

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

9:30–11:30 AM

Virtual via Zoom

Instructor: Susan Phillips, PhD

Fee: \$25

For more information and to register by

December 1: www.newcollegeberkeley.org

Christians are called people of the Way (Acts 9:2). We follow the Way, live with the Way, and prepare the Way. Advent is an opportunity to reflect on this adventure into which God invites us. Carve out time in the press toward Christmas to prepare your hearts for walking the Way in the year ahead. Join us for a morning of prayer, reflection, and readying ourselves to continue our great pilgrimage with Christ.



Responding to God's Call

God is always calling, inviting us to the inward journey of deepening intimacy with Jesus and discovering our real selves, and beckoning us to the outward journey—to work with God and others to champion God’s mission of creation, redemption, and restoration.

FIRST PRES PRAYER TEAMS

MONDAYS, 10–11 AM

WEDNESDAYS, 10:30–11:30 AM

THURSDAYS, 4–5 PM

Virtual via Zoom

For more information and Zoom access: www.fpcberkeley.org/adultministries

Serving others through intercessory prayer is a grace God extends to each of us—a personalized invitation to be intimately involved in laboring for the well-being of others. Three prayer teams bring the needs and concerns of our community, our church, our nation, and the world before the Lord each week. Join us regularly or drop-in when you can.

PARTNER IN GOD'S MISSION SERVE WITH OUR LOCAL MISSION PARTNERS

One of our primary ways of living missionally is to serve alongside our First Pres local mission partners who extend God’s grace and mercy to those in need in our East Bay communities. Our local partners have numerous ways for our First Pres community to safely serve, support, and encourage others during this time of particularly great need.

Learn how you can respond to God’s call:

www.fpcberkeley.org/mission-outreach, or contact Beth Thomsen at bethth@fpcberkeley.org, or Becky McKeen at beckym@fpcberkeley.org



2407 Dana Street | Berkeley, CA 94704
fpcberkeley.org | 510 848 6242

**For more information about our communities and classes
for adults, visit fpcberkeley.org/adultministries**