



March 21, 2025



In November, eleven members of our congregation began a discipleship program called the School of Kingdom Living. The program consists of readings, weekly small group discussions, monthly spiritual practices and four week long residencies.

In preparation for the first residency, which took place the last week in February, we read through *Hearing God* by Dallas Willard, *When the Soul Listens* by Jan Johnson and *Practicing the Presence* by Frank Laubach & Brother Lawrence. Each week we met with our small group to discuss these readings. The spiritual practices that we have been learning are: living an unhurried life, hearing God's voice, practicing lectio divina, walking daily with Jesus and journaling. The residencies consist of prayer, teaching, small group time, reflection and worship. Our days began at 7 or 7:30 with morning prayer. After breakfast we participated in classes of interactive learning. After breaking for lunch we returned to the classroom until 3:00 pm. In the afternoon we had some time for reflection, spiritual direction and rest. After dinner we gathered each night for a time of worship and prayer. Here are some reflections and insights from our week at the School of Kingdom Living.

Greg - Knowing Jesus and recognizing he is always with me is the goal of my life. At our residency I was able to explore these ideas with 45 others who are seeking to do the same thing. It was powerful to learn, practice and reflect with these friends as we all seek to know the fullness of God every day of our lives.

Cathy - The SKL residency was a beautiful place of Christian community, learning and experiencing God's presence. Our classroom times were full and the community was vibrant and exciting and I relished the time we were sent away to be with God. It is a very sacred space to be in, even given the destruction of the fire.

Betsy - My big take away from residency was that God truly delights in me. I saw Jesus speak through others and to me in ways I wasn't expecting. I have tried to stay still in my prayers, listening. I have also asked God to help bring my thoughts to him during the week. Like Frank Laubach's challenge, one second every minute, I have brought my thoughts more on Him throughout my day, asking more "mundane" questions and finding his presence with me.

Hilary - Jesus is the smartest person to ever live and he'd be a fabulous nurse practitioner, parent, spouse, friend, etc. His goal is to partner with us in every role we fill, not to make us puppets, but co-laborers. He's available in real time for conversation and idea sharing. I long for a constant communication with Him.

Andrew - One of the things that has stuck with me the most from our time in California is the idea for radiating Christ. Initially I thought about the radiator heaters in old apartment buildings and how heat spreads through a space. Later in the week I saw a flower whose petals were radiating outward from a center. Both seem accurate. This idea was paired with 2 Corinthians 2:15 where Paul calls us to be "the pleasing aroma of Christ" When talking about this with others I have wondered when we are the pleasing aroma and when we just stink.

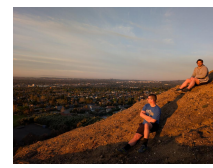
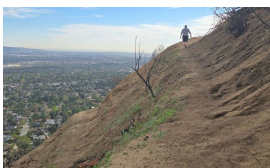
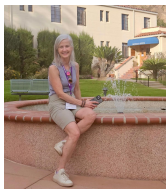
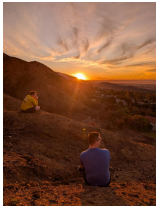
Julie - My biggest takeaways are that I am hearing God more clearly the more I slow down to listen to Him. He has given me new life verses and a desire to be in the word. I know that I need His grace to be the light of Christ to others everyday.

Kay - The week was wonderful and exhausting and I'm still unpacking all that ideas and concepts we encountered, and more importantly trying to internalize them. In a nutshell... God is crazy about me (and about you!) and desires more than anything to have a conversational relationship with each and every one of us.

Beth - "My prayer for you is that you would have a rich life of joy and power. " This is the prayer that Dallas Willard has for the participants in the SKL program. Throughout the week I thought about what that kind of life looks like. The joy of walking daily with Jesus and seeing life through His perspective. The confidence to face all types of situations or difficulties with Jesus support. Having the faith "of Jesus" as opposed to a faith "like Jesus". I'm excited to grow into that type of life.

Mary - So many things come to mind as I reflect on our residency. Quotes like: "Transformation always begins in the form of disruption and interruption." "When we pray, we enter the **REAL world.**" As well as "**Trust ME,** is the subtitle of the Bible." And there are so many more. Our 13 and 14 hour days were filled with participating in morning and evening Liturgy, morning and afternoon sessions where speakers shared their deep knowledge and stories all while engaging with all of the participants. We engaged in multiple forms of Spiritual practices each day. It was wonderful to get to meet and talk to all the other participants from many states, Canada, Australia, as well as the leadership team, individual Spiritual Direction time was a meaningful time for me. Sharing our thoughts in the scheduled times of planned discussions with my small group, that have been meeting weekly on Zoom since November, brought us closer with a deeper understanding and knowledge of each of us. As I moved through the week, the time spent in prayer brought clarity and understanding to those things that had been on my heart for the previous weeks and months. Jesus brought them all together for me during that week and a new Rule of Life is taking shape in me. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be part of SKL and am excited for the coming months and what God will bring to all of us at First Cov. Ask me about my paint chip.

We continue to be grateful for your support and encouragement as we carry on with this program and trust that God is using this time, teaching and practices to work a change in us for His glory.





It's time to place your Easter flower order. You can order Easter flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one. Envelopes are available at church. The cost is \$12.00 apiece. Order and payment due by Sunday, April 6th.



We need your help filling Easter Eggs for this year's egg hunt. Please pick up a baggie of eggs on Sunday, March 30th or Sunday, April 6th; fill the eggs with wrapped candy pieces and return to the church by April 13th. Thank you for helping to make this year's Easter Egg Hunt a success!



Lent at FCC:
We have several opportunities and services during the Lenten season:

- Formation - Sunday mornings at 11:00 AM
- Taize Service at 7:00 PM
- Palm Sunday Service - Sunday, April 13th at 9:30 AM
- Maundy Thursday Service - Thursday, April 17th at 6:30 PM
- Good Friday Service - Friday, April 18th at noon
- Holy Saturday Retreat - Saturday, April 19th at 5:00 PM
- Easter Vigil - Saturday, April 19th at 8:00 PM
- Easter Celebration - Sunday, April 20th at 9:30 AM



Mar 23rd - New Member Sunday
Mar 29th - Noel Newberg's Bridal Shower
Mar 31st - Taize Service
Apr 6th - Easter Flower Orders Due
Apr 6th - All Church Bowling @ Bowlatorium, 2791 S 25th St
Apr 11th - FCC Adult Fellowship Fish Fry @ the Hemphill's
Apr 12th - Second Saturday Serve
Apr 13th - Parents Plus



Mark 10:46-52

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