

This Week's Prayer Focus: Liberal**Week of: April 1, 2018****Location:** First Presbyterian Church, Liberal**Mission Focus:**

First Presbyterian Church of Liberal was the first church in the community, founded in July of 1888, only 3 months after the town of Liberal was established. The congregation shared its building with other congregations as they were formed and organized. This church has continually reached out to the Liberal community for 130 years! In summer of 2013, when the congregation became aware of the need for more preschool/daycare facilities, the congregation started a community preschool/daycare on the church campus to help meet the huge demand for quality preschool/daycare for the children. Other churches in the community, as well as individuals, made donations of funds, materials, and labor to contribute to this ambitious project. The pastor and members continue to focus on reaching out to the large Latino community (about 75% of the population), and people from all other cultures in the town as Liberal has a significant number of refugees from Somalia and other African countries, by trying to develop ministries which will be appropriate for and welcome people from the various cultures. The church shared its facility with a Latino Church, Puerto Del Cielo, for worship on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, and now this congregation meets in its own building. The church welcomes the county 4-H Club to meet at the church for club meetings and to work on their projects every month, and the Headstart preschool staff to have meetings/activities on the campus.

Rev. Kitty Lum, with God's grace has served 3 years at the church and survived the harsher climate, having moved from California! After much hard work and with God's grace and for grants from the Presbyterian Women Thank Offering, PSK and Rundell Foundation, the preschool/daycare is moving in positive directions. It continues to apply for grants and would appreciate your prayers for a newer building, as the church building is getting expensive to maintain. Pastor Kitty is working hard with the session and leaders to find appropriate ways to reach out to persons from the diversity of cultures in the community, and provide ministries which will allow members to interact with community groups and vice-versa. These last few years many new and exciting ministries and activities have started at the church! Pastor Kitty and the session introduced the community groups, Friends of the Library, Mosaic

(A religious group which serves people with intellectual/developmental disabilities), LARC (Liberal Area Rape and Domestic Violence Center) and IRC (International Refugees Committee) to the congregation, through Moments for Mission. The church enjoyed partnering with these community groups, to serve the people in a diversity of settings in the community! Pastor Kitty serves as Treasurer for Friends of the Library, a group whose mission is to help all children have access to books and be encouraged to read and succeed academically. Pastor Kitty has been involved with the Liberal Ministerial Alliance, Kiwanis, Liberal Coalition of Families and the Welcoming Initiative Council and has served on the PSK Committee on Representation with Elder, Mary Dusenbury. The Welcoming Initiative Council's mission is to help people from diverse cultures live together, peacefully, by providing ways for education, conversation and friendship. The church has re-started its community cooking class, which is open to anyone in the community and has offered a place for learning new recipes, good food and warm fellowship and laughter! With the vision and determination of the church's women and God's grace, Pastor Kitty has been able to re-start the Presbyterian Women Group, which had lapsed for decades, and now the group is a group for both women and men to come study the bible in more depth, have dynamic discussions, and a fun time of fellowship and snacks! We now call it the Cafe Bible Study and we meet in a restaurant, so people, who don't belong to the church can join us and we have 2 participants, who are not members. With the support of the congregation, Pastor Kitty was able to start a bell choir, for the first time in 127 years, at the church! The church is so thankful to God, to be a part of

an international movement to revive this form of art/music. Pastor Kitty started a Prayer Group, which meets weekly to share a devotional and concerns/ joys and pray; every other week the group visits home-bound members. The church's Deacon's Fund is a very important ministry in the community, which provides utility and other forms of financial assistance to anyone in need within the community. One-half of the church's loose offering received goes to support the Deacon's Fund, and this year the fund helped numerous people in the community. The church developed a program in 2016, which allows people in need to do service for the church in exchange for financial help. Pastor Kitty is encouraging the members to stand firm in their faith and 'keep on keeping on' though the church has experienced financial challenges and they will appreciate everyone keeping them in prayer. The congregation is a group of very caring, devoted and faithful people and they, along with their pastor, hope and pray that this church will find 'a way out of no way', as Calvin said, continuing its rich history of dedicated ministry and being 'a light across the prairie', forever!

Prayer Request: Please pray for growth in openness and appreciation of people from diverse cultures and all backgrounds, in the church and town and more outreach to families from all groups in the community, as the church focuses on living out Jesus' calling to us in Matthew 25:31-46, which is to offer 'a cup of free water', like S.S. Rogers, the founder of Liberal, to anyone in need, both spiritually and physically.

Mission Focus:

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