



Good News for the Pews

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A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 36

Summer-time musings.

In mid-July I was at Zephyr Point Conference Center as part of the teaching faculty with the Art of Transitional Ministry program. This was the first time that I was part of the teaching team and there was an awful lot to prepare. It was also about ten years ago when I first came up to Zephyr and was a participant in the very same program. At that time it was referred to as the Interim Training program, but the content was essentially the same. Transitional Ministries include both “interims” but also “designated” pastorates. So although we are in process to change my role with PCC, the work will still be transitional ministry.

While I certainly spent a lot of time on the various subjects that encompass the subjects I had come to teach, I was also processing some thoughts and reflections from my internal world. I had arrived on Friday afternoon and spent time Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday morning going over the curriculum and making last minute adjustments with the other faculty members. Sunday afternoon the participants began to arrive and that evening about 7 pm we had an opening worship service overlooking the lake. To be honest campsites don't usually do that much for me. When I was little we lived in a small cabin in the Mayacamas Mountains between Santa Rosa and Calistoga, so a campsite and retreat center still seem pretty developed and artificial to me. But only a robot could be on the shore of Lake Tahoe and not be moved by the beauty of Creation. It was during the hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* that I had a profound moment of connection with the Triune God and was really struck with how much has happened to me between the ten years since I took that training and now when I was there to help teach the next generation.

I won't bore you with the details of what I thought about but I will give some highlights. As you all know from my sermons, my call to follow God has been an adventure from the first moments up until now. I never prioritized my comfort, my security, or even my desire for connection. The Scriptural description of my call is expressed in Isaiah 6:1-8. Having never felt that I was worthy of service to God's church, never-the-less, the presence of God in my life has been so compelling that I have undertaken to fulfill God's call, knowing both that I am totally inadequate (a man of unclean lips) and also that with God who strengthens me, all things are possible (here am I; send me!).

It seems to me that anyone who has walked the path of Christian discipleship must live in that eternal tension of feeling unprepared for the work we are called to and yet also feeling the exuberance of God filling our sails with energy, excitement and determination. Nowhere is there a promise that we will know what to do, that we will have the perfect plan, or that we have a prophecy of the future. All that is assured is that our world and the people in it are in need, and we are called to give what we have. Ministry is like the miracle of the loaves and fishes: you never

have enough in the beginning: never enough time, never enough resources, never enough solutions, and yet in the moment, when we are willing, when we simply give what we have with trust in God, there will be more than enough with some left over. So as we take our rests and our vacations this summer, I hope that each and everyone gets recharged. I hope that everyone spends some time in prayer and in contemplation, asking God for vision, for energy, and resilience. Probably none of us think we are ready, and yet all of us are called. Believe it or not, there is plenty to do and some of it is perfectly tailored to your gifts and skills. Do not think for a moment that you have nothing to contribute. Manifold within you are the gifts of God. You are able to help multitudes!

As the summer draws to a close and we all reconnect, I am looking forward to ministering with each of you, and ministering collectively for the good of our community. So recharge and rest up! Then let's all reconvene here at church to roll up our sleeves to serve. Whether you are praying and supporting remotely, or serving and helping in person, we are a collective of God's servants for a world in need!

With thanks and blessings,
Pastor Don



For Your Information

by Dave Soohoo

The Presbyterian Chinese Mission held its first meeting on November 6, 1853 with four members. In 1925, the mission was put under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions and renamed the Chinese Presbyterian Church. It was renamed again in 1958 as the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown to better reflect its context in the Chinatown community. We are the oldest [Chinese American](#) or [Asian American](#) church in North America and have been incorporated with the state of California since 1972.

Over the generations, our church building has housed worship services, three worshipping communities, weddings, memorial services, anniversaries, Session/committee & community meetings and classes, housing project meetings (Mei Lun Yuen), daycare, food pantries and a myriad of ministries.

Did you know that the title of the church property on 925 Stockton Street, San Francisco belongs to the Presbytery of San Francisco? Yes, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is its tenant and caretaker. Over the decades, we have been stewards and caretaker to the church building, its structures and grounds.

In taking care of our church building, here are some highlights from this year (January-May):

- Installation of a new tankless water heater
- Repair/replacement of valve body assembly in second floor women's bathroom

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For Your Information *(continued from page 2)*

- Repair of cabinet door also in second floor women's bathroom
- Realigned and reset door panic bar and lock system on alley door
- Realigned, repaired hinges and reset door panic bar and lock system on basement rear exit door.
- Repaired hinges and deadbolt on basement to sidewalk door (north easement)
- Installed new door stop/holder for front doors
- Replaced magnet for office door holder
- Installed new camera in the north easement
- Repaired motion sensor lighting in the north easement
- Installed new camera in the entry area (outside) by the north gate
- Installed gate lock hardware and re-keyed into building key system on the new north gate
- Purchased and installed new carpet/runners for both hall ways on first floor
- Purchased carts and shelving for food pantry
- Replaced several light bulbs/LED's in various rooms including bypassing failed ballasts
- Checked water leak reported by the SF Water Department
- Accompanying (opening & closing) a host of vendors responsible for regular maintenance.

All these highlights and more were performed by David Chan, our volunteer extraordinaire, saving us much in labor and overhead costs. These savings are in addition to his A/V work to bring our worship services online. We continue to grateful for his expertise and generous support.

WHY ASIAN PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN?

Third World Women's Conference of the United Presbyterian Church was held on November 16-18, 1972 at SF Theological Seminary at San Anselmo. These women of color realized their struggle for equity had to be carried out by themselves. Subsequently Women in Leadership (WIL) provided funds to Third World Women's Coordinating Committee (TWWCC) for each of the 4 caucuses (Asian, Black, Latino and Native American) to sponsor leadership development events.

In 1973 Rhoda Iyoya and June Kimoto organized the first APW to meet at Christ United Presbyterian Church (CUPC), since Kathy Reyes was the Clerk of Session and organist. Chris Yuen recruited Doreen Der McLeod and Cindy Joe to participate in the formation and leadership sharing of APW. Over the years other APW regions were organized, but only 3 regions remain to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of "National Asian Presbyterian Women", namely Northern CA APW, Southern CA APW, and South APW (Houston, Texas).

The 50th Anniversary Celebration was hosted by the South APW in Houston on June 23-25, 2023. We were reminded that Asian Women continue to struggle for equity and partnership within the Presbyterian Church. We seek to inform the PCUSA and broader community about Asian American concerns and to enrich the cultural diversity of the church. We advocate for justice issues such as racism and sexism.

Cindy Joe



Laughter, sharing, and song filled the room as we explored our theme *Arise, Shine, For Your Light Has Come*. We sang the *Bim Bom* lyrics to a traditional Hebrew tune, laughing as tried to keep up! One keynote speaker left a joyful impression on me.

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WHY ASIAN PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN? *(continued from page 4)*

The Rev. Shanea Leonard (they/them) is a self-proclaimed justice warrior and currently serves the PC (USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) as the Director of Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries. They spoke to us about Asian and BIPOC women standing up straight, take up space -- Arise! In our culture, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) women tend to shrink; we need to be proud and be who God wants us to be. We exist as Light and Love in the community, and we need to be "at the table, in the planning".

I was moved by their message and how their work at PMA has been impacted and supported by Valerie Izumi (Black/Japanese American), so much that they have a "Valerie" tattoo! In the bio it notes that Rev. Leonard is very intentional about connecting disenfranchised populations to information, resources and community; receiving awards for work in reproductive justice, leadership, queer education and racial freedom.

PMA will be hosting an in-person Matthew 25 Summit January 16-18, 2024 in Atlanta. Members of our English Worshipping Community may want to consider attending, when additional information is posted.

Peace, *Linda Lee*



Officers from the three regions of Asian Presbyterian Women – Northern CA: Linda Lee and Cynthia Joe; South (Houston): Suzan Wang and Mimi Wells; Southern CA: Kelsey Law

Every time I attend a National APW Gathering, I come home feeling refreshed, uplifted, and affirmed. The preacher for the worship services was Rev. Dr. Yu-Fen Lin, an ordained pastor and Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of North Texas in Dallas. Her message about rising up and shining also emphasized that we be mindful of ourselves. For example, if the oxygen masks on an airplane deploy, the adults should mask up first, and then help children put on their masks. We can help others and be more effective leaders if we have taken care of ourselves first.

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There can be no APW Gathering without a craft activity and this year we made colorful macramé on a large clip. This is a mission project of a Houston church and their members attach a spiritual note and hand them out to teachers and others who need encouragement.

Rev. Ralph Su presented on the structural organization of the PCUSA. He works for the Presbyterian Mission Agency as the Associate for Asian Intercultural Congregational Support. It was interesting to learn about his work and how he supports Asian churches all over the country. It's a challenging time with so many Asian churches currently seeking pastors.

The Houston women ordered a wide variety of Chinese food for each meal and on the last day, they packed a warm joong for everyone to take home. I couldn't wait and ate mine on the spot! We discovered later that the airport security x-ray machine does not recognize joong and someone's bag had to be hand-searched by TSA. So, be forewarned about packing joong in your carry-on bag!

In 2025, the responsibility of organizing the National Gathering rotates to the Northern CA APW region.
- Jeanette Huie



Cantonese Worshiping Community

by Glen Choy

Earlier in May this year, my family and I had a chance to visit Boston. Compared to the usual locales we were used to in the Bay Area, it was quite a refreshing change in atmosphere! I would like to preface that we rarely travel to the East Coast, so this was a brand new experience for me. Our trip around Boston only lasted a few days, but I'd still like to share about the experiences I had there.



Let's start with the most important part: we didn't go to Boston merely for sightseeing--it was my cousin Matthew's graduation! Congratulations, Matthew! We were able to witness a defining moment in his life as he walked to obtain his diploma during the ceremony. With a degree in Mechanical Engineering, Matthew starts his new job working on submarines in Connecticut later this summer. As the saying goes, they grow up so fast... I grew up together with Matthew and seeing him become this successful has made me proud. Some of you have even watched him grow up from when he was much younger, so I'm sure you may share this sentiment.

< *Matthew's graduation 5/13/23 WPI, MA*

Cantonese Worshiping Community *(continued from page 6)*

To celebrate, we headed to the restaurant Pauli's. It was Matthew's personal recommendation to come here for lobster, one of the foods Boston is well-known for. There, we ordered a couple of their rich lobster rolls, along with a few bowls of creamy clam chowder. The lobster was certainly fresh, and coupled with a few lavish dips of butter made the whole experience extremely enjoyable. After the satisfying meal, we walked around town with Matthew as our guide. Along the way, we passed through several shopping centers, and even a street performance. The nightlife in Boston is a sight to behold. While I mentioned a change in atmosphere earlier, the lights and crowds of people along the streets truly reminded me of the nightlife in San Francisco.



Pauli's Lobster Roll, Boston >



Lastly, I'd like to talk about my experience with a small church in Boston that Matthew actually regularly attended. This trip to Boston was a first for me, but I've realized that this was also the first time I've attended a church that wasn't ours. For one, during communion, we were provided wine instead of grape juice. (To note, they also offered the option of juice, but I mistakenly took the wine anyway.) The entire attendance was quite small to be frank, even smaller than ours. However, it was a very close-knit community; everyone knew and greeted each other. Matthew was talking to just about everyone there! Even I, as a stranger to this group, felt welcomed by their community.

< *Grace Presbyterian Church, Worcester MA*

Boston is a wonderful place to visit if you ever get the chance to. From the locales to the food, it is quite unique from other popular cities. For a first-timer like me, it was definitely a great time. And of course, once again, congratulations to Matthew for graduating! Thanks to him, I also got to experience Boston for the first time. As he is starting his job all the way in Connecticut, it may be a while before we see him again, but I wish him all the luck, and may God bless him. Thank you all for reading.

Blessings, *Glen*

Juneteenth at PCC English Worshipping Community

by Carole Chinn-Morales

To celebrate and mark the significance of Juneteenth this year, the EWC welcomed the Rev. Carmen Mason-Browne to the pulpit. Carmen's warmth and charisma were a blessing for all of us that Sunday.

What was most memorable to me in her message was her description of the Sankofa bird, its name coming from the Twi language of Ghana, she explained. The bird has its head turned backwards while moving forward, and carrying a precious egg in its mouth.



The Sankofa Bird,” via pcusa.org >

Carmen helped us to see that the bird was striving to move forward, yet at the same time, looking back over its shoulder and retrieving what was most valuable to bring forward with it. This description seemed so appropriate—to identify what is crucial and bedrock to carry into the future with us—as both EWC and Cameron House reprioritize their goals and mission after the time of pandemic restrictions, opening up again to full, in-person ministries, “serving Chinatown and into the world”, as our Mission Statement affirms. How do we describe our “precious egg” that we don’t want to leave behind as we go ahead.

As we plan for the next years, what do we consider to be our mission worth preserving and carrying forward into the future with us, that both honors our legacies yet continues to be responsive to new callings into the future? This seems to be a crucial question for us to wrestle with in this transition time, as we seek to be faithful to our common history and committed to our common yet-to-be-discovered future. Thanks to Carmen for giving us a way to think about our task as a beloved community, and for encouraging us to continue to move forward, discerning the challenges that God puts before us into the future. May we boldly respond.



Susie Wong and Carl Jew welcome Rev. Carmen Mason-Browne and her partner, Kenn.

A recount of recent events from the Mandarin worshipping community:

COVID has hit us hard, probably not only the Mandarin WC, but also for all the rest of our PCC church families. As we all learn to coexist with it, members are three years older and more inclined to stay home and push a button to watch us on TV/computer/iPad or whatever device... it's much too convenient and saves so much time! So my question: what are you using the "saved up time for?"

Physical attendees are more or less at a stagnant number; we must think of new ways to encourage members to come back! Instead of having several different age group fellowships meeting on different days and different times, where attendance on Zoom is even at its low, strategic planning to combine them all to one fellowship twice a month: one day we meet on Zoom and have our traditional Bible study, songs and discussion, and one day of the month we have an outing/and or an activity to encourage more fellowship togetherness. We planned our first outing with a bang! Most of us were able to go on a six-day cruise to Mexico during Spring Break in April!

The commission also formed a new planning committee to discern God's purpose for us. Although we tend to fall back on the 'number' of attendees as a means to measure our growth, more importantly we need to realize, and focus on God and what pleases Him! Our job is to proclaim the Good News. As long as we don't lose sight on our calling, God will bless us and our ministry!

Here are some highlights to reacquaint us to you! By the way, we've been seeing the EWC members in the crossing from our service of worship to your service just like old times, and we've enjoyed seeing you all again!



Dragon Boat Festival "zong zi" making at Amy's
6-17-2023 (June activity)



Ms. Hsiu Ying Yu Hsia turns 100! 15 of us went to her house to surprise her with a cake and sang Happy Birthday. We then went upstairs to greet her one by one, and she gave each of us "lay see"

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Father's Day 6-18-2023 (with all the men presented hymn song "Aba Father" during worship)



"Zong zi" wrapping party group

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Cherry picking 5-27-2023 with combined fellowship: old and young, and some in-betweens 😊
(May outing)



Our traditional annual group picture, Mother's Day 2023 (all the women presented hymn song "Thank You Lord" during worship. And, beautiful floral bouquet presented to us as we enter the Sanctuary by the Sunday School children, made by young adult Melody Wang, elder DiAn's wife....when you do a great job, you know what that means! 😊)

A 17th Century Nun's Prayer

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody: helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken,

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint — some of them so hard to live with — but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people. And, give me, Lord, the grace to tell them so.

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This prayer was submitted by Barbara Clark, former Moderator of PWSynod to her church for a prayer booklet. She found this prayer in 1999 in an Anglican church in Grasmere, England. Barbara worships at First PC, Pendleton, Oregon, and is known to several of our Women's Fellowship members who have met and worked with her. Our current PWS Moderator is Betty Delaney of Ingleside Presbyterian Church in SF. has just concluded her service as our PW Synod of the Pacific Moderator. She attends First Presbyterian Church in Pendleton, Oregon.

*Mildred Hall*

## Pilgrimage to the Border

by Carole Chinn-Morales

Sweat was pouring down our bodies in the unforgiving 104 degree desert heat. We, members of the IM4HI (Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity) Pilgrimage, as well as other supporters who arrived for the interfaith service, were grateful for the portable tarp that provided some shade and the unexpected folding chairs a local group had brought to the event. It was surreal, knowing that we were just yards from the front doors of a migrant detention center in Calexico where hundreds of detainees who have been incarcerated for months, or even years, waiting for their cases to be resolved, were also sitting, uncomfortable, in the sweltering heat. We were here, to demonstrate that we as a faith community, still cared about those on the inside, that we were raising our voices against the lack of a more humane and efficient immigration system, and that we were seeking ways to bring hope and comfort to these mostly forgotten detainees.

This was one of the experiences that Clinton Huey and I will never forget from the IM4HI Pilgrimage to Calexico in March, crossing the California-Mexico border to witness first-hand the intolerable situation for those who have agonizingly left their home countries that have become embroiled in pervasive violence, ineffective or corrupt government, overwhelming natural disasters, dehumanizing poverty—people, trekking thousands of miles in search of protection for their families and enough stability for viable futures and a new start.

Other events seared into our hearts were visiting a Mexicali shelter filled with men, women, and children, who were enduring a purgatory of waiting and uncertainty for months, yet greeting us with hopeful smiles and friendliness; participating in a solemn native American ceremony to honor the memory of migrants who have perished crossing the desert to reach the border, now buried at the Cemetery of the Unnamed; listening to a young Calexico pastor who spoke movingly about his efforts to organize a border ministry with his small but faithful congregation, doing whatever they could with their minimal resources. Clinton and I brought a small donation from M&E to support this ministry, allowing us to be a partner in their work. We were joined here by Doug Clark, who has participated in this border ministry many times, so it was a joyful reunion as well as a blessing for us, as Doug knows the area as well as the issues involved.

Even the act of simply walking across the bridge connecting Calexico and Mexicali on the Mexico side, was a humbling and affecting experience. With American passports we were able to cross without hassle of questioning, passing warning signs, security cameras, and barbed wire, knowing that at the same time, our at-risk brothers and sisters were barred from crossing, and when they are finally granted permission, are often greeted not with welcome, but with fear and antipathy.

Besides the goal of informing ourselves about the border situation, the Pilgrimage was also planned as an opportunity to reflect upon our own faith journeys, and to be open to the possibility of transformation within. For me, it was a chance to challenge my faith in light of Micah 6-8, “to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with our God.” I pondered, too, how being a Matthew 25 Congregation related to the border, and whether there was a way to support ministry efforts, or better yet, to become a ministry that can offer welcome. Aren’t newcomers, without adequate safety nets already, and more, likely to become victims of structural racism and systemic poverty?

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## Pilgrimage to the Border *(continued from page 13)*

It was not lost on me, too, that without the help of those who welcomed my grandparents to new lives in San Francisco's Chinatown, I would not be here today. Do we all owe our lives to the first immigrants in our families and to all those who assisted them in early days, to blaze a path for us to follow? Think of the work of Donaldina Cameron, Tien Wu, Dr. Speer, Lorna Logan, and so many others.

Is there a role for the English Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, to stand alongside of and to accompany asylum seekers who have made their way to San Francisco, but without friends, family, or other contacts? Can we be the ones to greet these newcomers with radical hospitality? Are we being called to an accompaniment ministry, just as Miss Cameron was, and how will we respond?

I am so grateful for the inspiring experience at the border, standing with Clinton and the rest of the team, learning together. Now back at home, I wonder if we and others are willing to risk crossing borders, are willing to treat refugees as our neighbors, and to walk humbly and with kindness, next to those who need us and are hungry to begin new lives in this country. Are we willing to work at giving them a chance? Is this our calling? Clinton shares these words from our Mission Study, "We are committed to bearing witness to Jesus Christ and sharing his love and justice, starting with the San Francisco Chinatown community and extending out into the world." What are your thoughts?

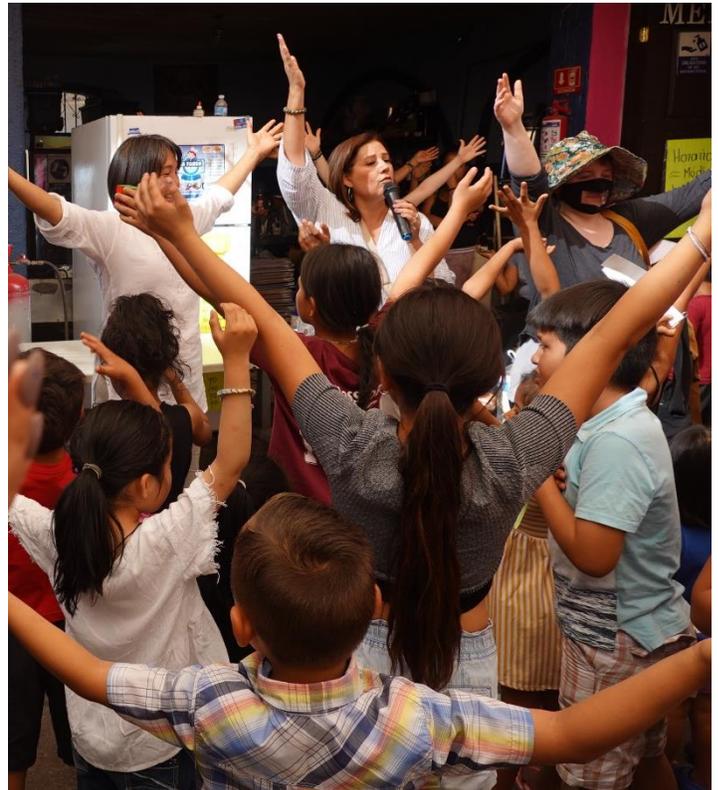


The Border Pilgrimage Experience group poses in front of the mural at the United Methodist Church of Calexico. Pastor Baldwin Avendaño's (second from left) church helps with the plight of migrants at the border as well as with people released from the ICE detention center in Calexico, offering help contacting friends and family and to provide travel kits containing food, clothing and snacks for the migrants' journeys. *(continued on page 15)*

**Pilgrimage to the Border** *(continued from page 14)*



Carole conversing with a young mother at the Mexicali shelter.



At the end of our visit to the shelter, Rev. Debbie Lee led the group in a blessing of solidarity with hand motions, “we see you, we hear you, we hold you and carry you in our hearts, we are connected with you in solidarity.”

