



# Good News for the Pews

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## From Pastor Don

In the ancient church there were many movements that taught people to retreat from the world into lives of prayer and contemplation. We may vaguely remember stories of the Desert Mothers and Fathers who lived alone in caves or tents in the wilderness and who practiced a kind of asceticism and essentially renounced the world for a life of the spirit. Their work was simple: prayer, study, simple chores. Those ancient monastic traditions are largely gone these days, and where they exist, they are connected almost exclusively with the Roman Catholic or the Eastern Orthodox churches. We modern people often forget that they, the mystics and monastics of old, lived this way to increase their connection to God, by disconnecting from the world.

In the Protestant movements, active engagement in the world was prioritized. Protestant believed that there was work to be done in the world, and it was the duty of the Christian faithful to do this work. Protestants were clear, in most traditions, that works were not done to earn rewards or to vouchsafe salvation, but instead were to be undertaken as a response to the gifts of salvation that God had given. In an effort to live into this theological understanding, the mystical, internal, contemplative life was no longer prized. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century Mainline protestants in the United States began to talk about a “social Gospel,” a faith centered on action, that over time became ultimately pragmatic and far less mystical. Transformation was seen primarily as something that happened externally, as a process of perfecting society, and far less as the individual’s own transformation. The monk’s cell and the monastery were left in the past. The church became the center of the spiritual world, and the social programs that the church in engaged in became the focus.

From time to time, however, we remember that church is far more than its social programs. Church is first and foremost a spiritual entity: the *incarnatio continua*, or “continuing incarnation,” of Jesus Christ. Indeed, in our Confessions we hold that the church is the Body of Christ, (Book of Confessions, 5.130, 6.054, 6.186). For the church to be an effective agent of transformation in the world, its members must first be transformed in Christ. When we come together corporately we seek to be transformed in Christ, but this process doesn’t just happen on Sundays between 10:45–11:45. No, you see the worship we

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## NEWS FROM THE DEACONS by Pam Jang

### Crazy Rich Asians Potluck

We may not be crazy or rich (in the sense of the movie). But we are Asian and really know how to throw a fabulous potluck! On October 26, the pre-dinner activity for the evening was a dumpling making session lead by Sabrina. After dinner, we watched the movie, "Crazy Rich Asians." It was a real fun Asian themed evening. A special thank you to Jackie, Sabrina, Mei and Belinda for making the dumpling session happen.



Mildred, Sabrina and Annie showing off the homemade, pan-fried dumplings using the fry, steam and flip technique.

### Farewell and Good Luck to Jeannette and Jim

We must bid farewell to Jeannette Wei and Jim Caldwell as they start a new life in San Antonio, Texas at the end of January. We have been truly blessed to have Jeannette and Jim attend worship just about every Sunday for decades. If PCC were to give out attendance merit pins Jeannette and Jim would have a whole drawer full. The fellowship hall was packed for their farewell luncheon. The program started with four custom written songs by Gordie. One of the songs went like this...

*(Sung to the tune of Dinah Won't You Blow)*

*Caldwells as you GO – to the AlaMO  
Keep your hearts in things you KNOW-OH-OH  
Forget the status QUO;  
Glad tidings you will SOW  
T'share with fam'ly, friends or FOE.*