



Good News for the Pews

February 1, 2016

A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 6

The Music in a Rest, by John Ruskin

by Pastor Kimberly Elliot



“There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it. In our whole life--melody, the music is broken off here and there by rests and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the theme. God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts, and we make a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives; and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. How does the musician read the rest? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking- place had come between.

“Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the tune, and not to be dismayed at the rests. They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the keynote. If we look up, God him/herself will beat the time for us. With our eye on God, she shall strike the next note full and clear.”



I am very grateful for my time in Washington over the Christmas holiday, (even if all of it was not necessarily restful). It was good to be with family. And I appreciated your compassion, your support, your cards, hugs and prayers during this time of transition as I have grieved my mother's loss. It has been profound and God has been in it. I am grateful to be part of such a loving community here at PCC.

You may see me wearing a lot of angels in the days to come. My mother loved angels and collected them. Angels blowing trumpets were her favorite. I have several angel pins that I am wearing now. They are a comfort because they remind me of her and also because of the reminder to our connection to the angelic realm.

I don't know if our loved ones become angels per se, when they pass on and enter heaven. But I like to think they are a bit like an angelic presence – peaceful, free of the cares of this world, but still able to look upon us and send us love. The Wednesday Night Covenant Group has been discussing the book *Heaven is for Real* and sharing reflections about heaven. It might be interesting for all of us to join in that discussion. If you have thoughts or experiences you would like to share, please let me know.

As I reflect on this notion I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13: 1-2: *“Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.”*

(continued on page 2)

Pastor Kimberly *(continued from page 1)*

We are angels for each other as we care for each other in mutual love. And as we welcome the stranger in our midst, and live out the truth that we are all beloved children of God.



You have been angels to me. May we continue to be angels to the wider community as we do the work of justice and peace and seek to embody God's peace, patience and compassion. Even if God seems to be handing us a rest, with God all things can work for good as we walk with Jesus and live in community together.

May the angelic, restful and peaceful love of God be with you this day.



Called to Be An Elder

by Sing Quan 關家勝

I was called to be an elder because I felt it was my time to be part of the leadership at PCC. I want to lead because I want to serve my church and be part of growth and direction of PCC. I also felt called to be an elder to grow in my own spiritual experiences. God has called me to serve my community and church. For me, Church is a place where I go to center myself for the week. It is the sanctuary, where I go to be reminded of my purpose in my work. PCC is important in my life and being an elder is what I felt I need to do, not only to give back to the church but also to grow as a Christian and as a member of PCC. I don't know where life will lead me in the future but I will always have the love and spirit of God and PCC with me.



Experiencing the power of nature at the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir

“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.....” Matthew 25:40

You will be reading several reports from members of our church who went on the Guatemala Mission Trip in this newsletter. On Sunday, January 31, the group did a video and verbal presentation of their trip. A Guatemalan lunch was provided and donations for the lunch will support our church’s goal of raising \$3,500 for another water filtration system.

December is always a busy month for Mission & Evangelism as we keep focused on God’s gift of incarnation to us that the birth of Christ embodies. As Rev. Norman Fong preached: “the Word became flesh and dwelled among us”. In trying to meet the ever growing demands of Christmas, we lose the simple joy of God coming to us in human form.



It has been our practice for many years to support Chinatown CDC in purchasing gifts for the SRO children on Super Sunday in December. In the past several years, we have added an alternative Christmas Fair whereby members of PCC could purchase Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, or nuts to support independent farmers in South America retain more profits from their labor. We have also collected money for the Heifer Project. This year through Pastor Kimberly’s contact with a shop in Half Moon Bay, we were able to add craft and hand made products from Guatemala to the Alternative Gift Fair. The children, in alignment with sermons on water and working for drinkable water in the villages in Guatemala, decided the funds raised for the Heifer Project would go to support clean water projects. Thus far, \$692 has been raised for this.

Christmas is also when we collect for the **JOY Offering** (one of three special offerings) that the PC(U.S.A.) collects to support special needs of the church. The JOY Offering supports special needs of church workers whose retirement income may not cover unexpected high medical expenses or care of a spouse, etc. and to support Racial Ethnic schools such as Menaul or Cook School. This year PCC gave

\$1,791 to the JOY Offering. Thank you for your generosity.

We are now making preparations for our turn at working with the Interfaith Coalition to serve meals to the homeless housed in different churches over the winter. We will be cooking and serving 100 people at the Unitarian Church on February 19th. Again, The Sequoias will join us in preparing and donating mashed potatoes and gravy for 100 persons to add to our meal of meatloaf, broccoli cheese casserole and cupcakes. Anyone interested in helping cook, serve, or make cupcakes should contact Doreen.

Blessings to you all in the New Year.

Mission & Evangelism Committee:
Eunice Bejar-Lee, Ed Chin, Doreen Der-McLeod, Cynthia Joe, Shar Hall, Jeanette Huie, Gilbert Lee, Jeanine Lim-Chan, and Susie Wong



At the December Super Sunday, every seat in the Francisco Middle School gym was taken. This year 400 gifts were distributed to Chinatown families.

Dear Friends at the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown,
Thank you for your kindness and generosity in donating 100 awesome gifts to SRO families!

From your friends at Chinatown CDC and the SRO Families United Collaborative

by Jeanette Huie

Update Events from Cantonese Worshipping Community by Eleanor Wong, Elder

Christmas is the season of great joy and peace. It's a time not only for us to celebrate with gifts, foods or parties, but also for us to think about all the amazing changes in our own lives. We thank God for all the blessings and His great love for us, especially to the Cantonese worshipping group.

On the 20th of December, we celebrated the birth of Jesus by having a special luncheon and program after our Christmas Sunday service. We had different groups or members perform by hymn singing, dancing, and piano recital. We also had games and gift exchanging.

On Sunday, December 27th, we held our baptism ceremony during our service of worship. Six members baptized: Nian Ying Zhang, Hui Zhen Wen, Sunshine Chong, Lucky Chong, Xiu Zhen Luo and Li Zhen Lei.

(missing photo)

We also had six members transferred from other churches: Suwen Huang, Zhonggui Huang, Spring Loo, Wai Leung Kwan, Huilian Chen, and Huan Yi Zhen. Glory to our Lord, He gives us visions and increases the number of our Cantonese community.

(missing photo)

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Cantonese Worshipping Community (continued from page 4)

The followings are some quotes of “My Testimony” from the above new members:

“Jesus is our only savior. Knowing that He died for me is a constant reminder that my worth as a person is much more valuable than what I give credit for”. “I believe in Jesus because He sacrificed Himself to save us from our sins. He guides us to the right path in life, always watching over me no matter what obstacles I face.” “I was led by God to this church since 2014 when my twin daughters took music lessons here and heard about Jesus”. “I grew up from a Christian family. My father was a pastor in China and I was baptized over there when I was a teen. I never gave up my faith even during the difficult time in Communist China. After I immigrated to the U.S. in 1996, I’d been worshipping in a few different churches and finally found this Church as my home”.



Our Commission also held its ceremony of Baptism of the Lord/Installation service on Sunday, January 10th.

Kay Wong was installed as our new elder for the 2018 term.

Other current elders are: Laura Cu, Kan Ming Leung, Carrie Li, Ra Chani Lu, Sheung Yin Mark and Eleanor Wong.

May God continue to lead the Cantonese Commission in 2016.

Rejoice!

Good News from the Mandarin Commission

by Sabrina Cheng

Photos by Sabina Cheng and Tom Feng

The air was damp and cold, but our spirits were high and warm. This year, we went out for caroling on three separate days on December 19, 20, and 22, 2015. We were excited as we were joined by our youth, some of them were recently baptized or transferred as our new members. We visited quite a few church members who have not been able to attend Church worship service because of illnesses or senility. We also visited The Sequoias and Mei Lun Yuen where our senior neighbors live. We sang Christmas carols heartily and happily together.



For three years, after caroling, we went back to our church to have hot pot dinners opened for all church members and their families or friends.



This year on December 19th, we had five hot pots serving almost fifty people. We shared a variety of delicious vegetables and meat boiled in tasty hot soups, as well as laughter, Bible riddles and games together.

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Good News from the Mandarin Commission *(continued from page 6)*



In 2015, our Mandarin Commission had many things to be thankful for. The most gracious gift God has prepared for us was having five youth baptized on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 22. Moreover, two of our youth Deacons, Billy Yu and Paul Li, were elected to become Elders of our Commission.

We are so grateful to see the fruits from our youth ministry diligently led by Elder Amy Feng, Elder Jeremy Lue, Elder Di An Chen, and Deacon Jammie Lue. We thank God for their commitment, dedication and loving care for nurturing the young people week after week of fellowship, activities, and outings.

We praise God for His guidance and providence though we still do not have a minister within sight to pastor our Commission yet.



According to Joel 2:28: “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” A new year is coming. Let us dream big to expand God’s work but not to lose vision in what is pleasing to God.



In 2013 I had the opportunity to go to the Presbyterian Youth Triennium which took place at Purdue University. During my time there I was surrounded by thousands of people, all on different journeys of their faith. I was privileged enough to hear about what it is like for Presbyterians in the Middle East, of being under scrutiny and also in constant fear of being punished because of your faith. Hearing these journeys and being surrounded by all these people provided me a front row seat to the power of God, thousands of people all gathered in one room all with the same belief in God. Triennium was probably the first time I truly felt connected to God and understood how strong of a force he is.

I carried this experience with me into my Senior Year when my commission was gearing up for their mission trip. As the year progressed I found myself coming to the decision of not going on my commission's mission trip. I knew that this mission trip was going to be an incredible experience, but there was something in me that knew that going on that mission trip was not the right step for me. Nonetheless the people in my commission are wonderful, and I am so grateful that I was able to help them go to Washington and that they came back with a memorable journey.

This past year and a half at San Francisco State University (SFSU) I was enrolled in the Metro Program at SFSU which helped guide me in my transition into college. While I was grateful for

the guidance and community I found myself in, I also felt constantly bombarded with the theme of social justice. Although the discussions interesting and thought provoking initially and knew they were serious discussions, eventually I was listening to the same lectures and discussions in every Metro class, leading me to decide to withdrawal from the Metro Program because college should be about exploring your horizons, not limiting the thoughts and knowledge you are exposed to.

As for my personal background, I grew up in this church and was baptized as an infant here. In addition, I started training in martial arts when I was almost 5 years. Now, almost 15 years later, I find myself teaching young toddlers, teenagers, and young adults and older. As a martial artist, you learn not only various self-defense techniques and forms, but also what it means to actually be a martial artist, which includes teaching others the knowledge I have gained. For me, to learn and to teach is an expression of who I am. I have been blessed with incredible friends and instructors that have helped me to learn bravery, wisdom, kindness, and moral integrity. Now I find myself a Deacon for the next 3 years in addition to going to the 222nd General Assembly in Portland Oregon as the Young Adult Advisory Delegate. I am looking forward to the journey that is to come. Being apart of both the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown and the Tat Wong Kung Fu Academy has and continues to help me grow. I am looking forward to the journey that is to come.



Desmond Ng, PCC Deacon 2012-2015 and 2016-2017



What is there to know about me? Shrugs. My full name is Desmond Brian Ng. I was born and raised in San Francisco and I am a third generation Chinese-American. I attended the following schools: Wah Mei Pre-School, Saint Anne, Archbishop Riordan High School, City College of San Francisco, University of the Pacific, and UC Berkeley. I have had careers in education and research. I have been part of Donaldina Cameron House for over 15 years and I have been part of the church for about four years. Currently, I am interviewing at various dental schools in hopes of becoming a general dentist in the Bay Area. My goal as a dentist would be a leader in the community and provide affordable dental healthcare to those in need.

Some fun facts include the following:

- I enjoy golf, running, tennis, soccer, basketball, football, and rock climbing
- I enjoy going to San Francisco Giants games and the occasional Warriors game
- I am planning on running a few more Half-Marathons in the upcoming years
- I spend my free time visiting museums and going on hiking trails
- I collect sports cards and have a collectibles company called Desico Sports Memorabilia
- Introvert

Finally, I should talk about my spiritual journey. I went to catholic school for 12 years (grammar and high school). I had a religion course each of those years and really got a chance to study the Bible and what the scripture means to me. Religion was always one of my favorite courses because it taught me to love one another and treat people with love and respect.

In college, I was part of various Christian Fellowships and that was when I started to learn about myself spiritually. I got a chance to personally know God and how I can help others.



Ready to Serve! Cookies galore bring generations together.

The Nature of Conscience



This is the 2nd time I've answered the call to be an Elder. The 1st time was when my daughter Rachel was born. It was late 1996 when I

receive a call to be an Elder and served the two consecutive terms, like most everyone else. Since the end of my initial first two terms, I had not really thought about serving as an Elder again. I had even turned down a couple of requests since then to again serve as an Elder, with the primary reason for my declining that request being that my son needed me. The end of my initial 2nd term was the year 2002 I believe, and the following year, 2003, was significant for me in many ways, aside from my stepping down as as Serving Elder.

For 2003 was not only the year I stepped down serving as an active Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, 2003 was also the year I turned 45. As that song goes... *"I'm 45 for a moment... The sea is high... And I'm heading into a crisis... Chasing the years of my life..."* I was 45 and I found myself going through a personal crisis of a sort, a crisis where my faith in God ran up against my belief in Country. 2003 was the year the United States of America launched its war against Iraq, and I found myself in my very first anti-war march. I was one of maybe at least 65,000 protestors marching through the streets of San Francisco, where globally anywhere from eight to thirty million people came out to protest. I, along with my daughter Rachel, who was seven years old at the time, was one of those millions who came out to march. I protested, I spoke out, I wrote, I participated in a forum organized by the Mission & Evangelism Committee of the English Congregation of PCC, and I wrote some more, spoke out some more. The years went by,

by Stanley Wong, Elder

one after another, and things only got worse. Hope and Change came, and things did change... for the worse... as the writ of habeas corpus was formally repealed with the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, with the signature of a President who was the former editor of the Harvard Law Review, a President who considers himself a Constitutional Scholar. After Iraq, came Libya and now Syria, not to mention Ukraine. It's been twelve years since 2003, and we now find ourselves staring at the precipice of World War III, sectarian wars spreading in the Middle East and threatening to spread onto the European continent, with all of this being the end result of American policies. There came a point when I was forced to confront the reality of the true nature of American policies: from Iraq to Afghanistan, from East Timor to Indonesia, from spending \$339 per aircraft for the new F22 to the bailout of the big American financial services corporations like J.P. Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Bank of America. Was it futile to speak out? to protest? Was the Occupy Wall Street protests a futile gesture? No it was not, for as disheartening the last decade and a half have been, it is never futile to pay heed to your conscience, for God speaks to us through our conscience. When we hear our conscience, we are hearing God calling us to give witness to our faith, we are hearing God calling us to speak out for justice. As an individual there is nothing I can do which can ever change the policies of the elite running this country. As an individual, however, I can raise my children in a manner where they are open to listening... hearing... being attuned... to God... and to know that there is a significant difference between that which is Political and that which God calls us to be. There was a time when I believed in God and Country. For me that statement is no longer true.

My daughter Rachel is now a sophomore at San Francisco State University, and as a young college ager she has ran smack dab into the forces of Political Correctness at SFSU.

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Stanley Wong, Elder (continued from page 10)

Listening to her talk about these experiences, I realize that my daughter instinctively believes in free will, free choice and... that idea called liberty, an idea I learned as a 1st Generation immigrant to this country. My daughter also believes in God, believes that there can be no justice without God, that there can be no Moral Law without God. One of Rachel's most significant life events was her experience at the Presbyterian Youth Triennium, where she met youth of her age from across the country. Out of that experience and her growing up in the church with the nurturing she received as a child of this church, she came to accept her call to be a Deacon of our church. At the end of the day, that's all we can do - to nurture our youth, to help keep their hearts and minds open.....open to hear God's call.

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News from the Pews by **Pat Chan**



The last half year of 2015 had some celebrations.

- Kathy Tong had a surprised retirement luncheon at the new Original Joe's restaurant on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. Brad really surprised Kathy. The Deacons and the Wednesday Night Study Group were part of the surprise. Kathy retired as an Office Manager at a dental office in Japantown.
- Linda Young also retired. She was a Social Worker for On Lok for 42 years. Linda is doing some volunteer work with some church members and the Pastor at True Sunshine

Church on Mason and Pacific. The low income housing is being retrofitted for the next six months. The church is offering services and activities for the Seniors to go to while the building is being worked on. Linda is the coordinator.

We want to wish these two ladies
A Happy Retirement!

- Harry Chuck celebrated his 80th Birthday on November 14 at St. Mary's Cathedral Event Center. Hawaiian food was served along with some music and dancing. Friends, family and relatives helped Harry celebrate his birthday. The highlight of the celebration was when Granddaughter Addison did a solo tap dancing routine to dedicate her Grandfather's birthday. We all clapped and in awe that she did this great dance.
- Kyle Shin, son of Sabrina and Jung, got an early College acceptance to Wesleyan College in Connecticut. It was his first choice. He told me it's a liberal arts college.
- Congratulations to Ryan Kam, son of Peggy and Eddie
- and to Tim Go, son of Diane and Stuart.
They both graduated from San Jose State in December.

Good News for the Pews is published quarterly by the English-Speaking Worshipping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown, 925 Stockton Street San Francisco, CA 94108
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Adventures in Nepal – 2015

by Nancy Chee

So ends another year of 2015 and beginning of the new. Each year has continued to bring new adventures traveling as a volunteer medical worker. In July, it was off to Nepal via Abu Dhabi. It was the longest single, nonstop flight I had ever taken of almost 17 hours (whew). I never knew airplanes could fly for that long.



Kirtipur Hillside (Kathmandu), Nepal

Nepal has been a country I have been to twice before to help with training of a local personnel and working specifically with Mohan, a physiotherapist there. In many developing countries, there are no specifically trained hand therapists and I have been mentoring Mohan for many years and it was such a joy to see the new clinic he has developed and to be able to work



Mohan – The student is now the teacher

with him side by side. This time, I received a call to help him 3 months after the earthquake in Kathmandu. While his hospital withstood the quake well, many, many parts of the city I had visited before were devastated especially the old, historical buildings and landmarks. Even three months out, I felt several aftershocks while there, just like being in San Francisco.

This two week trip gave me a chance to not only work in the Kathmandu area but beyond. And I mean way beyond. I flew to the farthest western part of Nepal bordering India to help follow up with patients who had previous surgeries by another foreign team earlier in the year but they had little to no therapy follow up. The visit took me to the Chauderrey village where several of the children and adults received hand surgery and also to check their use of a newly developed hand device call the Hand Hero. It is a mechanical splint developed by Stanford students to gradually stretch out fingers. It is perfect for these patients as they are not care due to lack of access to therapists or resources. Hopefully the Hand Hero will help them in their home exercise program and retain what they've received from the surgery. But working in a remote village with primitive conditions (in 100+ degrees weather) can be quite the challenge (whew)!



Ashim and Hand Hero

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Adventures in Nepal (continued from page 12)

The Nepal trip also gave me a chance to meet and connect with other local therapists who all have patients with hand injuries. They actually did not know much about one another and more importantly what knowledge and skills they had and how they could pool their local resources. Mohan and I brought them together for a one day hand therapy workshop and they were so excited about what I taught as often new knowledge and teaching is not easily available. But for me, I was so happy that they were talking with one another about how to contact and help one another with difficulty cases and even organizing themselves to meet again in the future. While I am excited for them, I also realized that I might not need to go back to Kathmandu for a while as they were becoming self-sufficient! I proudly would say that with Mohan, the student has now become the teacher and I hope to have left a long lasting mark with the therapists there.

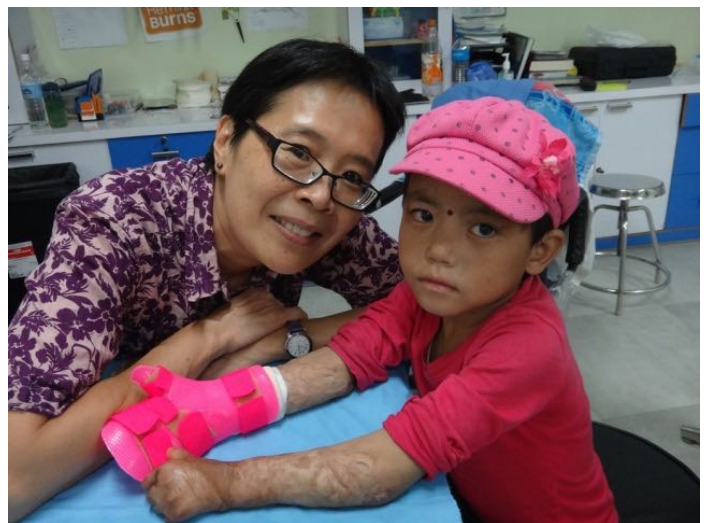


Nepal-India Border Crossing

Many years before in my first trips and through these adventures, I believe that God has a purpose for each and every one of us. Sometimes we can't see that when we first embark on an unknown road. But trusting that He guides our hands and feet and is ever present, I feel that I can almost go anywhere He calls and share the gifts He has given. So maybe my work in Nepal is complete for now but I know there is still another path and adventure to follow with Christ



Workshop Class with Nepal Therapists



Ready for the next adventure!

Lives Changed

by Kimball Wong

Clean water for a community has a large impact. I observed the effects Living Waters had on two men. Josef lives in Guatemala. He was a product of uncertain lives from a county torn by civil war. Through it all, Josef lost family, was forced to exile, returned to Guatemala only to now be prevented from leaving. He developed many skills, some of which are better left unsaid. He is now an employee of Living Waters World Missions. He was our local trainer for our installation, supervisor and teacher of the people within the country. Josef patiently taught our team the process of installing the filtration system, all the while demanding quality and preciseness. His skills permeated along with his passion for his work. Besides helping with all the installations, he maintains the filtration systems within the country and communicating with all the churches that have systems. The success of the water filtration systems is dependent on having local people like Josef there.



Josef explaining the system



Maintenance of an existing system.

One of the days I had an opportunity to jump into the back of a pickup truck to visit a couple of prior installs that needed follow-up. We visited a church that had an installation performed. The water maintenance person from the church shared with us how thankful he was for having the water system. It provided a job for him and his family. It also supported the work of his church since they are able to sell clean water to the local community, which is at a price about 1/3 of commercial companies. He showed pride in how he kept his system working and how happy and thankful he was for having a system.

While clean water provided health changing benefits to the people in the communities, it also provided changed lives to two men and I am sure many more that we were not able to see.

Guatemalan Mission

By Gilbert Lee

1 Corinthians 12 talks about the One Body, many parts. I saw that for 5 days in Guatemala, as a variety of activities and talents simultaneously hummed along installing the purified water system. Living Waters local staff taught San Marcos workers how to regulate and maintain the system. Almost all of us got to cut and glue PVC piping. More skilled volunteers set brackets to hold the system to the wall. Still others washed gravel or hauled charcoal that would be used for filtration. Others did the equally important work with 10-15 Compassion International teachers doing lessons for about 50 children about health, clean water and Bible stories related to water. Still others, like Vivien and Eunice helped in their open air, open fire kitchen, cooking lunch for the 50 local and American volunteers. And in slack times we all played games of jump rope, cards and making pointy sticks to pick up litter with the children. "The Body" hummed along, and God provided humor in our diversity...

So our last night in San Marcos at the System dedication ceremony they had paraded in the Guatemalan, US, and San Marcos state flag. We stood as they sang the National Anthem, 12 minutes long. Then they announced the 22 Americans would assemble in front and sing the U.S. Anthem. We were not expecting this. We had prayed together but never sang together. We lined up at the altar and I could feel 200 pairs of eyes eager to hear this foreign anthem for the first time.

So we wouldn't sing a cappella the PA piped in "Oh say can you see" with a vocal track. After 10 seconds I realized the version they'd pulled was a jazzy Whitney Houston/*American Idol* rendition, including dramatic pauses and extended vocal "warbles"(the bombs bursting in a-yehyehyeh-yair!) I could hear half the group behind me trying to sing rhythmic cadence and getting thrown by the pauses, unsure when to restart, others just holding one note during long warbles. Across the room I saw adults frowning "You don't know your own anthem?" and children's faces, those great kids we played with all week, seemingly saying "Are you OK? Should we get help?" I started crying and laughing both. Crying because I'd gone to a lot of Giants games and this was sacred...& awful! And I laughed because in their beautiful country innocence, our hosts had picked an *American Idol* version!

We struggled through, slunk to our seats, and the Body still hummed along.



After the first day, a challenge was given to us by Mark, our leader from Living Waters, to mingle and engage with our Guatemalan friends. He observed us working and eating separately from our counterparts. I took this to heart and felt my calling was to work with the “ladies of the kitchen”.

Majority of the cooking is done outdoors – with the prep work done on 2 small tables, 2 sinks serviced by a faucet from well (not filtered) water and an open wood fire. There is also an indoor kitchen with a small gas stove, a cabinet and large plastic containers where dishes are stored. Refrigerator is not available.



Off to the kitchen I went which was located in the back of the church/school building. Banana and coffee bean trees are alongside the building. I introduced myself to the “head chef –Mari” who was preparing our lunch for the day. It took a village of 7 ladies to prepare a meal that would feed 50 people. The menu for the day was Carne Asada, vegetable and rice. With hand motions, I told her that I wanted to help them cook. She was initially surprised, but with a smile, she had me marinating the meat and cutting the vegetables (chayote, green beans and carrots). The ladies were very open, engaging, and did not hesitate in showing me the packets of ingredients they were using since we cannot verbally communicate.

A couple of observations:

Much of the ingredients they used contain MSG flavoring. There were no garbage containers in the kitchen and unfortunately, food scraps along with the ingredient plastic wrappings are just thrown over the back side of the building.

The language of food is universal and it was made so memorable for me by the Guatemalan ladies of the kitchen. Mark had acknowledged that we were the first group in all the years (? 8 years) he had been bringing volunteers to have worked and be involved with the ladies of the kitchen. We shared much tears and hugs on our last day with them.

For your enjoyment to try out

Guatemalan Carne Asada

Marinate meat for an hour with onion salt, garlic salt, pepper, tomato beef consommé, Chinese dark soy sauce, light soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce. There were bunches of whole green onions added to the marinade as well. Grill the meat along with the green onions and served with tortillas.

Unexpected Blessings

By Jeanette Huie

The experience organized by Living Water World Mission is ideal for working adults or anyone with limited free time - it's only a week long, but quite intensive and much is accomplished in that short time. From Guatemala City, we rode for six hours in a bus with other members of the team and local staff. When we arrived at the church in La Independecia, a rural farming community, I had no idea how the next four days would affect me. Every moment was a feast for the eyes and provided much to think about. Like the family dogs who accompanied their owners to the church – rib bones showing through their fur, constantly sniffing the ground for a morsel of food. Barbed wire and gated entries to homes and neighborhoods. Beautiful tropical landscapes and waterfalls. Women and young girls wearing traditional Mayan clothing. Young couples riding on motorscooters, with the rider in back texting on a phone instead of holding on to the driver. In a week's time I saw a land of many contrasts.



At the church, supplies and equipment were at bare minimum. We used our hands a lot - in the kitchen without a large spoon, hands were used to mix spices into a large bowl of chicken; without a juicer, hands were used to squeeze juice out of limes; in the classroom without a paper cutter, hands and scissors were used to cut strips of paper for a craft project; outside the church without a rake, hands were used to pick up litter from the tall grass; without a sifter, hands were used to rub small rocks clean of dirt for the filter system. Each morning we greeted each other with warm handshakes; even the young children were accustomed to greeting adults with a handshake. And at the end of the day as our bus drove away, our hands were used to wave good-bye to the families.

Two weeks later back home on Thanksgiving Sunday at PCC, we prayed and expressed thanks for abundance in our lives. I must've been thinking about lunch because I recall giving thanks for the abundance of food in my life! I usually think of material things and food when I think of abundance. Once I started writing this article, I felt thankful for the intangible things in my life that are abundant. While in Guatemala, I didn't see the same material abundance we have here at home but the children and adults of La Independecia shared with us something more special -- their abundance of joy and hospitality.

Inside their church walls it felt like a refuge. Inside the walls was a community of faith ready to welcome a stranger and eager to equip themselves to respond to needs in their small town. It was a blessing to be in their midst.

What's it like

by Carole Chinn-Morales Nov. 6 reflecting on Guatemala trip

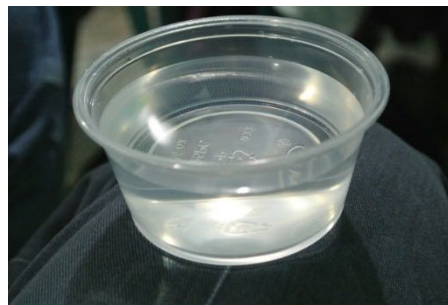
What's it like
to live
Without clean water
Contaminated well
Bacteria rich
sediment thriving
Untreated tap water
Stomach problems
a way of life
Gurgling
discomfort
bloating pain
diarrhea urgency
Boiling water
consumes fuel
Money needed elsewhere
Purified store bought water
Luxury for a few
Ignited by
wide eyed innocent children
Someone wondered
What if...what if
Is it possible?
Can it be done?
What would it take?

Know how
ingenuity
access to materials
simple durable system
In country workers
compassionate volunteers
committed partners
persistence

(go to next column)

Cut plastic piping
measure
level
seal joints
clamp
secure filters
ozone producing machine
Teach operators
Educate women children
Engage,
make friends,
side by side
No leaks, celebrate!

Sing again again
Usa esta agua Usa esta agua
Es mui buena Es mui buena
Drinking cooking brushing teeth taking care of baby.
Use this water. It's very good.
Children brothers sisters mothers fathers abuelos y abuelas
Celebremos! Gracias a dios!
USA ESTA AGUA
USA ESTA AGUA
ES MUI BUENA!
ES MUI BUENA!
ESTA AGUA ES MUI BUENA!
Gracias a dios.
Thank you God!



Guatemala PCC Faith in Action Experience

by Eunice Bejar-Lee

I was hesitant to come to Guatemala because of my health condition, worried about the heat and humidity. I'm glad I did go. It was very inspirational to meet the founders Mark and Phil, for their vision and faithful work. I am grateful for the service experience, thankful for the church team's volunteer spirit and for the partnerships with Compassion International and local Iglesias where we met the most wonderful, friendly warm and hospitable hosts, adults and children alike.

Everyone was busy giving one's best ability with skills we have as teachers, installers, assembly team, cooks, playing with kids and or cradling a lovely baby and efforts to teach children clean their environment. Victor aged 4, smallest kid, holds a dustpan helping collect garbage got a bigger lollipop. It was indeed the efforts of many hands in different colors and sizes...



I left San Marcos knowing that children and the community of 660 families will get purified clean water to prevent illness and improve their quality of life. It is indeed a gift of "Living Water". We hope we left behind good memories for the locals and pray for their health and welfare. And hope planted the seeds of God's compassion, love and hope.

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Upcoming Events

by Linda Lee

February 10: Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 6:30 pm Simple supper. 7:30 pm Service

February 14, 21, 28 and March 6 & 13: Sunday Lenten Studies with a simple meal

March 13: PCC Session meets

March 20: Palm Sunday

March 24: Maundy Thursday supper and service beginning at 6:30 pm

March 27: Easter - Celebrate the Resurrection of Christ!

April 10: Celebrate the Gifts of Women worship. The Rev. Yung Me Suh Morris will be preaching.

May 27-30: PCC English Retreat at Westminster Woods

