

**Mission Study Report  
Presbyterian Church in Chinatown  
English Worshiping Community**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the auspices of the Presbytery of San Francisco's Committee on Ministry, the Mission Study Team ("MST") was tasked to study and report on the past and current culture and health of the English Worshiping Community ("EWC"), and compose a mission statement that provides direction for the church's journey "as a proclaiming, witnessing, and serving Christian congregation over the next 5 - 10 year period, or during the tenure of the next pastor."<sup>1</sup>

The team began meeting in May 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and all meetings were held via Zoom technology. To develop this Mission Study Report, the team engaged in Reflection with the EWC, Fact Gathering, Data Analysis, and Envisioning. The team's intent was not to make its own conclusions regarding the priorities of the EWC. Rather, it was to listen to the ideas, dreams, goals, and priorities of EWC members, and discern how God—in this time and space—is calling the EWC to mission. This was done through written questionnaires and surveys to EWC members and other stakeholders, Town Hall meetings, meetings with EWC partners, and focus groups. Many helpful suggestions were given regarding what the EWC's priorities should be and how it might achieve them. **It is the responsibility of the English Commission, other church leadership, and the new pastor, to develop a viable and realistic plan for implementation with the necessary strategy and resources.**

In this extraordinary historical moment, we move forward into transformation. We shall allow ourselves to adapt, equip, and take risks, while being grounded in God's grace, united in spiritual fellowship, and faithful to our call to discipleship. We strive to be the visible and active body of Christ that brings hope to those in need. "Behold, I am doing a new thing. Can you perceive it?" (Isaiah 65:16-17)

The team developed the following Mission Statement:

*The English Worshiping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is a community of faith, biblically grounded and acting faithfully in the spirit of Micah 6:8 "to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God." We are a Matthew 25 worshiping community, committed to lifting up the three priorities identified by the PC(USA): building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. We strive to nurture and support our members through every age and season of life. 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Mission Study Guide for Congregations* (revised by COM October 2012), p. 8.

The following goals were identified by EWC members as the highest priority to them. They are *not* ranked in order of importance:

- Strengthen Our Identity as a “Matthew 25 Church,” by Strengthening EWC’s Congregational Vitality, Dismantling Structural Racism, and Eradicating Systemic Poverty
- Build Stronger Relationships With The PCC Cantonese and Mandarin Worshiping Communities
- Continue to Engage in Missional Action, Beginning In Chinatown and Extending Into The World
- Build and Invest in a Hybrid Model of Church, To Create An In-Person and Online Worshiping Community

These goals are summarized in the following graphic:



## HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHINATOWN

The church opened its doors on November 6, 1853, as the first Chinese Protestant church in North America. Designated a “foreign mission” by the Presbyterian denomination, it was not until 1925 that jurisdiction of the church was transferred from the Board of Foreign Missions to the Board of National Missions. After changing its name from the Presbyterian Chinese Mission Church, the congregation continued to be known as the Chinese Presbyterian Church until 1958. The church’s current name, the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown (“PCC”), emphasizes the church’s recognition of its social context and commitment to the San Francisco Chinatown community.

As Presbyterians, the EWC is part of the Reformed tradition of theology and practice, in faithfulness to Christ, under authority of Scripture, and guided by its Confessions.

Our church originally opened its doors to a primarily Cantonese-speaking immigrant population, whose members faced segregation, oppression and racism, most notably in the form of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a discriminatory federal immigration law, which was not repealed until 1943. To address changing demographics and to meet growing needs, PCC expanded beyond its original Cantonese worship service to include an evening English worship service in 1944. A Mandarin worship service was added in 1954, and a morning English service in 1959. In 1993, the two English worship services combined into one morning service.

In 2003, PCC completed a major remodeling, retrofit and expansion of its over 100-year-old building. These upgrades and renovations allow the church to better serve elderly and disabled worshippers, and provide space for hospitality and service to the community.

Throughout its history and up to the present, PCC has placed an emphasis on prophetic faith at work in society. For over a century, it partnered in ministry with Donaldina Cameron House (“DCH”), a Presbyterian mission located two blocks away. The church has a long tradition of supporting social services, education, affordable housing, youth programs, and other justice ministries, while proclaiming the Gospel in worship, prayer, study, work, and fellowship. Recent ministries include a weekly food distribution pantry, adult English language classes, and support for children and families who live in Chinatown’s crowded Single Room Occupancy (“SRO”) unit buildings.

PCC is also the sponsor/owner of the Mei Lun Yuen affordable housing project, located also two blocks away from the church. The planning, community advocacy and construction of the Mei Lun Yuen project took over ten years, beginning in the early 1970’s. Mei Lun Yuen was Chinatown’s first experience with a HUD-financed development, under its now-defunct Section 236 program, where HUD directly subsidized construction and provided rental subsidies in order to maintain affordability for residents. PCC membership decided to seek sponsorship of Mei Lun Yuen, and was eventually selected due to the community’s trust in the church and its strong leadership and proven commitment to Chinatown for over a century. A committed PCC Housing Committee met hundreds of times over the project period. The committee met numerous

technical, political, legal, and funding challenges with determination, patience, and grit. Mei Lun Yuen was finally completed and occupancy began in May 1982, with 152 senior housing units and 33 multi-bedroom family units.

A major challenge occurred in 1987 when public allegations began to circulate about pastor emeritus F.S. Dick Wichman, who had retired in 1977. Dick Wichman was accused of a long history of molestation and sexual misconduct/abuse perpetrated against boys and young men in the DCH and PCC programs. When it became evident that Wichman might still be perpetrating such abuse, the information was relayed to the Presbytery of San Francisco, which retained formal authority and oversight over Wichman as a Presbyterian minister, DCH as a Presbyterian mission, and PCC as a local church. Subsequent Presbytery investigations substantiated the allegations and formal charges were issued. However, in 1988, Wichman demitted and renounced his ordination as a Presbyterian minister, thus terminating the jurisdiction of the Presbytery over him and ending the proceedings. There was no legal (criminal or civil) adjudication of the matter either.

Members of the church and DCH were shocked and reeled in disbelief. Divisive “camps” formed among those who believed the charges and those who were in denial. By the time of Reverend Cal Chinn’s arrival in 1990, the subject matter had become one that was uneasily or rarely spoken about. This silence can further be viewed in the context of a culturally Chinese community where it is unacceptable to speak of negative feelings, sexual matters, and to accuse an elder authority figure of misconduct.

Not until 2002, when the DCH Board of Directors established a Healing Task Force and brought the entire issue to light, did the process of reconciliation and healing begin to occur. Pastor Cal participated in work with the DCH Board and staff, which led to the formation of healing workshops and resources, the provision of funds for counseling, action from the Presbytery of San Francisco and the Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly, and the development of awareness and training needs. The transformative work of overcoming both individual and collective trauma continued through the tenures of Reverend David Mote, Reverend Kimberly Elliot and Reverend Donald P. Hammond. (Note: The reader is referred to [www.ourhealingjourney.org](http://www.ourhealingjourney.org) for further information and resources on this issue.)

Throughout its history, PCC has been an active training ground for Asian American church leadership. Over 50 seminarians and church workers, and even greater numbers of others, have gone into community leadership vocations or serve the church in volunteer lay leadership positions at all levels of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The PCC community continues to encourage members to be a voice for others, and equips lay leaders to participate in efforts in community building, justice issues, and compassion for all.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CHINATOWN

PCC is one congregation with three language worshipping communities: Cantonese, English, and Mandarin. This structure is unique within the denomination. Each language worshipping community nominates and elects up to nine elders each, and together they comprise one Session of PCC. Currently, only the EWC elects deacons, who serve in support of the programs and operations of their language community and function as the caring arm of the group.

The elders of each language group, along with their language group's moderator, meet monthly as Commissions, planning for the life and programs of their respective worshipping community. Each worshipping community has the authority to elect its own slate of elders and deacons, set its own budget and programming, and approve the Terms of Call for its pastor. A report of the elected elders and deacons and the Terms of Call for their respective pastor is presented by each Commission at the trilingual Annual Congregational meeting, which takes place in the fall of each year.

PCC is also a 501(c)(3) corporation subject to the laws of the State of California. As such, members of the Session serve as officers of the Corporation. Elections for the Corporation, along with business decisions requiring a vote, are accomplished during the Annual Congregational meeting. In addition, members of the church serve on the board of the Mei Lun Yuen housing corporation. As sponsor/owner of the Mei Lun Yuen, the Board of Director by-laws allow only PCC church members to serve, who hold the responsibility to maintain the low-cost housing for the community.

The Session meets quarterly to make decisions and plan for items which affect the life of the whole congregation, such as building issues, budget, and joint programs. The Session further receives reports of activities from the Commissions and takes actions required by the Book of Order. The Session has one budget which is funded by the Commissions allocating a per capita amount based on membership of the language communities. The Clerk of Session documents and supports the work of the Session. Efforts to function and relate as one church united in purpose and mission, as opposed to three separate entities, require intentionality, commitment, prayer and work.

The members of PCC are sisters and brothers in Christ and, as in all families, have their differences. Owing to members' diverse cultural and historical backgrounds and theological perspectives, unity does not mean members always agree. Yet even when there are strong differences, the members of PCC choose to be one church and, in Christ's love, continue to work together as one church family.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PCC ENGLISH WORSHIPING COMMUNITY

This Mission Study Report is for the EWC upon the vacancy of the pastoral position funded by the English Commission ("EC") budget. For the purposes of this report, the structures of the Cantonese and Mandarin worshiping communities will not herein be discussed.

The EC is composed of up to nine elders, who are responsible for the governance and nurture of the English worshiping community. There are also up to nine deacons, functioning as the "caring arm" of the community.

The EC oversees five committees, which are (1) Mission and Evangelism (2) Resource (3) Worship and Nurture (4) Personnel, and (5) Nominating. The EC also oversees the work of the Deacons.

In recent years, it has become more difficult to fill a complete slate of elders and deacons. Fortunately, for the first time in many years, a full slate of both elders and deacons is ready to serve in 2022. Similarly, participation in the EWC's standing committees remains static. Outreach for fuller participation, particularly on the part of youth and young adults, is needed.

EWC's Women's Fellowship has a long history, with members also participating at regional and national levels of Presbyterian Women. A number of small groups, called "Covenant Groups" (see page 20), also exist, consisting of PCC members generally organized around location and/or age or lifestyle.

## PASTORAL LEADERSHIP - HISTORY

For most of our history, PCC has called and paid for a Cantonese pastor. The position is currently filled by the Rev. Dr. Sze-Yan (Ronnie) Kaan, who has served since 2011. The Mandarin community was established in 1954, and is currently served by a Commissioned Lay Pastor (CLP, also called a Commissioned Ruling Elder), Pastor Guo Hao.

From 1947 until 1987, the EWC relied on pastoral leadership from the clergy staff of DCH. The pastors from DCH were accepted at PCC as part of the collegial pastorate. While their salaries were paid by DCH, some funding for staff benefits was paid by PCC. Former pastor F.S. Dick Wichman was the first of these called pastors, serving from 1947-1977. Many pastors from DCH staff rotated preaching responsibilities for the English worship services and fulfilled other pastoral needs in addition to their full-time positions at DCH. During those years, a steady stream of collegiate pastors provided the EWC with a foundation of nurturing Christian education, and a focus on faith in action. The affiliation with DCH also, primarily through its strong youth programs, provided a steady stream of members who were welcomed into the PCC family.



During the 1980's, there were changes in the dynamics of the leadership and relationships of the Chinese-speaking and English-speaking members of the church. Previously unexpressed feelings of oppression came to light and accusations began to be expressed in long and difficult Session meetings, to the extent that it became evident that the pastors and the elders could no longer function productively together. In June 1985, the Session requested assistance from the Committee on Ministry of the San Francisco Presbytery. By 1987, an Administrative Commission conducted an investigation, which resulted in a recommendation that the Cantonese pastor resign. That pastor left with three-quarters of the Cantonese congregation to form another church. Additionally, PCC settled certain disputes by giving that group a large portion of building fund monies, which had been raised in prior years.

The Rev. Robert McKenzie was appointed head-of-staff in 1987 by the Administrative Commission to restore the peace and unity of PCC. Under Rev. McKenzie's leadership, a new structure was designed. This new structure established three separate and coequal language Commissions under one Session, allowing each language worshiping group more flexibility in its own programming. This unique form of governance remains in operation. To alleviate tension and potential feelings of English dominance, the close relationship of the DCH pastors was distanced, and they were no longer administratively involved in church governance.

In March 1990, the Rev. Calvin Chinn was installed as the first called pastor to the English-speaking ministries, and he served until his retirement in June 2006. From 2007 until 2010, the English Commission contracted with the Rev. David Mote as interim pastor. In 2010, the Rev. Kimberly Elliot was called, and she served until her resignation in 2018. In May 2019, the Rev. Donald P. Hammond was retained by the EC to serve as the interim minister of word and sacrament, and he serves up to this time of writing. The ministries of Rev. Chinn, Rev. Elliot, and Rev. Hammond are discussed in further detail, below.

As Reverends Chinn, Elliot, and Hammond were leading the English-speaking worshiping community, there were several changes in clergy personnel taking place in the Cantonese and Mandarin leadership. In the Cantonese worshiping community, a vacancy in permanent pastoral leadership since 2002 was finally filled in July 2011, by the Rev. Dr. Sze-Yan (Ronnie) Kaan. Since then, the Cantonese worshiping community and ministries have increased in growth and vitality. In addition to Sunday worship, Bible study and prayer, choir, and fellowships, the Cantonese have engaged in outreach ministries to the Chinatown community. Since August 2015, the Cantonese worshiping community has co-organized the evangelism event of "*Jesus Loves Chinatown*". This includes passing out gospel leaflets, musical evangelism concerts and outreach training programs. The Cantonese worshiping community has also provided adult English conversation classes, youth karate classes, music classes, and tutoring classes for elementary students, in order to bring Chinatown neighbors into the church to hear the gospel and learn about the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The Mandarin worshiping community had been served by the Rev. David Kao from 1976-2000, and by the Rev. David Pan from 2003-2013. After a three-year search, Guo Hao from mainland China was retained in June 2016 to lead the youth and young adult fellowship. Subsequently, he

was hired to be the half-time leader of the Mandarin worshipping community. After his graduation from the American Chinese Evangelical Seminary in December 2018, Guo Hao was commissioned by the San Francisco Presbytery as the CLP for PCC's Mandarin worshipping community. In addition to Sunday worship services, Pastor Guo Hao and the Mandarin Commission oversee ongoing programs such as the Ling Hsiang Senior Fellowship, the Ling Feng Family Fellowship, Ling Ching Young Adult Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, choir groups and prayer groups.

## ENGLISH WORSHIPING COMMUNITY PASTORAL LEADERSHIP (1990-Present)

### **The Reverend Calvin Chinn**

Rev. Calvin Chinn, called to PCC in March 1990, was the first pastor who devoted 100% of his time to leading and nurturing the English-speaking members. As noted above in the previous section, Pastor Cal arrived at a time of conflict and tension between the language worshipping communities of PCC. This climate emphasized the need for a ministry of healing, reconciliation, and new growth.

Under Pastor Cal's leadership, the pre-existing evening and morning English worship services were combined into one morning service. Pastor Cal envisioned a single, intergenerational worship service that would unify the two worship groups, which had previously been predominantly young, single adults connected with the DCH program in the evening service, and older or married adults with families in the morning service.

Members appreciated Pastor Cal's sermons for their Biblical and theological enlightenment, as well as practical real-life challenges to being the church in their everyday lives. Pastor Cal was skilled in pastoral care, and members were comforted and counseled through life events, both joyous and sorrowful. He encouraged the formation of a number of covenant groups, which gathered regularly for fellowship, study, and support. A strong Sunday morning children's program led by a dedicated layperson under Pastor Cal's guidance, nurtured numerous children into active participation at PCC. Through the Urban Ministry Program of the San Francisco Theological Seminary and Presbytery of San Francisco partnership, Pastor Cal also mentored and trained a member of the EWC as an Urban Intern (1997- 1999) and later brought this person on as a staff associate for one year. Pastor Cal also opened up channels of listening and respectful communications between the English, Cantonese, and Mandarin worshipping communities, and helped the church move forward in the building remodeling campaign. He also was instrumental in beginning the healing work from clergy sexual abuse (referred to in our Church History section).

### **The Reverend Kimberly Elliot**

The 2008 EWC Mission Study was issued as part of the process of calling a new pastor after Pastor Cal's retirement. That study set forth six goals and approximately 36 sub-goals, with one, three, and five-year objectives. It stated, "We envision our church family as cross-cultural and inter-generational, compelling and relevant to a new generation". The Pastor Nominating Committee created the job description which brought Pastor Kimberly to the EWC two years later. The description stated:

*"As an intergenerational congregation, we desire a pastor who...will promote growth in all aspects of our church ministry. We are adventurous and seek a like-minded pastor who is willing to try new things...Most of all, we are praying for a pastor who feels the call to lead us in our continuing spiritual journey—someone who does not walk on water, but can stand up and balance inside the boat!"*

In April 2014, four years after Pastor Kimberly was hired, the EWC attempted to clarify its goals, and generated an *Envisioning Statement* which read, "Empowered by God's love through Christ, we welcome, celebrate and serve our community". Subsequently, two priorities were extracted from the Mission Study: 1) intergenerational worship and 2) enriched Christian Education. The EWC focused on these two items because it recognized it was not possible to carry out all of the goals and objectives in the 2008 Mission Study. The theme of reaching out to youth, and making worship resonate with them, was carried forward from the Mission study as a priority for Pastor Kimberly.

In 2011, the EWC nominated an openly gay person to be an elder of the church. Members of the Mandarin worshipping community objected to this, and were prepared to leave the church if it ordained a gay person. Pastor Kimberly worked with the Mandarin pastor to find a solution that would allow the communities to remain together, while disagreeing. Ultimately, the Mandarin suggested PCC change the church bylaws to allow each worshipping community to elect and ordain its own officers. By affording respect to the Mandarin worshipping community, they were given the opportunity to develop a creative solution to their differing theological perspective, and maintain a healthy relationship with the EWC that continues today. In her time with PCC, Pastor Kimberly opened the church to LGBTQ issues, new theological concepts, different styles of worship, and showed the EWC there were many ways to achieve spirituality. She highlighted the sacred place of women, and worked to involve youth in worship. Importantly, she identified the need for the EWC to engage in adaptive change, and to meet the challenges of declining membership in the Christian church nationwide. She was instrumental in bringing to PCC the weekly Food Pantry, which opened in October 2016 after many months of planning and preparation.

### **Events Leading to Reverend Elliot's Resignation**

In the years after Pastor Kimberly was hired, EWC members asked church leadership how they could voice comments and concerns about her performance and their relationships with her.

There was no formal feedback mechanism or precedent for doing this, so the EWC Personnel Committee discussed with Pastor Kimberly a process for conducting a pastoral evaluation.

In September 2017, Pastor Kimberly went on sabbatical for four months. While she was away, her Terms of Call were reviewed at the EWC's annual meeting. Dissatisfaction was expressed that there was still no mechanism in place for doing a pastoral evaluation, despite calls for this during Terms of Call for the past several years. A series of town hall meetings followed, to discuss concerns about the health and direction of the church. It was decided the meetings should not focus solely on the pastor while she was away, so the questions centered on identifying the EWC's core values, strengths, weaknesses, and ideas for improvement. The EC heard the discomfort people felt as the changes were implemented in the style of worship.

Following the meetings, the EC instructed the Personnel Committee to conduct its inaugural pastoral performance evaluation. As Pastor Kimberly had never been given criteria by which her performance was to be evaluated, it was recognized it would be unfair to evaluate her performance. So instead, the Personnel Committee conducted a *Congregational Feedback Survey*, whose purpose was to equip the EWC's pastor to succeed, develop pastoral goals and objectives, and provide the basis for an annual pastoral performance process.

The responses to the survey ranged the full spectrum from exceeding to not meeting expectations. There was a disconnect regarding members' understanding of Pastor Kimberly's primary goals, objectives, and roles, and the need for change was validated. In retrospect, Pastor Kimberly represented a big change for the EWC. When it advertised for the position she filled, the EWC said it was an "adventurous" congregation, which was open to alternative styles of worship, and different forms of liturgy, music, and dance. One of its top priorities was to attract and engage a younger generation of worshippers through intergenerational worship. However, Pastor Kimberly's efforts to execute these priorities caused discomfort and dissatisfaction among some members, and was met with resistance. Ultimately, Pastor Kimberly felt she could no longer be effective in leading the EWC and resigned her position in August 2018.

The EWC recognizes there was a disconnect between its Mission Study's objectives and its acceptance of the way its pastor carried them out. The EWC acknowledges the need to develop healthier processes to communicate and share its concerns about worship style and church leadership. Importantly, the EWC needs to ensure its members understand the present Mission Study Report and take ownership of it. Another takeaway the EWC has learned is the need to be realistic about the number of goals it expects its pastor to accomplish.

The EWC is grateful for Pastor Kimberly's seven years of ministry to the EWC, and the growth she afforded the Community. Since April 2020, the Commission, in collaboration with Interim Pastor Donald P. Hammond, has conducted two performance reviews of EWC's pastor. With a commitment to conducting annual reviews going forward, the EC and EWC are well positioned for the future to work as partners in mission with the pastor.

### **The Reverend Donald P. Hammond**

Following the resignation of Pastor Kimberly in August 2018, PCC's EWC again turned to its strong lay "infrastructure" of the EC, Deacons, committees, Women's Fellowship, covenant groups, and active, committed volunteers. Sunday worship services were led by, and pastoral counseling was provided by, former parish associates, a number of teaching elders/ministers within its own community, and guest pulpit supply.

In May 2019, the English Commission called the Reverend Donald P. Hammond to serve as the EWC's interim pastor. Pastor Don, a Bay Area native who had recently been serving in interim ministries on the East Coast, brought his extroverted, relational style, along with skills and experiences both in the secular and religious arenas. Pastor Don was charged with leading PCC through its transitional period, including the process of the Mission Study and the formation of the Pastor Nominating Committee.

With Pastor Don's energetic leadership, PCC continued to thrive. However, beginning in March 2020, unprecedented and historic challenges came with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Shelter-in-place orders and a shutdown of in-person worship services, committee meetings, fellowship opportunities, pastoral and deacon visitations, and other activities required a sharp pivot, as PCC leadership was forced to adapt to a new reality. No guidance or road map existed on how to survive and thrive in a global pandemic, as no one alive had ever experienced such a disruptive and deadly crisis, which brought profound personal and societal upheaval. During this period, great disruptions also occurred in the forms of climate change, nearby raging wildfires, a particularly divisive presidential election, the murder of George Floyd, and the increase in and more violent forms of Anti-Asian hate. All of this brought into stark vision the reality of systemic racism, negatively impacted Chinatowns across the nation—including San Francisco's—and re-ignited a racial justice movement.

Pastor Don, the EC, and a dedicated force of lay volunteers quickly rose to the challenge. Worship services were conducted over YouTube, with the guidance of skilled IT experts within the PCC community, and proved to be as well-attended as, and more far-reaching than, pre-pandemic physical worship services. Committee meetings, post-worship "Tea Time", Women's Fellowship, Bible study, and covenant group meetings took place using Zoom technology. The Deacons enlisted help from members of the congregation and contacted each person on the PCC roster through phone calls, e-mails, postcards and letters, and the occasional social-distanced personal visit. A Compassion Fund was established by the Deacons to assist those experiencing economic hardship. Mission projects, such as support for children and families living in Chinatown's SROs, continued in different forms. And, in the face of widespread economic suffering, PCC met the issue of rising food insecurity by continuing and expanding its Food Pantry.

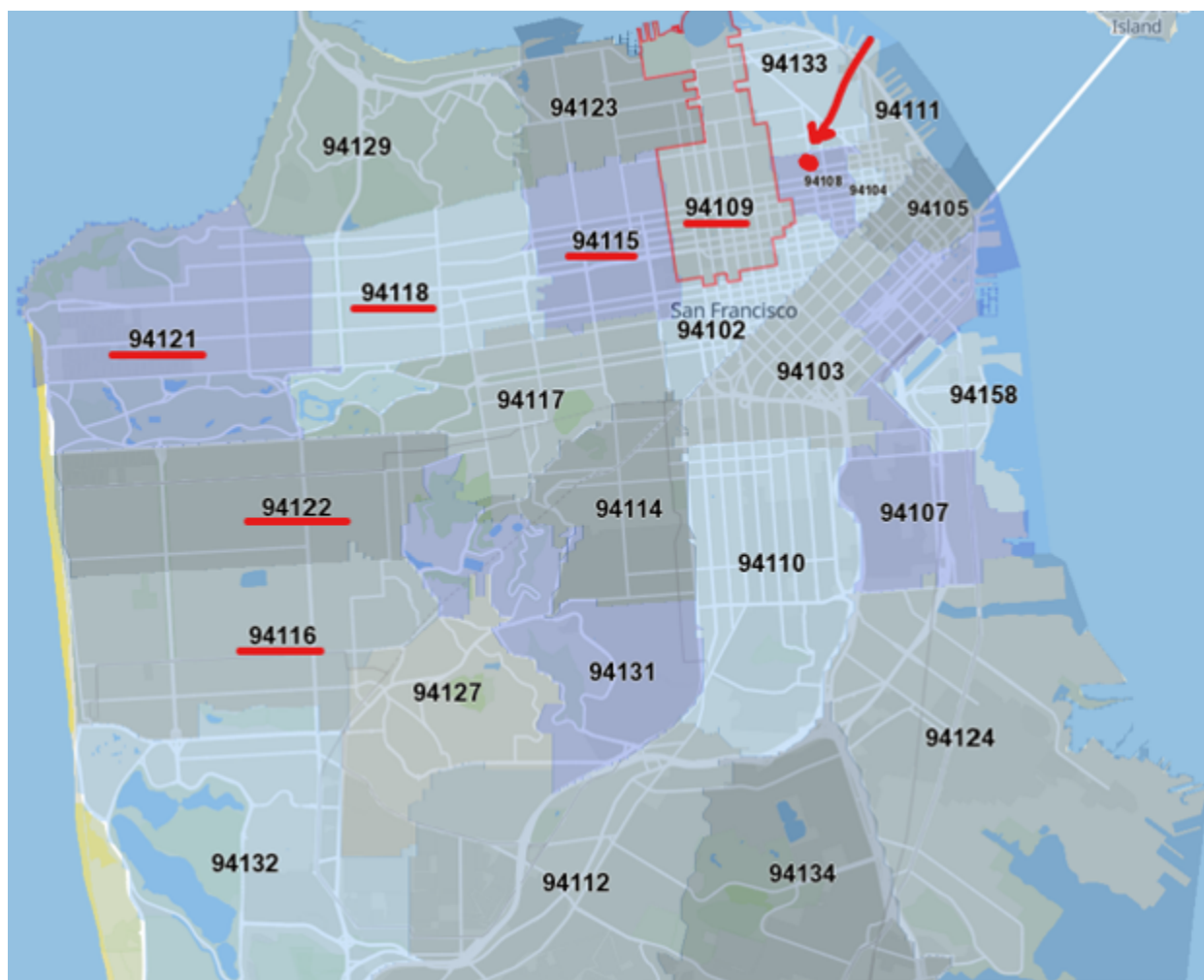
Pastor Don's leadership continues to help the EWC understand and cope with its members' personal and collective journeys through this time of disruption, sorrow, and profound change. His work also led the EC to invite Dr. Russell Mark Jeung, Professor of Asian American Studies at SFSU and architect of STOP AAPI HATE to speak on "Be Like Water: A Faith Response to

Stop AAPI Hate.” Pastor Don also served as a commissioner of the San Francisco Presbytery at the 225th General Assembly. He was invited to co-author a resolution to the Committee on Race and Gender Justice, [\[RGJ-14\] On Violence and Hate Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders](#), which was passed unanimously.

God remains in our midst, offering comfort and solace, and challenging the EWC to examine anew what it means to minister, fellowship, act as the beloved community, and do the labor of reckoning, reimagining, and remaking.

## EWC MEMBERSHIP - DATA & ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH WORSHIPING COMMUNITY

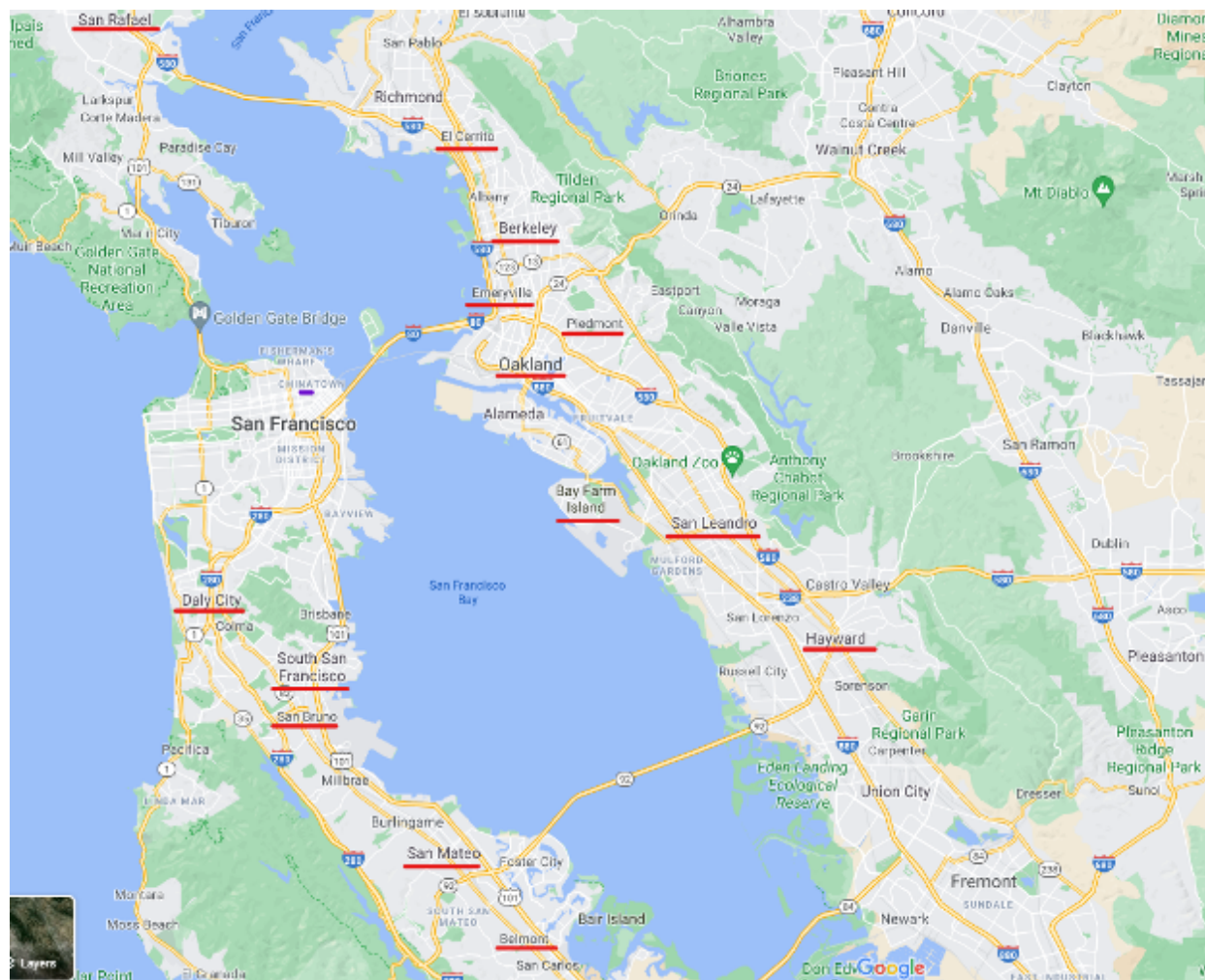
PCC is located in the heart of the Chinatown community. However, very few of the EWC’s members live within walking distance of the church; thus, the EWC is a “commuter church”. Approximately 65% of its 118 members (as of 12/31/2021’s report to GA) live in San Francisco, and travel between one to eight miles to PCC. **Figure 1** shows underlined zip codes from where most of the members commute.



**Figure 1: Underlined San Francisco Zip Codes where PCC members reside; red arrow points to PCC**

The remaining non-SF members live in surrounding Bay Area counties traveling between 8 to 40 miles to PCC. This is shown in cities underlined in red in **Figure 2**, below.

Interestingly, one of the benefits of live streaming of worship during the pandemic is that the EWC has become less of a “commuter church”, and its outreach extends to several other states, as well as to one person in the United Kingdom.



**Figure 2: Underlined are some cities of members outside of SF Bay area who attend PCC**

One may wonder why the EWC’s members are so willing to commute to PCC from all reaches of the Bay Area. From the 1950’s through the 1970’s, many of the youth who attended the DCH youth program lived within walking distance of both DCH and PCC as part of their integrated ministries. Many attended the same elementary, middle, and high schools together, were married at the church, and had children who also attended and grew up in the church. Their Christian roots grew deep as they lived in Chinatown, and PCC became their “home church.” Even as most were able to buy homes outside of Chinatown in other areas of the City or outside the San Francisco Bay Area, many remained faithful



and continued to travel into Chinatown to attend worship. Furthermore, the presence of this primarily Asian American church, located squarely in Chinatown, reinforced the sense of home, identity, and community.

**Figure 3** below shows the count of members from 2008 through 2021, and the count and percentage change in membership each year. For 2018 (yellow shade), losses were a result of updating the membership rolls. In the 13 years since the 2008 Mission Study Report, membership has decreased by 13.9% or 19 members, from 137 to 118 (blue shade). Note that as of December 31, 2021, membership increased by two members from 2020, for a total EWC membership of 118.

Year	# Members	# Difference	% Membership Change
2008	137	0	0.0%
2009	134	-3	-2.2%
2010	133	-1	-0.7%
2011	132	-1	-0.8%
2012	132	0	0.0%
2013	132	0	0.0%
2014	136	4	3.0%
2015	136	0	0.0%
2016	135	-1	-0.7%
2017	133	-2	-1.5%
2018	120	-13	-9.8%
2019	118	-2	-1.7%
2020	116	-2	-1.7%
2021	118	+2	1.7%

**Figure 3: Count of members, gains/losses and percentage change**

**Figure 4** below shows two breakdowns entered for the 2021 General Assembly Statistics for the EWC that provide a quick overview of the EWC's composition.

1. Age category breakdown reveals that 67.8% of EWC's members are age 56 and older.



2. 91.5% of the EWC's members are second through sixth generation Asian American, primarily Chinese American, with two Japanese Americans, one Filipino American and one Korean/Chinese American. 5.1% are White and 3.4% are Multi-Racial.

Age Grouping	# of Members	% of Members	# of Asians	# of Whites	# of Multi-Racials
25 & under	10	8.5%	10		
26 - 40	20	16.9%	19		1
41 - 55	8	6.8%	8		
56 - 70	35	29.7%	31	2	2
71+	45	38.1%	40	4	1
<b>Total Distribution</b>	118	100.0%	108	6	4

**Figure 4: Age/Race and percentage breakdown of members as of 12/31/2021**

Until around the year 2000, most members of the EWC came through the youth programs at DCH. The DCH program emphasized leadership development, volunteerism, basic Christian values and education skills, with the result that participants were able to easily step into leadership roles at PCC. During periods when the EWC was without a pastor, lay leadership capably oversaw the operations of the life of the EWC. While there is no longer a yoked ministry between the EWC and DCH, EWC members continue to support DCH programs as board members, volunteers, and donors.

When the yoked ministry between DCH and the EWC was discontinued in 1989, the flow of DCH youth to the church gradually declined. During Pastor Kimberly's tenure, several youth and young adults, including those whose parents were active at PCC, were baptized or confirmed. Unfortunately, a pattern emerged in which the young folks who grew up in the church often did not remain active in PCC, because they would move away for college or join other churches whose membership was closer to their age. These trends have contributed to the current dearth of youth and young adult church members. EWC's lack of focus on the development of youth, young adult, and family-oriented ministries, along with societal and secular trends, has meant the EWC is populated with an aging membership and the lack of a younger generation to maintain the continuum of leadership.

### **Finances and Analysis**

Members of the EWC are mostly in professional careers or are retired on fixed income. A comparison between 2008 and 2021 (**Figure 5**) shows pledge amounts increased by 28.9%,

with a slight increase in membership and pledge units. From 2008 through 2021, receipts sometimes exceeded expenses, alternating with some years when expenses exceeded receipts. When possible, funds were placed in reserve for future efforts and projects. During the 2021 pandemic, PCC continued to follow the mandate of the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Presbytery by discontinuing in-person worship services and activities. Thus, similar to 2020, loose offering remained low as in 2021—approximately \$3,500. However, with God’s blessings, the EWC received two unexpected generous donations amounting to \$35,000 added to its surplus. As a result, the EWC was able to be in the black for 2021.

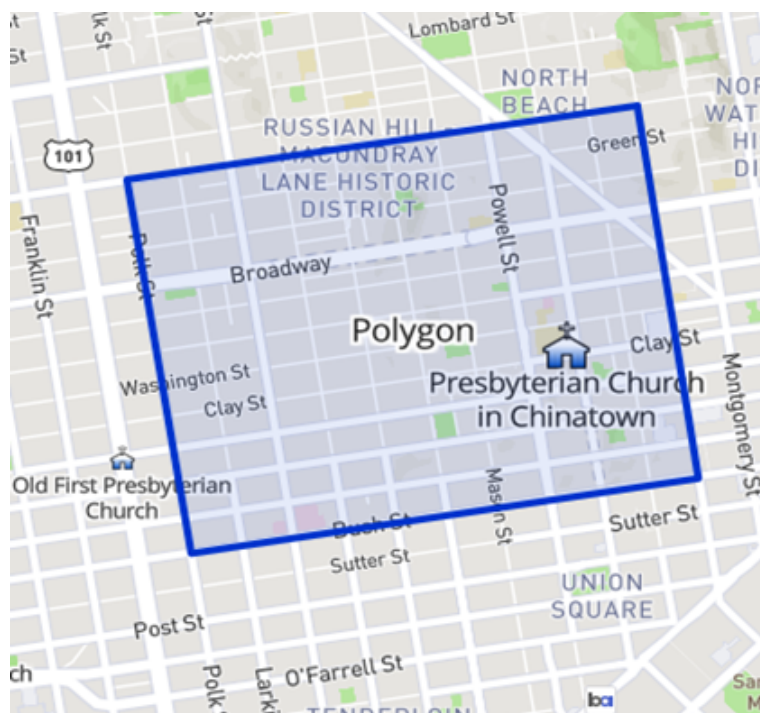
The EWC maintains a commitment to give approximately 10% of its budget to mission support, either through the General Assembly or directly to other national, regional or local non-profit agencies and causes through its Mission & Evangelism Committee.

Year	# of Members	# of Pledge Units	Amount Pledged	Total Receipts	Total Expenses
2008	137	87	\$152,255	\$169,955	\$162,705
2009	134	86	\$162,160	\$179,206	\$163,196
2010	133	87	\$168,856	\$179,436	\$175,222
2011	132	84	\$158,708	\$169,633	\$175,165
2012	132	85	\$168,513	\$179,748	\$175,553
2013	132	80	\$183,796	\$194,554	\$187,327
2014	136	88	\$187,412	\$197,381	\$189,614
2015	136	86	\$177,706	\$186,209	\$191,710
2016	135	86	\$183,058	\$193,199	\$200,215
2017	133	86	\$199,828	\$210,485	\$229,007
2018	120	82	\$185,345	\$194,250	\$205,423
2019	118	82	\$204,832	\$233,460	\$177,140
2020	116	74	\$207,924	\$215,633	\$192,417
2021	118	76	\$239,072	\$212,262	\$198,610

**Figure 5: Summary of Pledges and Expenses/Receipts 2008 - 2021 (notes below):**  
 Membership losses for 2018 (yellow shade) were a result of updating the membership rolls.

## CHINATOWN COMMUNITY DATA & ANALYSIS

The SF Presbytery MissionInsite Custom Demographics



*Polygon: Bush to Union, Kearny to Polk (Expanded Chinatown to North Beach)*

Chinatown is the densest urban neighborhood west of Manhattan, NY. According to the SF Planning Department, of the 20,000 people living in the center of Chinatown, more than one-half are over 60 years of age. 70% have a high school education or less. Of total households, 80% speak Asian languages, which implies first generation immigrants. Over 6,200 housing units are SRO units. One third of Chinatown households live in poverty. The following charts show data and projections from MissionInsite <https://www.presbyteryofsf.org/mission-insite/>:

Racial/Ethnic Trends: Detail	2010	2021	2026
Asian	21,421	21,797	21,385
Black/African American	655	690	683
Hispanic or Latino	2,127	2,269	2,244
White	14,791	15,545	15,298
Other	991	1,136	1,162

Declining population may be due to evictions, gentrification, the economy, loss of job opportunities, and/or overcrowded housing where families are forced to move away from Chinatown for less expensive and/or more appropriate housing.

<b>MissionInsite Data Outreach Opportunities: Children</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Early adolescent Ages 6 to 10 years old</b>	2,485	2,718
<b>Preschool Ages 3 to 5</b>	1,970	1,973

<b>MissionInsite Data Outreach Opportunities: Youth &amp; Young Adults</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Early Adolescent Ages 11-14</b>	1,573	No information available
<b>Late Adolescent Ages 15-19</b>	856	No information available
<b>Population Ages 20-24</b>	1,097	1,032

PCC is located less than one block from Gordon J. Lau Elementary School, which has 685 children in attendance. The EWC's Sunday School currently has no children attending; this was true even prior to the pandemic.

The EWC has provided 200 bags of school supplies annually for children living in SROs. Parents come with their children to the church to pick up the school supplies.

Every Saturday, the PCC Food Pantry distributes 200+ bags of groceries to seniors in Chinatown. Our volunteers represent an intergenerational cross-section of the City and Bay Area, and serve for reasons of faith, fellowship and community service.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to the Chinatown community. Restaurants, stores, and businesses - which are primarily "mom-and-pop" small businesses - have struggled to survive. Tourism has severely declined. Encroaching gentrification threatens existing housing stock. Unfairly, the community suffers blame for COVID-19 amid rising anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes. As society emerges from the pandemic, it remains to be seen how the community will evolve and respond to the many challenges and changes ahead. Of particular note for PCC is the opening, scheduled for late 2022, of the Chinatown Central Subway Station located directly adjacent to the church building. The church needs to be

prepared for an increase in foot traffic in and around the building, sanitation issues, and people who are unhoused.

## CURRENT PROGRAMS

This section describes the EWC's programs, much of which went online, or were suspended, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the EWC emerges from the pandemic, members are in the process of determining which programs to maintain, which to reimagine and reshape, which to leave behind as no longer useful or practical to continue, and which might be newly created and designed.

### **Christian Education**

Church School for Children - Formerly, there was a "Time for Children" during worship, followed by church school. Eventually the children/youth opted out of this participation during worship, in favor of church school only. The number of children participating gradually decreased over time due to the decline of families with children within the worshiping community. Currently classes have been suspended due to COVID-19.

School of Discipleship - This group, geared towards adults, formerly met every Sunday morning before worship. During the pandemic, the group moved to Monday morning Zoom classes, which continues to today with a dedicated core group of 15 who regularly attend.

Inquirer's Class - This group is held on an as-needed basis, for those interested in exploring church membership.

Seasonal Classes - Pre-pandemic, Advent Studies (four weeks) and Lenten Studies (six weeks) were held after worship on Sundays with approximately 35 - 40 members in attendance. Studies during the pandemic happened over Zoom during Tea Time.

### **Nurture and Fellowship**

Deacons - The Deacons provide an organized way of bringing the love of Christ to the EWC, and serve as the caring arm of the church through acts of compassion and concern. Before the pandemic, they coordinated a number of duties such as ushering, hosting post-worship Tea Time, inventory and stocking of church supplies, preparing communion elements, and assisting with memorials, potlucks, and celebrations. They coordinate meal trains and transportation, make visitations to the ill or homebound, maintain an ongoing prayer list which may be shared during worship and in the weekly *Ragsheet*, and keep in regular touch with EWC members to extend sympathy, concern, celebration, and gratitude. During the pandemic, in the absence of physical worship and fellowship, the Deacons, with help, contacted every person on the church roster to "check in". The Deacons also established the Compassion Fund, to provide emergency

monetary assistance to members of PCC's worshipping communities who might be experiencing financial hardship.

Women's Fellowship - A circle of Presbyterian Women ("PW") meets monthly on the third Monday evening for fellowship, study and dinner. A core group is active in regional and national Presbyterian Women events, as well. Some special study events are open to all PCC members. In addition, the group organizes an annual fall retreat, and leads the "Celebration of the Gifts of Women" worship each spring. PCC's Women's Fellowship also takes on at least two service activities a year: a Valentine's Day ministry to Safe House (a local agency which supports women who are experiencing housing instability, sexual exploitation or trafficking), and a Christmas gift support for a designated agency. During the pandemic, the group stayed connected via zoom and kept up with their bible study. Women's Fellowship collects dues of \$50/annually (suggested) to help fulfill its financial pledge to Presbyterian Women. The women also generously support PW's special offerings each year – Birthday Offering, Thank Offering and the Least Coin. Their budget includes a scholarship for PCC women to attend the national PW conference.

Covenant Groups - There are currently three affinity groups that meet regularly. They are organized generally around common interests, age, or geography:

1. The "*Dinks 'N Sinks*" (Double Income/Single Income, No Kids) began in the mid 2000's when eight couples gathered for fellowship and to discuss topics and issues of growing older without having children. This was valuable discussion and support, since in Chinese culture, having children was highly valued and couples without children were thought of differently. Discussion topics expanded to include caring for aging parents, ways of staying healthy, sharing travel adventures and retirement planning. The group is active in service projects (ie. cooking for the unhoused, toy and book drives, sending toys/books/school supplies for churches in the Philippines.) The group initially met twice a year but now only meets once a year, since members also participate in other covenant groups. The group was able to meet through the pandemic for fellowship and continued to pack and send boxes to the Philippines.

2. The "*East Bay Covenant Group*" includes East Bay PCC members, families previously connected to PCC and/or DCH, and persons new to a worshipping community. The group met monthly for several years for fellowship, support, discussion and study. After a dormant period, the East Bay Covenant Group was revived on Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to meet on Zoom. The group gathered for an in-person hike and lunch before the Delta surge.

3. The "*Wednesday Night Group*" began in the 1980's as a group of about 15 single, young adults from the Evening EWC, who gathered for bible study and fellowship. For 35+ years, the group continued to grow together, with many experiencing milestones of marriage, having and raising children, issues of middle and older age, and retirement. Study has been the core activity of this group (the Bible, popular Christian literature, topical subjects including world religions and current events issues affecting the community and world). The group has also

developed a strong fellowship component by gathering for meals, supporting the church's mission through leadership and participation in community activities (i.e. summer Christian sports teams), and sharing in Christ's faith journey together. The group continues with 12-15 participants with composition of the group changing over the years. It continues to gather weekly through the pandemic via Zoom and hopes to meet in person again in the near future.

Tea Time - Every Sunday after worship, Tea Time happens in PCC's Fellowship Hall. Members and friends rotate providing refreshments and sometimes a light lunch. Announcements are shared, folks check in with each other, and some members may meet to conduct church business at the back tables. During the pandemic, Tea Time was held via Zoom with intentional and focused conversations about faith issues. Tea Time is still held over Zoom with declining participation, and currently without a facilitator.

Young Adult Wellness Check - Young adults, ages 18-30, have been meeting with Pastor Don on a regular basis. This group was started online during the pandemic, and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Musical Accompanists and Special Music - PCC is blessed with a pool of talented volunteer musicians, who provide weekly live or digitized musical accompaniment for worship, including piano, organ, guitar, ukulele, and cello instrumentalists. There is no regular choir, but there is an email list of people who are invited to rehearse and sing during seasonal and special occasions, such as during Advent, Christmas, and Easter. During the pandemic, people were invited to record their individual singing of the upcoming Sunday's hymns. These voice recordings would be turned into a soundtrack of congregational singing that would be played during the live-streamed service since, at that time, singing was not allowed in the sanctuary due to the church's COVID safety guidelines. As of March 27, 2022, the congregation is allowed to sing out through their masks.

Summer Youth and Young Adult Sports Leagues - Youth and young adults from PCC and DCH participate in summer basketball and volleyball sports leagues sponsored by CROWN (formerly the Chinese Christian Union). PCC members serve as coaches, team spiritual leaders, and volunteers. CROWN will sponsor a summer basketball league in 2022, with the EC considering 2023 to sponsor youth and young adult sports teams again.

### **Service to the Community**

Donaldina Cameron House - Many English-speaking PCC members grew up in DCH youth programs and continue to have a strong commitment to its mission. Members contribute their time, talents, and financial resources to support DCH activities, including: the weekly (Thursday) Food Pantry; the annual Cameron Carnival, fundraising Gala, and Harvest Home food drive; serving as Board members; leading workshops at Westminster Woods Youth Camp; and preparing meals for the volunteers and youth of their weekly Friday Night Club and summer youth programs.



In 2002, a joint Healing Task Force of DCH and PCC was formed around the issue of the decades of clergy sexual abuse perpetrated by former DCH executive director and pastor Dick Wichman. After more than 18 years of work and ministry, the healing journey navigated by the various members of the DCH/PCC Healing Committee disbanded on September 14, 2021. Responsibilities have been passed to the DCH Board of Directors, the PCC EC, and the SF Presbytery partners. (As noted above, see [www.ourhealingjourney.org](http://www.ourhealingjourney.org) for further information and resources on this issue.)

Mei Lun Yuen - PCC has a strong history of support for affordable housing in Chinatown. During the 1970's, many church members were key leaders and advocates for senior and family unit housing in Chinatown. PCC sponsored the construction of Mei Lun Yuen, a senior and family housing complex located on the corner of Sacramento and Stockton Streets, with 185 units of housing (152 seniors and 33 families). Recently in 2022, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development mortgage was paid off and the title reverted to the Mei Lun Yuen Corporation, the board of which is composed of PCC members.

Food Pantry - In partnership with the Chinatown Community Development Center ("CCDC"), PCC has operated a food pantry every Saturday since 2015. The focus is to serve seniors and adults with disabilities who primarily live in District 3 and in SRO units. Members from the English, Cantonese, and Mandarin Worshiping Communities volunteer to distribute the food to 240+ people, and also hand-deliver food bags to approximately 24 frail elders in two CCDC-operated buildings. During the pandemic, young adults have been attracted to this program and served as regular volunteers. As food insecurity increases, the Food Pantry program has been steadily expanding to serve more people in need.

Single Room Occupancy Ministry - After the 1906 earthquake and fire which destroyed much of Chinatown, racism and housing discrimination prevented Chinese from living in and owning property outside of Chinatown. At the time, due to restrictive immigration laws, the Chinese population was mostly male, and rebuilt housing stock consisted primarily of single room occupancy unit buildings with communal kitchen and bathroom facilities. These SROs eventually became home not just to Chinatown bachelors, but to seniors and families as well. Because of the current high cost of living in San Francisco, many with extremely limited incomes have no option but to live in SRO unit buildings. Nevertheless, there have been concerns about gentrification, resulting in rising rents and the loss of affordable housing units. Approximately 400 families live in Chinatown SROs, the majority of whom are recent immigrants. In partnership with the CCDC, PCC members annually collect and organize school supplies bags for 150+ SRO children, and Christmas gifts for 100 SRO children. In addition, 60-65% of PCC's Food Pantry recipients are SRO residents.

Homeless Ministry - Once a year EWC members shop, cook and serve dinner to approximately 80 homeless men in a temporary shelter set up at a local church through the SF Interfaith Council's Winter Shelter program.



Joint Mission Trips - Past intergenerational mission trips include several trips to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and to the Philippines with Pipit Fund founders and PCC members Eunice Bejar and Gilbert Lee. A joint mission trip with Living Waters for the World Mission ("LWWM") in 2015 to help install a clean water system and provide educational activities in Guatemala included eight PCC members. A second trip with LWWM is anticipated when it is safe to travel without threat of COVID-19.

## PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL GOVERNANCE, EVENTS, AND INITIATIVES

PCC members have a long history of participation at all levels of the PC(USA), including the Presbytery of San Francisco, the Synod of the Pacific, national committees of the PC(USA), General Assembly, Youth Triennium, Presbyterian Women, Asian Presbyterian Women, and the National Asian Presbyterian Council.

PCC members also have a long history of support and participation in local nonprofit groups and committees, generally centered on issues of social justice, immigration, women's rights, and anti-racism. In addition to the CCDC and DCH, the additional groups which receive PCC support include: Safe House, Tsuru for Solidarity, the San Francisco Interfaith Council, the San Francisco Night Ministry, and the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity.

In 2021, a task force under the guidance of the EC recommended that the EWC become a Matthew 25 ("M25") community, with the three focuses of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. Three of the EWC's committees (Mission & Evangelism, Resource, Worship & Nurture) were charged with examining how M25 core values intersect with the work of the church through these committees. The committees self-reported the following current activities:

### 1. Mission & Evangelism ("M&E"):

- We help to foster congregational vitality by offering opportunities of service, advocacy, and education to members in combating the twin evils of institutional racism and systemic poverty in our society through our faith in Christ with the hope that in doing so, we witness to God's love.
- The committee receives monthly updates about the PCC Food Pantry, supports the members who help coordinate the pantry, and encourages EWC members to volunteer.
- We plan, organize, and coordinate service projects, mission trips, and advocacy.
- We promote three of the special offerings of the PC(USA) (One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy).

### 2. Resource:

- The Resource Committee provides oversight and administration of the EC budget and building utilization that support the programs and work of Mission & Evangelism,

Worship & Nurture, Personnel, Board of Deacons, and the common fund of the PCC budget, which includes M25 objectives.

### 3. Worship & Nurture:

- We provide direction to and support for Both/And worship so that everyone in our worshipping community can be a part of our services. Offering engaging worship opportunities is a key to congregational vitality.
- We organize workshops with outside facilitators for community members to have an opportunity to examine and enhance their faith.
- We provide support for classes and covenant groups such as the School of Discipleship, Wednesday Night Bible Study and Women's Fellowship so that our community is connected.
- We oversee communication with the community through the weekly *Ragsheet* and the Saturday email message. We also oversee maintenance of the English portion of the PCC website.
- In non-COVID times, we organized and supported retreats such as the Memorial Day Retreat at Westminster Woods as an opportunity for our community to build relationships and enhance their faith. We hope to resume this support in future years.
- In addition, we coordinate with the Mission and Evangelism committee to provide opportunities to highlight their work in dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty during worship and articles in communication media.
- We invite outside preachers to the pulpit who share good news of their work in other ministries to dismantle racism and eradicate poverty.

## MISSION STUDY TEAM: PROCESS

The MST process was guided by the requirements of the Presbytery of San Francisco, calling the team to engage seriously in Reflection, Gathering (Fact-Finding, Data & Analysis, Listening), and Envisioning. It should be noted that the MST's process took place during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and all meetings were held using Zoom technology, which proved challenging for the team's sense of cohesion and time management. It was only as the Omicron variant surge waned in April 2022, that the MST met in person for their first and only time for a productive and enjoyable retreat.

The MST's intent was not to make its own determination of what the goals and priorities of the EWC should be. Rather, it was to listen and sift through the many ideas, goals and priorities of the EWC members, and then discern as a team how God – in this time and space - is calling the EWC to mission. This was done through written questionnaires and surveys to EWC members and other stakeholders, Town Hall meetings, partner meetings and focus groups. A number of helpful suggestions were offered as to how the EWC might achieve these goals. However, it will be the responsibility of the new pastor with the EC to develop a viable and realistic implementation plan with the necessary strategy and resources.

## TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The first town hall meeting presented the responses gathered from a written survey to the EWC asking whether the 2018 recommendations of the Adaptive Change Team (“ACT”) were still relevant. The Mission Statement for the EWC drafted by the ACT was: “*We are called to foster intergenerational connection and growth within our church, through faithfully serving the wider world.*” The ACT identified four areas to achieve this goal: 1) focus on mission work, especially opportunities for service and mission trips; 2) increase the EWC’s focus on music in worship, fellowship, and folded into mission work and arts; 3) develop youth leadership through teaching and mentorship; and 4) better utilization of the church building through rentals.

In the three years since those Adaptive Change recommendations were made, our society has become increasingly polarized, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have suffered a surge in violence and hate against them, and there has been worldwide upheaval due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the MST wanted to see if the Adaptive Change goals were still the EWC’s top priorities. After two town hall meetings in May and July 2021, respondents endorsed the need to better understand the purpose and reason for the EWC’s actions as a Christian community, in light of recent history.

Several aspirational goals were stated:

- The EWC should be a *beacon of light* on issues involving civil rights and social justice, as it has been historically. This includes combating racism and anti-Asian hate.
- The EWC should be a *beloved community* that inspires and shows God’s love to others, and helps empower people.
- The EWC should be *builders* of its members’ personal spiritual health and growth, to better equip them while engaging in the world.

The MST was also encouraged to set realistic and achievable goals, which reflect the EWC’s top priorities.

A number of points were mentioned repeatedly in the town halls and survey responses, and are listed below. Some of them apply to multiple goals which were felt important, so should be given particular consideration:

- **Engage In Mission Work For The Benefit Of Chinatown.** PCC is the Presbyterian Church *in* Chinatown. Being in mission for the benefit of Chinatown is a core part of the church’s DNA, and remains a high priority. The EWC needs to be specific about whom it wants to serve, ways it can serve effectively, and the purpose/reason it serves.
- **Build Stronger Relationships With The Cantonese And Mandarin Worshiping Communities of PCC.** PCC currently has three worshiping communities which share the same building. If the EWC’s goal is to minister to the Chinatown community, it should start within its own church.

- **Strengthen the EWC's work as a Matthew 25 Worshiping Community.** As a M25 community, the EWC is committed to three areas of focus: 1) building congregational vitality 2) dismantling structural racism, and 3) eradicating systemic poverty. EWC members endorsed these as high priorities.

## PCC PARTNERS and FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

After the Town Hall meetings, and as a part of its continued fact-gathering and listening process, MST members met with PCC partners and facilitated focus groups:

### Donaldina Cameron House

The MST met with DCH Executive Director Michael Lee, along with the outgoing and incoming Board presidents, and another board member. They shared the DCH "*Presentation of Strategy Roadmap*", outlining a directional framework and strategic plan for the coming years.

There was an acknowledgment of the deep historical connections between DCH and PCC, and a discussion of a future partnership. There appears to be a synergy between PCC and DCH with regard to (1) service to the Chinatown community, and (2) a family-centered approach to programming. It was clear there is a desire in both institutions to maintain a partnership and a connection with each other. However, the EWC doesn't yet know what that will look like, and both institutions need to determine in what ways they can work together. Formerly, there was a DCH-PCC Partnership Committee, which is currently dormant.

### Cantonese and Mandarin Worshiping Communities

From a Zoom meeting with members of the Mandarin Worshiping Community ("MWC"), and written responses to questions from the Cantonese Worshiping Community ("CWC"), there definitely is a desire to strengthen relationships with each other. This would be at the level of the membership, and not just between the respective pastors and commissions.

It was noted that the MWC has a focus on attracting newcomers and international students, such as those attending the Academy of Art University. Unfortunately, many of these folks - especially young adults and students - eventually move away from San Francisco due to the high cost of living, and they discontinue their attendance at PCC.

The CWC focuses on newcomers, outreach through the Chinese Christian Union's *Jesus Loves Chinatown* Program, and ministry to Chinatown youth and young adults through ESL classes and tutoring. CWC young adults formerly operated a tutoring program and would like to start this program again. In addition, adult ESL classes, formerly led by EWC member Shar Hall, were popular and could be resumed.

From the partner conversations, there was agreement that there is a desire to find more common ground between all three worshipping communities. There was discussion of various ways to get to know each other better, and learn each other's perspectives on such topics as mission and theology. Small-group conversations with sharing of faith stories, joint Bible studies, retreats, and social/fellowship events could be developed. Intentionally building opportunities to understand, communicate with, and be in relationship with each other, is vital.

### **Young Adults Focus Group (ages 18-30)**

*"PCC was my first faith community and my first community as a whole."*

Participants expressed the following thoughts:

- We want authentic (intergenerational) relationships and to be seen and respected as individuals separate from and not the same as our parents or siblings.
- We desire to be seen as adults.
- We felt the love and acceptance of all the "aunties & uncles" at church as we were growing up.
- We go to church to reconnect in our relationships, but worship is dull and akin to "lectures".
- We want to hear the raw reality, and need you to get to the point more directly and quicker.
- We'd like to know the schedule/roadmap of sermon themes ahead of time. This might help motivate worship attendance.
- Music is important and spiritual to us, so we need a better balance between hymns and more contemporary music.
- We want to be able to open up and put hard questions about faith issues on the table without fear.
- We want to be able to ask questions in a safe place without being criticized, judged, or made to feel stupid.
- We want to be able to explore life outside the church without feeling trapped or judged.
- We seek to achieve a church/life balance which syncs together, not having to "code switch"<sup>2</sup> when walking into church.
- It would help if church elders could approach us to build relationships and get to know us better.
- We enjoy Pastor Don's way of relating to us; his candor, authenticity, and non-judgmental attitude help us feel comfortable with him.

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<sup>2</sup> "Code-switching" is the act of purposefully modifying one's behavior in a setting in order to accommodate different norms for appropriate behavior.

### **Young Families Focus Group**

*“Church provides experiences that parents and children can be exposed to together. We can share theology, service, family life, and creation of memories that are nurturing.”*

Participants stated that opportunities for service which families could do together was important. The culture, support, role modeling, and network of the “cool aunties and uncles” were very important. Inviting and attracting families to worship and church activities could be a more productive way to bring youth into the church, rather than seeking solely to attract youth. It was suggested that a music program or musical activities were desirable. Most parents of young families are extremely busy. Being a commuter church is a challenge, which saps time and energy.

### **Adult Focus Group (ages 30-70)**

*“I think it would make a difference if every member/attendee of the EWC is involved in a small group...Being involved in a group where the interaction between members makes someone feel included, supported, recognized...I would welcome more intergenerational programming.”*

Participants supported the goals of working for the benefit of the Chinatown community; developing closer ties to the Cantonese and Mandarin Worshiping Communities; and partnering with DCH's ministries. There was also support for acting in ways that reinforce the EWC's role as a M25 community. There was no support for the idea of hiring a part-time pastor, as all felt that a full-time pastor is necessary. A bilingual or trilingual administrative person/receptionist/greeter is needed to help all of the pastors and members.

### **Seniors Focus Group (ages 70+)**

*“Church is my second family - almost my first family - since my kids have grown and moved away. My contemporaries at church grew and are aging together...the church should nurture our spiritual growth throughout our lives.”*

Participants like activities during the daytime. They are less comfortable with evening activities, since many don't drive, or no longer feel safe driving at night. It is very appreciated when transportation is provided to church activities. Recent anti-Asian sentiment and violence targeted at the elderly also keeps the seniors indoors at night.

As frailty sets in, consideration should be given to home visitations, in-home communion, providing transportation, and other such services. “This community is slow to ask for its needs,” so it is good for the church community to anticipate and think through how to keep the EWC's seniors connected and supported. Some don't use technology; however the younger generations seem more comfortable with technology, and there was consensus that tech will increasingly be a part of the church experience. There was no support for the idea of a part-time pastor in this age group.

## REGARDING STAFFING

A question about staffing structure was raised in all of the focus groups, with some members suggesting that a part-time minister would suffice, given the skilled talents and gifts of the EWC's members and the presence of several clergy members associated with PCC. However, feedback from members, and direct experiences from those in church leadership, led to a consensus that a full-time minister is needed. The issue emerged as one of economic justice, given the expectations and demands of the job, and high cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area. The current pool of volunteers has not been sufficient to fill all of the slots for elders, deacons, church committees, and other functions such as the weekly food pantry. In addition, the number of lay leaders may decline in the coming years as the EWC's membership ages.

At the Town Halls and Focus Groups, there was support for hiring an administrative employee, preferably bi- or trilingual in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. There appear to be adequate funds for such an administrative position, so budgetary concerns are not a driving factor.

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The English Worshiping Community of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown is a community of faith, biblically grounded and acting faithfully in the spirit of Micah 6:8 "to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God". We are a Matthew 25 worshiping community, committed to lifting up the three priorities identified by the PC(USA): building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty. We strive to nurture and support our members through every age and season of life. 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.*

## ENVISIONING AND GOALS

As the first Chinese Presbyterian church in North America, PCC has embraced the Reformed tradition in theology and practice, and proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ. PCC has worked to meet the needs of the Chinatown community through evangelism and service for over 150 years. The EWC is committed to continuing this legacy, while also evolving to meet the needs of PCC members and the surrounding community towards spiritual formation and growth, and a just and loving world. In this extraordinary historical moment, we move forward into transformation. We shall allow ourselves to adapt, equip, and take risks, while being grounded in God's grace, united in spiritual fellowship, and faithful to our call to discipleship. We strive to be the visible and active body of Christ that brings hope to those in need. "Behold, I am doing a new thing. Can you perceive it?" (Isaiah 65:16-17) The EWC strives to become a vibrant Asian American Presbyterian church that practices radical welcome and inclusion, called to preach and practice Christ's healing, hope and abundance in all seasons of life.

From the surveys and questionnaires, Town Halls, and the partner and focus groups, the MST has discerned from the PCC EWC the following visions and goals - *not listed in order of priority, but may be engaged in at the same time*:

## **Goal A: Strengthen The EWC's Identity and Work as a Matthew 25 Community**

### **A1. Congregational Vitality**

Congregations nurture and make disciples as they embody the teachings of Christ in daily living and service. Congregational vitality refers to the intentional and continuous spiritual formation of the members of a congregation that deepens their faith and inspires them to engage in their community and the world.

The beloved community nurtures its members through their many ages and seasons of life. Currently, the EWC is aging, and needs to listen, anticipate, and respond to the needs of this cohort. At the same time, the EWC risks dwindling away if there are insufficient new members to bring new life and leadership to the church. The EWC needs to identify ways to effectively let go and emotionally accept that DCH is no longer a "feeder" system for new PCC members, in view of current youth demographics and trends, and especially as DCH is re-envisioning its own strategic goals and programs.

Some ideas for achieving congregational vitality:

- Design and develop new fellowship and covenant groups, which may be centered around age groups, interests, lifestyles, etc.. Some suggestions include a widows group, a young families group, a group exploring issues pertinent to aging, or a randomly assigned but intergenerational fellowship group. In the belief that small groups are where many relationships begin and develop, it is strongly suggested that every person in the EWC join at least one fellowship/covenant group or committee.
- Consider ways to redesign and revitalize the EWC's worship services, utilizing different forms of liturgy, music and technology to enhance the message from worship.
- Focus less on attracting youth, and more on attracting families to worship, which includes their children. Establish a Young Families Covenant Group, offering fellowship opportunities, workshops, whole family service projects, etc..
- Engage in societal issues which young people are passionate about. If the EWC is engaged and creates opportunities for them to have an impact, they may be more attracted to the church.
- Have more intergenerational programs, such as the mission trips the EWC had to New Orleans, Guatemala, and the Philippines
- Consider moving the EWC worship service to later in the afternoon, so the EWC is not always "time-pressured" between the Mandarin and Cantonese services, and which may allow the EWC to be more experimental with its worship services
- Create new rituals/church traditions, such as doing service projects on a regular, perhaps quarterly basis. These could include work/service projects in Chinatown, such as street cleanups, escorting the elderly, outreach to SRO or Ping Yuen residents,



helping to paint a community mural, or “field trips” to sister Presbyterian churches or CBO’s in other neighborhoods.

- Provide study, retreats and educational opportunities for all generations, both year-round and for special seasons of the Christian calendar.
- Strengthen existing leadership and train new leaders by providing workshops, resources and other educational opportunities, such as in church governance and polity.
- Mentor youth and young adults on topics such as life skills, financial competence, and careers. Continue to participate in youth sports leagues. Support students away from home with mentors and care packages. Offer small groups for fellowship and support to help address social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Anticipate the needs of the EWC’s aging members. Consider providing transportation to and from church, provide visitations and communion to homebound seniors, offer workshops on such topics as vital aging, spirituality in late life, death and grief, estate planning, etc.

## **A2. Dismantle Structural Racism**

On July 21, 2020, following the killing of George Floyd, the EC issued its *Anti-Racism Statement*, which read, in part, “We are emboldened by our faith to continue to work steadily towards a racially just and inclusive society, and with love and humility, to discern our unique contributions to the ongoing struggle against inequality in all its forms.”

The PC(USA) calls the EWC to dismantle structural racism by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices, and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.

At this historical moment, there is rising anti-Asian hate. As a church founded in 1853, squarely located in Chinatown, and with its members primarily of Asian descent, the cyclical nature of anti-Asian racism is no surprise to PCC. As a community of color, PCC also struggles against internalized oppression and colonization. The EWC is uniquely situated and experienced to speak on these issues. Because of its biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the EWC must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. The current struggles over racial justice in the United States mark a *kairos*<sup>3</sup> moment. The EWC must speak its own convictions now with clarity and power. Anti-racist effort is not optional for Christians.

The congregation is a place where individuals can experience sanctuary and a safe place. Many of the EWC travel from all areas of the Bay Area to worship at PCC, where its members are comfortable, experience “family” relationships within a loving, accepting community of faith, and enjoy a haven from anti-Asian, racist sentiment. Congregations are also strategically placed to effect change in the world by building bridges of communication across racial and cultural lines. The EWC seeks both to educate and be educated in anti-racism work.

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<sup>3</sup> Kairos (καιρός) is an ancient Greek word meaning ‘the right, critical, or opportune moment’: Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

Some ideas towards dismantling structural racism:

- Create opportunities for personal storytelling and reflection. Continued conversation is an important part of activism.
- Encourage participation in educational opportunities, films, podcasts, books and other resources to be more well-informed on issues of racial injustice.
- Show up as a racial justice organization for our community and provide space for the EWC and others to have enlightening, perhaps difficult, but necessary conversations. Embrace a willingness to learn, even if it may be uncomfortable.
- Assess the impact of racism on the needs in our community, including housing and homelessness, food insecurity, education, immigration, employment and work opportunities, and Chinatown business survival.
- Participate in anti-racism workshops and events sponsored by the San Francisco Presbytery, the national PC(USA), and other organizations.
- Partner with interfaith groups and other organizations on racial justice issues, such as the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, Tsuru for Solidarity, etc.
- Recognize the racial/cultural diversity in the Ping Yuen housing buildings. Collaborate on events such as the block party/barbecue that was held, which was well-received. Create ways to build bridges with the Black, Indigenous, and Latinx residents of the Ping Yuen and Mei Lun Yuen populations.

### **A3. Eradicate Systemic Poverty**

Systemic poverty is a construct that leaves vulnerable populations without the material and social capital to ensure basic welfare. Systemic poverty is perpetuated by laws, policies, practices and an array of dynamics that lead some people to benefit and profit from the exploitation of others. Systemic poverty may intersect with structural racism and other systems of oppression.

Homelessness is one of the most egregious signs of poverty. In the United States, poverty also means a lack of access to sufficient social assets such as education, healthcare, and food, that are essential for daily living and welfare. The EWC is certainly aware of the effect of poverty on the Chinatown community.

Some ideas towards eradicating systemic poverty:

- Use the EWC's funds to contribute to causes, and volunteer members' time and talents at community-based organizations such as DCH, Chinatown CDC, and others, with the goal of addressing such issues as food insecurity and homelessness;
- Continue to support PCC and DCH food pantries, and other programs;
- Continue to create opportunities for participation in mission projects such as Living Waters for the World - Guatemala.

## **Goal B: Build Stronger Relationships with the PCC Cantonese and Mandarin Worshiping Communities**

PCC currently has three worshiping communities which share one building. If the EWC's goal is to minister to the Chinatown community, it should start at home. The EWC's relationships with the Cantonese and Mandarin Worshiping Communities offer opportunities it would not have as a monolingual church, and those relationships present challenges that call for mutual understanding and forbearance as PCC grows in the unity Christ prayed for his church to have. In the theological continuum from conservative to progressive, the EWC recognizes it leans more toward the progressive than do the Mandarin and Cantonese Worshiping Communities. The EWC must intentionally build opportunities to understand, communicate, and be in fellowship and relationship with the CWC and MWC. The EWC, CWC, and MWC need to spend time together so they can function and understand each other as one community of faith and church.

Some ideas towards achieving this goal:

- Develop activities and programs where the three Worshiping Communities share common ground, such as the weekly Food Pantry;
- Hold inter-congregational recreational and mission activities, where the three Communities can work or just have fun together;
- Develop educational opportunities to learn each other's stories, histories, and faith journeys. This might be done in small intimate groups;
- Make creative use of each other's resources;
- Communicate about and support each other's mission and evangelism efforts, and engage in joint actions as appropriate;
- Encourage at least two trilingual worship services per year, and pulpit exchange among the PCC pastors at least once a year

## **Goal C: Continue to Engage in Missional Action, Beginning in Chinatown and Extending Out Into the World**

God's call into community includes a call to mission. Throughout its history and up to the present, PCC has emphasized prophetic faith at work in society. For over a century, it has partnered in ministry with DCH to address issues affecting the lives of people in the Chinatown community, supported social services, youth development, and family life, and fought injustice in such areas as human trafficking, discriminatory immigration laws, and housing. Recent ministries include the weekly Food Pantry, adult ESL classes, and support for children and families who live in Chinatown's SRO buildings and the Ping Yuen public housing. The EWC strives to continue its discernment of the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and global community to which its worshiping community can respond. A major challenge awaits the church as the Chinatown Central Subway station, located directly next door to PCC, is scheduled to open in late 2022. The church needs to be prepared for an increase in foot traffic in and around the building, sanitation issues, and people who are unhoused. As set forth in The Confession of 1967 (9.43), "In each time and place there are particular problems and crises

through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity, and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations.”

Some ideas towards achieving this goal:

- Partner with DCH, where the institutions’ strategic plan and mission study meet. For example, family-centered programming (DCH’s strategy) may be an area where both PCC and DCH can partner and share resources;
- Partner with other community-based organizations such as CCDC, on projects which further the EWC’s mission, such as the current PCC Food Pantry, and support for residents of SRO’s and the Ping Yuen public housing;
- Better utilization of the church building, in ways which align with the EWC’s mission. For example, the EWC could host a study hall which provides Wi-Fi for students who otherwise have none, or it could offer adult ESL classes, as it has in the past in collaboration with the CWC;
- Develop a ministry that addresses the opportunities and challenges presented by the Chinatown Central Subway;
- Partner with other Asian American churches, such as the Chinese Congregational Church, on joint workshops and projects. An example could be providing volunteers for PCC’s weekly Food Pantry;
- Sponsor an immigrant family;
- Provide workshops of concern to the surrounding community, such as ESL classes, tutoring, and self-defense classes against anti-Asian hate and violence.

#### **Goal D: Build and Invest in a Hybrid Model of Church, a “Both/And” Scenario of an In-Person and Online English Worshiping Community**

During the pandemic, the EWC saw members work tirelessly to be and bring church to each other in new ways. Its Zoom meetings and YouTube worship services reached farther than could have been imagined, throughout the Bay Area, to other states, and even internationally. The Deacons, using phones, e-mail, texts, cards, letters, and the occasional socially-distanced visit, reached out to every person on the EWC’s roster. The EWC learned what it means to be a church to the vulnerable, high risk, lonely, and isolated. It widened the circle of its welcome. Online church wasn’t just an adaptation to an emergency; it was a way to re-imagine the shape of a spiritual community. In responding to a rapidly changing society, the EWC’s spiritual formation and growth may shift, balancing in-person and online connections with each other, and bringing faith more deeply into homes and neighborhoods.

As part of this EWC mission strategy, it must allocate dedicated people and resources to build and execute this important ministry strategy. The EWC understands there is something essential and holy about human beings interacting in person that cannot be replicated in virtual reality. Embodied human relationships, with all the love, complexity, challenges, inconvenience, and even discomfort such connections may bring, are essential to members’ existence as humans. The EWC seeks to achieve a balance between in-person and online connections, to build a whole church experience.

## CONCLUSION

We are called to be the church, Christ's beloved community, to be in relationship with one another, and to offer our lives for the sake of the world. The creation of a living, breathing, vital community of faith at the local church level is a foundational principle of Christian life. Energy is required to overcome inertia in the worshiping community, to encourage and equip the members and leaders, and to get things done. Imagination and vision assists in designing goals for the future, discerning the will of God in prayer, and daring to imagine new opportunities with our best creative gifts.

May God bless us as we journey in relationship and ministry with each other.

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