



# Good News for the Pews

August 2018

A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 16

## Food for the Soul

by Pastor Kimberly



On Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, the elders and deacons of our English Worshipping Community met at Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church for a consistory retreat. Because our officers are already very busy, rather than another business meeting, our goal was spiritual renewal and renewing the bonds of fellowship with each other. Our facilitator was the Rev. Diana Cheifetz. She led us in an exploration of Psalm 1, using this translation being from Nan Merrill.

Blessed are those who walk hand in hand with goodness,  
who stand beside virtue,  
who sit in the seat of truth;  
For their delight is in the Spirit of Love,  
and in Love's heart they dwell day and night.  
They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
that yield fruit in due season,  
and their leaves flourish;  
and in all that they do, they give life.

In our time together, Diana encouraged us to find the things that nourish our hearts and bring us joy, for in doing so, we will be able to find a sense of balance and be more effective in our service to the world. In a day and age when there is so much bad news around us, this becomes its own kind of spiritual resistance – for when we look for the good and focus on what nourishes our hearts, we become more resilient and better able to respond in love to the needs of the world. *(cont. on page 2)*



## Food for the Soul *(continued from page 1)*

In reading the latest edition of *The Presbyterian Outlook* magazine, I was struck by how commissioners who gathered for our most recent General Assembly in St. Louis created space for this kind of spiritual renewal. “Meditation”, ‘Reiki’ (a kind of energy healing), ‘Yoga’, ‘Labyrinth’, these are not words typically associated with Presbyterians. When Presbyterians gather to do the business of the church at GA, it is an intense eight days of meetings, parliamentary procedures, scheduled meals, worship and exhibit hall wandering. In the middle of the craziness, the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy created two quiet spaces for people to pause, reflect, pray and center themselves, in order to seek God’s voice in the midst of the chaos”.



“Tucked away in a circular room on the second floor with almost 360 degrees of windows sat a sacred space in the middle of the St. Louis Convention Center – a place of reflection and respite. On the floor of that room lay a hand painted labyrinth, prepared with love for the assembly by a thoughtful team of volunteers from the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. In addition to the labyrinth, the Presbytery also created a prayer room that included a local volunteer doing Reiki, a yoga station with

suggested poses and accompanying scriptures, and a coloring area with large sheets and books from Illustrated Children’s Ministry, candles and a quiet seating area. The prayer room was a place away from the noise of the convention center that allowed participants to seek God’s presence in the midst of the assembly. “ (*Presbyterian Outlook*, Vol. 200, No 11, July 30, 2018, page 40).

The image of a space set apart (which is the essence of the meaning of the word ‘sacred’), seems to me to be at the core of the message of Psalm 1 listed above. It may be a sacred corner of your home where a candle is used for a time of prayer, it may be time in nature, or it may be as simple as noticing what brings you joy and really taking the time to allow it to sink in so that it may indeed nourish your heart.

Here are some simple prayer exercises that Diana also shared with us that can accompany us throughout our day. One suggestion is to say one half of the prayer as you inhale, and the second half as you exhale, as a way to center ourselves in God.

*Come Lord Jesus/ Be my guide; The Lord/ is my light; Fear not/ I am with you  
Be still/ and know that I am God; The Lord is my shepherd/ She restores my soul*

As we center ourselves in God, may we be like trees planted by nourishing streams, so that in all we do, we give life.

## Deacons Update

by Richard Jann

Question: Who was the first person in the Bible to fly? (\*Answer at the end of the article)

The Deacon's are continuing their work on tracking new and old worshippers, having monthly birthday cakes at tea time, keeping tabs on church committees, and signing up readers, ushers, tea time people and other volunteers for church duties. One doesn't have to be a Deacon to help in the duties and stewardship of our church.

Remember: we encourage the wearing our name tags at church to help identify each other to visitors, friends and guests to promote inclusiveness to and for each other. Please ask Stuart Go or Richard Jann for a name tag if you have misplaced your tag or need one printed.

Anyone interested in being or helping the Deacon's, please contact our chairperson: Dayton Leong.

Lists of Deacon's: Dayton Leong, Pat Chan, Stuart Go, Richard Jann, Desi Ng, Eddie Kam, Jerrick Woo, and Rachel Wong.

We still need one Deacon to fill the vacancy. If anyone has suggestions for improvements of Deacon's assignments, please let us know. Let's all of us make our church more dynamic and relevant.

One last concern! Let's all try to be at church on time. It has been noted by many that worshippers are arriving after 10:45 a.m. on Sundays, even as late as 11:30 a.m. Not good. Continue to have a great summer!

\*Answer to our question: Of course - Pontius (Pilot ) Pilate

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### Refugees, a poem by Brian Bilston

From Shar Hall: A moving poem which speaks to our current immigration mess!

Here are two links.

The first link has the words of the poem. You can also read the poem from bottom to top!

<https://brianbilston.com/2016/03/23/refugees/>

This link has the illustrated and reversed poem.

<http://www.signature-reads.com/2017/11/poetry-of-resistance-brian-bilston-refugees/>

## The Fifth Commencement Service of Christian Leadership Institute

by Eleanor Wong

Praise to the Lord! We are very excited to share the graduation ceremony of **Pastor Ronnie Kaan, Cantonese Worshiping Community, who received the Doctor of Ministry degree** on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

This fifth commencement of the Christian Leadership Institute of Sunnyvale was held at Ark Baptist Church in Milpitas on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00 pm. More than two hundred people--



faculty, graduates

and students, proud family members, church members and friends, filled the hall to celebrate their academic achievement. There were total of 13 graduates, including 3 Doctor of Ministry, 2 Master of Divinity, 3 Master of Christian Studies, 4 Diploma of Christian Studies and 1 Certificate of Christian Studies. The ceremony included singing by graduates, senior and faculty reflections, hooding ceremony, commencement message by Rev. Peter Wu, encouragement from Officiating Rev. Tong Sun and commissioning of the graduates.

**Rev. Kaan gave a valedictory** during the ceremony. Psalm 126: 2-3 was quoted “Then was our mouth

filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things to us; whereof we are glad”. Rev. Kaan stated “Graduation commencement also indicates the day we are about to start. Actually when we have completed a stage on life, we continue to start another new stage. Some students stay at the same position and serve God in their churches, some will continue to study and others may serve in different workplaces.”

Rev. Kaan gave thanks to God for His graces. He also expressed his delight to the faculty for all their teaching and good examples of serving God. He thanked different churches for giving experience and opportunities to students so they could serve in their own churches.

“Now when we are leaving the college, it feels like we have boarded a ship filled with good news of Jesus Christ, and ready to sail to ports which are churches far or near. We believe our Lord will lead us to move on. We also need support and prayers for courage and wisdom to fulfill God’s mission.”

*(continued on page 5)*





## **The Fifth Commencement Service of Christian Leadership Institute** *(cont. from p. 4)*

Refreshments followed the ceremony, and participants shared their joy in fellowship.



The 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary thanksgiving fund raising dinner was held after the commencement, at *China Stix* restaurant. Along with singing and instrumental performances, we also enjoyed the Mandarin/Cantonese fusion food very much. The message given by Rev. Peter Wu, elicited lots of laughs and applause. Speeches from new graduates were very impressive and & touching.

**Faculty and Graduates**



**Rev. Kaan's family & members from the Cantonese Worshipping Community**

Over the course of the past few weeks, I've had the opportunity to take part in two different experiences that displayed the power of music and its ability to heal. I'd like to take this opportunity to share with everyone my experience with both of them because both of them gave me a lot of inspiration during what has been a tough season of my life.

First, I'd like to talk about *Doors Open*, the recent musical that PCC hosted during Pride weekend. For those of you who weren't able to be there, the musical was presented by Wesley United Methodist Church in San Jose and was about a young Asian American woman and her experience of coming out of the closet as gay. It was a powerful musical with catchy songs and a great message, one that was perfect for Pride weekend.

I could relate to the story of the musical on many levels. As an LGBTQ person of faith, I have seen all the ways in which the Church has done or said terrible things to my community. It can be really, really hard to continue to be a Christian when I see all the ways in which the Church continues to harm my beloved LGBTQ people. Whether it is through denying us communion, denying us marriage rites, refusing to ordain us to church offices, leading anti-LGBTQ rallies or just preaching hateful rhetoric that we are all sinners who will go to Hell, the Church hasn't done a very good job of being welcoming toward us.

And that's really what *Doors Open* was all about. It dealt openly and honestly with the struggles that many LGBTQ people face when it comes to church. And it also wasn't afraid to wrestle with the struggles that many churches face when they debate whether or not to be inclusive of LGBTQ people. And I appreciated that the musical explored that dilemma and didn't gloss over how difficult the decision to become open and affirming can be for many churches and pastors. This made the show feel more authentic and more real to me.

I especially appreciated being given the opportunity to moderate the Q & A after the show. And I was grateful that both Mark, the creator, and Denise, the star, were so open and authentic of themselves with their answers. I'm really grateful to PCC for being willing to host this musical and for continuing to engage in conversations about how to reach out to our LGBTQ community. I know there are probably many differing opinions on this within our own worshipping communities but I do hope to see us continue to engage with each other on this. And I am grateful that I am able to serve this church as my full self and don't have to hide that particular aspect of who I am. You have no idea what a rare gift that is for me. There are good things happening in this community. I'm glad to be here to witness them.

The other thing I'd like to talk about is my recent experience of singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. As many of you know, I sing with the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. As such, the leadership of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir reached out to our leadership team and invited us to come sing with them during their sound check before their concert at the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View. I think all of us were shocked to be receiving this invitation. After all, the Mormon Church has not exactly been the kindest to the LGBTQ community. Many of us were still wounded from all the efforts they put into supporting Prop 8, the amendment that successfully made same gender marriage illegal in California. So, obviously, we were a bit wary and uncertain what to do with this request. The SFGMC's mission is to use music to create

*(continued on page 7)*

## **The Healing Power of Music** *(continued from page 6)*

opportunities for healing and to build bridges. That's why we embarked on the Lavender Pen Tour last fall. And that's also why it felt appropriate to accept this invitation to go down and sing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

As a queer person of faith, I want to do my best to promote healing between the church and the LGBTQ community. As I said earlier, the church has a lot to do to win back the trust of the LGBTQ community. We have been deeply wounded by the Church and some of those wounds are too deep and too big to heal. Every time I hear an LGBTQ person say that they hate the Church or hate Christians or don't believe in God, my heart breaks a little bit. And yet, I also must confess that I completely get why they would feel that way.

I was lucky enough to grow up in a really great progressive Presbyterian congregation in north Texas. This was the church that shaped me, molded me and supported me every step of my faith journey. I never once worried about my identity or my ability to serve that church in any capacity. But I also know that my experience has not been the norm for most LGBTQ people. Hence why I felt like this opportunity to sing with the Mormon T. Choir was such a great one.

From the very first moment we arrived at the Shoreline Amphitheater, we were welcomed and fully embraced. Everyone from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was thrilled to meet us. They expressed appreciation for us coming there to sing with them. We got to sing several old time hymns and a few show tunes during the two hours we were there. It was quite the experience. They even invited our conductor to guest conduct a piece of theirs during their concert that evening. It truly was an inspiring and amazing experience to be a part of.

Singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir wasn't even on my bucket list of experiences because it was something that I never even thought would happen. As you're well aware, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir is considered one of the crown jewels of the chorus world and an especially important outreach of the Mormon Church. Thus, our being able to sing with them had to be approved by the elders of the Mormon Ch. which just shows how big a deal this really was.

Let me be completely transparent here. Do I think that this experience will completely heal the divide that exists between the Mormon Church and the LGBTQ community? No, I do not. That wound is still too deep. Do I believe that the Mormon Church is going to just up and change their policies regarding us? No, I know that church politics don't work quite that smooth or that fast. So, what was the point of any of it then?

For me, it was about hope. Hope seems to be in short supply these days. Children are being locked in cages. People are being deported left and right. Minorities are seeing their rights and their lives threatened on a daily basis. Hope is real hard to find during these bleak, uncertain times. That's why it is so important to find it in any way you can and anywhere you can. Like through a musical about a church opening its doors or through singing with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. These are both examples of the ways in which hope continues to abound. And they also are examples of the power that music can have. It can inspire, it can encourage and it can heal. These were both experiences of healing and encouragement for me. Both things I needed in my life right now. And I hope that reading about these experiences has given you some hope too. We have to grasp on to whatever slivers of hope we can get right now. None of them are insignificant. They all matter because they all help us stay strong in times of darkness. Where's your hope? Where's your encouragement? Find it and hold on to it and let it strengthen you.

## **My Experiences and Thoughts After Two Years of Service at PCC**

**by Pastor Israel Hao**

By God's grace, I came to this church, in July 2016. Already, it has been two years! Comparatively speaking, two years is not a long time, however, during these two years of serving in a church setting, I've learned a lot, and experienced a lot.

Because while serving as a pastor at PCC, I am also a seminary student, constantly 'learning', so when I was asked to describe my experience at serving in a church for the last two years, I conclude that: Learning and Serving: go hand in hand. And that I want to become a pastor who never ceases to learn! To continuously learn, seek more knowledge while I serve shall be my model.

During my serving at PCC, I use the truth of God's words to help nurture people, so I'm constantly learning.... As a pastor, I need to be equipped with God's words, a wealth of knowledge, a vast and variety of experiences, genuine heartfelt warmth of caring...these, no doubt, are blessing to a church and its members, therefore, I have to continue to learn, have a passion to learn, not only in a classroom setting...but wherever I may be...not only while I am a student, but it's a never ending process. My position of being a pastor will no doubt surpass my role as a 'student' at a seminary school. So, I will need and will use my whole life to continue to learn.

These past two years at PCC, as a pastor pastoring its sheep...led me to realize the responsibility and meaning of being 'pastor'. Now the ever changing society and its values have great impact on churches. It also seem like churches are competing with one another: whether it's more attractive programs, or special events or seminars, etc... to attract more people...(don't take me wrong) there's no problem with all this, but, we need to focus and emphasize more on the Truth. To a believer, and even a non-believer, in order to develop and grow, we need to turn to immerse ourselves in the Truth. Yet, where does this Truth come from? Subjectively speaking, it comes from sermons at the pulpit each Sunday. Many times we feel that our members should possess the concept of what it means to belong, to be a member of a church...that they should 'commit' to a church and not go 'church hopping' on Sundays... Yet, we forget, pastors, especially, need to set by example. We should also not go to different churches to preach on Sundays, thus, neglecting and forsaking precious time to walk into the lives and nurture its own members. We need to understand our members, and to help them both spiritually and physically. I feel that when a pastor commits himself in one church, and preach accordingly to the needs and nourish its members is crucial and so important to the members. This is the responsibility of a pastor, and this is why we (pastors) exist, and the true meaning of 'pastorship.' This is also one driving force that attracts people to churches. So, if I don't want members to "church hop" then, I need to commit to one church, and exert my full attention and energy also to the one church. There are churches who will invite guest speakers all the time, so the members are not 'tired' of listening to the same person over and over again...to bring in some 'freshness' about each sermon, different style, different types of messages, etc...Therefore, I've learned to be well prepared, I constantly remind myself and set high standards and take each sermon I preach ever so seriously. I make sure each sermon is practical, is full of contents and context, and mostly, accordingly to God's truths. I stand firm and hold fast the holiness of the pulpit, to spread the truth of God's words, nothing will sway our walk with Jesus.

*(continued on page 9)*



## My Experiences and Thoughts After Two Years of Service at PCC *(cont. from page 8)*

I pray that God continues to lead my path of serving our church, so that I will work well and collaborate with the pastors and elders, to live out God's words in every corner of our church, to ensure that our church is well nourished within, and with a mission mind bare great witness outside of our church. We plant our foundation firmly, and bear fruit, to bless this generation! Amen!



*Picture taken on their 4<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary*

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character  
A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.

*Proverbs 31:10-12*

A true testimony we are witnessing! Amen!

Submitted by Amy Feng, Mandarin Worshipping Community

## 服侍心得

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郝國

2016 年 7 月蒙神恩典，我來到這間教會，轉眼間兩年的時間過去了。相比之下日子雖然不長，這兩年的服侍讓我學習了很多，也經歷了很多。由於在牧會同時我也是一名神學生，對於學習和侍奉之路，我所得出的心得是要做一個學者型的牧者。牧會過程，是借著上帝的話語去與人打交道，因此不管對真理還是對與弟兄姊妹，都要一直不斷學習，一個牧者如果具備全備的真理，豐富的知識，足夠的經驗，熱忱的關懷，那將是對這間教會莫大的祝福，因此學習不該停留在課堂之上，也不該停留在學生之時，牧者身份比學生身份更久，因此用一生的時間去學習，做一個學者型的牧者去祝福教會。

這兩年的牧會，也讓我看到「牧者」這一身份的責任和意義，現在日益變化的社會形態對教會有著極大的影響。教會也似乎在競爭，如何藉著豐富的活動，有趣的講座吸引更多的人來到教會，這些並沒有問題，然而作為教會更應該著重於基督的真理。於非信徒和信徒而言，生命要想建立和成長都來自於真理的澆灌。那麼真理從何而來？主觀的說，從牧者主日宣講而來。很多時候我們以為教會觀是信徒該有的，希望他們有這樣的觀念，從而委身教會，不至於每週來往於不同的

## 服侍心得

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教會。但是卻不知牧者更該有這樣的觀念，因為牧者很多時間去不同的教會講道，沒有更多的時間去走近自己教會的每個信徒。如此，並不知道教會會眾的生命狀況和屬靈缺乏，不能很好達到牧養效果。因此，一個牧者穩定的在一間教會，按照信徒真實屬靈需要的去宣講聖經資訊，這對於教會以及信徒都是很重要的。這是牧者的責任，這也是牧者的存在賦予信徒的意義，這更是吸引人來到教會的真正動力。

若我不希望信徒流動式的聚會，我就不該流動式的「牧養」。當然很多教會流動性的請不同的牧者去宣講主日資訊，很大的原因是想為教會注入新鮮資訊，覺得老是聽一個人講道容易聽覺疲乏。因此我自己也不斷提醒自己：作為教會的牧者，最重要的是認真預備每一篇講章，使它真實，豐富，並且符合上帝的真理。只有堅守住了上帝的講台，我想哪怕這個世界再多荒誕的教導和資訊，都不能動搖我們跟隨基督走永生的道路。

也盼望上帝帶領我接下來的侍奉道路，使我能和同工更好的搭配把神的話語活現在教會每一個角落，讓這間教會是一個對內有牧養，對外有宣教，對下有紮根，對上有結果的真教會，去祝福這個時代，阿門！

## **A quick look at our Church's General Assembly or how the PCUSA all fits together** **by the Rev. Gregory L. Chan**

- What is the General Assembly?

Every two years several representatives (hereafter known as Commissioners) from each of our Presbyteries (170), Synods (16), International representatives/Commissioners, Young Adults, Seminarians and other persons from organizations and agencies come together to make major decisions and determine the direction of our Church. In years past, the General Assembly met every year, now it meets every other year. In Presbyterian slang—Presbyteries and Synods are often referred to as Mid-Councils.



The theme of this year's meeting, the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly: "Renewing the Vision: Kindom Building for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," from Matthew 6:25-33.

One other Presbyterian slang that applies here: Church connectionalism is shorthand for saying that we are one body—because God in grace and mercy has called us together. Our unity is in Jesus Christ. Therefore, our one body is connected via these organizational structures: the Congregation, the Presbytery, the Synod and the General Assembly.

- How do things get done/decided at the General Assembly?

As mentioned, the Presbyteries and Synods and other entities select their representative(s) before hand, the Commissioners. Also in advance, each Commissioner is assigned to a General Assembly working Committee. This year there were 13-14 working Committees. We had the Environmental Issues Committee, the Way Forward Committee, the Social Justice Issues Committee, the Mission Coordination Committee..., you get the idea. Committees were quite large, I would estimate anywhere from 40 to 65 persons per committee.

Issues that Committees discussed and decided upon were brought forward during the course of the preceding 2 years by Presbyteries, Synods and/or other recognized methods. These items are assigned to one of the 13-14 General Assembly Committees. In turn these Committees then made recommendations to the General Assembly Plenary—where everyone would now review the work of all Committees. In the General Assembly Plenary, every Commissioner would consider the recommendations brought forward by the 13-14 Committees. There are some late night meetings as the Committees and, now, the Plenary is considering two years (even more if prior year's General Assemblies referred matters to this General Assembly) of issues or overtures from the Presbyteries, Synods, other organizations and, of course, the world as we know it. Through prayer, worship and, of course, many meetings—the Plenary or meeting of everybody makes their decisions.

- Why did I go to the General Assembly?

As many of you know, the Presbyterian Church USA's headquarters is in Louisville, KY. And several of our national agencies are housed in Louisville at 100 Witherspoon St. Although the Church is made up of Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly it also has 6 national agencies that

*(continued on page 13)*



## **A quick look at our Church's General Assembly** *(continued from page 12)*

perform ministries and functions on behalf of the General Assembly, those things the Mid-Councils and the Congregations are not equipped to do. The 6 agencies are:

- [Board of Pensions](#)
- [Office of the General Assembly](#)
- [Presbyterian Foundation](#)
- [Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program](#)
- [Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)
- [Presbyterian Publishing Company](#)

Each of these agencies has an independent Board of Directors. At the time of the General Assembly I was a member of the Board of Directors for two of the six agencies: the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program.

So I was at the General Assembly representing and articulating the issues that most concerned the Presbyterian Mission Agency, such as how the Church hoped to organize and streamline how we functioned as a Church in the future.

- Some issues I worked on and monitored

Our key concern was how and what a special Commission called the Way Forward Commission, established at the last General Assembly, was going to recommend to the General Assembly Committee assigned and to the Plenary. Although we had tried to work with this Commission for the entire two years prior, there remained several key bones of concern or contention.

To make a very long story short, I can say our work did, indeed, help to educate all participants about how best to organize and the pitfalls of concentrating decision making power in a few hands. Our meetings, discussions and presentations influenced the Committee and the Plenary to make adjustments to their proposed organizational model and decision-making structure.

- Other key issues of import

New co-moderators were elected: the Rev. Cindy Kohlmann and Ruling Elder Vimarie Cintron-Olivieri, one of the closest elections in years.

Confirmed the election of the Rev. Diane Moffett as president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Diane has Bay Area ties and worked as a pastor in the East Bay earlier in her career.

By a vote of 332-178 the General Assembly voted to continue its corporate engagement with fossil fuel companies rather than divest its holdings.

*(continued on page 14 )*

## **A quick look at our Church's General Assembly** *(continued from page 13)*

- What came else out of the General Assembly worth noting—in my opinion

A Confessional Declaration from 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly via the Hudson River Presbytery

the Role of the Church

As confessing Christians,  
we trust God, whom we know through Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray as others pray in other names.  
We are obligated to declare our concerns about the  
direction towards autocracy that our country is taking.  
We say Yes to God's power of love and justice for the  
neighbor as well as the self, and we say  
No to demonic power that urges hate of the other,  
scatters blame, and creates civic discord.  
We say Yes to our imperfect democracy with one person,  
one vote, and No to any corruption of our elections.  
We say Yes to universal health care  
and No to care based on the ability to pay.  
We say Yes to safe schools, houses of worship,  
and public gathering places;  
and No to civilian access to assault  
and/or military-style weapons.  
We say Yes to core human values and No to  
dividing our humanity by ideology and partisanship.  
We say Yes to bridges and preservation  
of families and No to walls.  
We say Yes to affirming and celebrating the  
full spectra of human identity  
and No to discrimination and bigotry.  
We say: In life, and in death we belong to God.

Reading about the General Assembly is, possibly, a bit like watching paint dry; however, the declaration above, that came out of this Assembly, helps me to live out my faith in today's national context. The Declaration affirms my values, my faith and my journey. I hope this Declaration, and in essence, this General Assembly can be an aid to you as well.

By the grace of God—Greg Chan

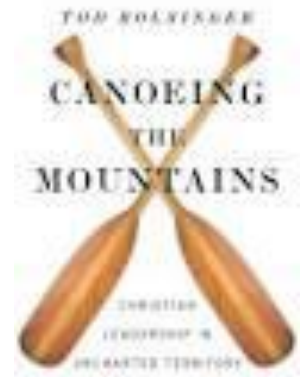
## Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory

by Diane Go

This writing is not a book report on the book with the above title or a report from author Tod Bolsinger's presentation at the SF Presbytery's gathering on April 28, 2018. Rather, it is an introduction to the book, a few tidbits from Tod's presentation and a quick update/insight into the progress of our own English Worshipping Community's Adaptive Leadership group.

First, I highly recommend that you take time to read this book. It is Tod's perspective on what is happening to our own Presbyterian denomination, and to many other churches throughout our country. I don't specify any particular other churches as there are similar challenges in Christ centered worshipping communities everywhere.

The book is very engaging, thus easier to read despite its length and small print. It helps the reader to better understand the complexity of the problems facing church leaders today as it parallels the challenges faced by the exploration team of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the Corps of Discovery in its attempt to find a water passage to the Pacific Coast in his writings, Tod also dives into the process of how churches can prepare themselves to explore this new world, post-Christendom, where many people no longer have an allegiance to any religious institution.



I was also able to attend Tod's 2 hour presentation to Presbytery in April. It was very helpful to hear Tod present the essence of his book in person. He emphasized many points in the book, even recapped some of his experiences and historical illustrations. But it made a lot more sense hearing it from Tod verbally.

Here are some of the highlights that I find very helpful for me as a member of the Adaptive Leadership group.

- The nature of the challenges before churches is systemic with no clear answers.
- In referring to Alan Deutschman's book, *Change or Die*, Tod pointed out that when people participated in choice making regarding their own health, 90% chose to not change their habits, thereby increasing the risk of death.
- For adaptive change to occur, fear, facts and force don't produce change. Rather, leadership must relate, repeat, reframe--Leaders must relate to new communities. They must help the group repeat new practices that are adopted. They must reframe how the group thinks.

Tod outlined several adaptive principles to consider:

1) People don't resist change; they resist loss.

2) Change, in order to last, must be a healthy adaptation of the DNA of the group. (Note: DNA is not necessarily core values; it is the common themes that can be found in the history of the group, in the stories about the group).

*(continued on page 16)*

## Canoeing The Mountains *(continued from page 15)*

- 3) You haven't succeeded [meeting the challenge] until you have endured the sabotage.
- 4) Everyone will be changed, especially the leaders.

Working with these principles to produce change can seem very daunting; Tod gave some hopeful thoughts as well.

- 1) The future is here--it's in the fringes (those who don't have power or privilege in the present church). They are not lost; they are at home in the "new world"
- 2) When the church is in mission, the church is its best self
- 3) For the member who has been with the church longer, be a Jefferson (President Jefferson). Remember, he had to keep the country running while Lewis and Clark were exploring.
- 4) You are not alone on this journey (my observation).

Our own EWC's group is having the privilege of delving into the process of adaptive change as it relates to our own English Congregation. We have explored the question of "what is our DNA?" We have begun to understand a little better the "new world" that surrounds our congregation. We have just started thinking about the missional future for our congregation as well. We have also started identifying what challenges are present in that future and what tools we have/need to begin the adventure into that future.

Our Adaptive Leadership group will be presenting an update to our congregation during our Sabbath Sunday lunch on August 5th after worship. Everyone is welcome to join us and hear the latest and even participate in an activity that we did with Jim Kitchens, our PneuMatrix facilitator.

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**The baptism of Kelly Chen on July 15, 2018**



## Reflections on the 2018 PW Churchwide Gathering (CWG)

by Linda Lee

### **Arise, shine, your light has come!**

This was the theme of the CWG for 2018. Mary McKee Martin, the chair of the CWG writes: “If we identify ourselves as followers of Christ, the true light, we need to show it. This implies both attitude *and* action. I confess that I am not as glowing as I could be. But what specific actions should I be taking? What attitudes do I need to work on?”



I took these questions with me as I attended the CWG, intending to look for updated ways that I can shine Christ’s Light in my life and the world. Here are some people and actions that spoke to me.

**Marisol Jimenez**, half-Irish, half-Mexican, is head of a consulting company offering racial equity training and coaching. She reminded us that our nation’s history of enslavement and genocide, systemic racism, is the foundations of the US immigration system. The current conversation about our immigration systems often focuses on the border, as if building walls and barriers would heal past injustices. Each of us is complicit through our lifestyle, steeped in consumerism, in the economic oppression of poor countries, and workers, and dangerous environmental practices. We want lowest prices on goods so corporations exploit third world countries for cheap labor and bid them against each other, increasing their own profits. How do we as Christians choose hope, search for light and urge a global conversation about immigration policies? How do strengthen and stand in solidarity with threatened communities?

**Jieun Han Kim**, PCUSA Associate for Racial Ethnic Leadership Development in the office of Racial Ethnic & Women’s Ministries, spoke of her experience of becoming “the stranger” when she immigrated to her new home in USA as a young adult, trying to navigate American culture. She told us to put on the clothing of radical hospitality, not just by going out to serve those who may be different, but by inviting them into our midst. In her workshop on Women of Color in Leadership, she reminded me that we need to provide women with resources, support and opportunities to step into leadership in our congregation, community and the wider church. PW continues to provide and grow into this role for women of color.

**Ninth Street Divide Protest March** More than 350 PW and allies took to the street (in 91°F heat!) after hearing Louisville Mayor, Greg Fischer, declare that the city is taking positive steps to eradicate the racial and poverty divide represented by the 9<sup>th</sup> St. freeway overpass. The Councilwoman for the district spoke of compassion and commitment by the city. PW carried signs of solidarity: Who Is My Neighbor?, The Lives of the Poor Matter, Repair and Restore, Partners in Progress. Of course this is an easy action step for me to continue protest marching here at home!

Lastly, at the **PW Synod of the Pacific** lunch I was installed as the PWS Vice Moderator/Historian. While I will be learning ‘on-the-job’ what my role involves, I plan to use the wonderful experiences from this CWG to participate on the Coordinating Team in arising and shining the light of love and action.



Months before August 2018, artist, plenary team member Darci McKinnon with box cutter in hand, paper cuts the backdrop theme design on 180 yards of photographic paper on the floor of the Oklahoma City's Westminster Presbyterian Church's Fellowship Hall. This paper cut backdrop installed on the stage of the Galt Hotel Grand Ballroom is flooded with a different colored light at each plenary held twice a day.

The top left corner of the backdrop features a paper cut of a giant dove facing a Celtic cross; below them are people depicted by the PW logo. Across on the right corner the Communion cup faces a loaf of French bread; below them 2 hands encircle a globe and at the bottle sits a steeple church. In the center the sunflower dominates with sun rays of petals and a heart of PW logo of women. This dramatic paper cut backdrop combines art, church symbols and spiritual inspiration for us. Ask to see the photos on the phones of Doreen, Jeanette, Linda, Mildred, or Pat.

## What Do 1,500 Women Do When They Meet?

by Jeanette Huie

The first PW Gathering I attended was at Purdue University in 1988 to help with the production of the *Daily Horizons*, a newsletter that's distributed each morning of the Gathering. At the time, I was active in Women's Fellowship at PCC but had no idea of the national scope of the organization. I packed my suitcase with clothes and all my tools needed to lay out a newsletter. When I arrived in Indiana the suitcase never emerged on the luggage ramp and it was never found. That was sure discouraging! For five days I had to manage with just the clothes in my carry-on bag and no newsletter tools, but I felt uplifted by the camaraderie of the *Daily Horizons* team and we got our job done.

1,500 women, from across the U.S. and from other countries, attended the 2018 Gathering. The theme is from Isaiah 60:1 "Arise, shine, your light has come", and included sunflowers and a horse for a fun element. Sunflowers remind us of light and the horse represented Louisville because of the historic race track, Churchill Downs. Attendees eagerly embraced the theme – artificial sunflowers were everywhere – pinned on hats, hair, lapels, and tote bags! Participants were encouraged to wear black shirts on the first day, a shirt with a PW logo on the second day and green on the third day. At first, I thought this was a little silly but I played along . . . and I felt the camaraderie of PW.

I always look forward to the Exhibit Hall which is lined with information booths about PW and PCUSA programs (including freebies), handicrafts for sale, and a Silent Auction with items donated by women and PW groups. A display about recycling caught my eye and in talking with the woman overseeing the booth, she was really surprised to hear about all the stuff we recycle and compost here in the Bay Area! On this trip, I had some food-to-go that was packed in a Styrofoam box and now that feels so out of place.

I attended a few workshops and here are some of my highlights:

- **The View from Here:** The Rev. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of General Assembly, shared his thoughts on how churches should respond to the fast-changing culture around us
- **Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:** look within ourselves first before going out on a mission project. Communicate with recipients and understand how to best respond to their needs
- **Social Media for Churches:** we touched upon four social media outlets and determined Facebook can be an effective communication tool for churches

In some of the workshops, I appreciated splitting up into small groups to share our experiences on specific topics and the learning went beyond the workshop leader's presentation. It was interesting hearing about life in other parts of the country.

As membership in the PC(USA) declines, so does the membership of Presbyterian Women and the organization is faced with many challenges. This year's attendance is a far cry from past attendance numbers of 5,000+ but the PW spirit and camaraderie remains steadfast. I left the 2018 Gathering with a renewed sense of hope and a longing for the 2021 Gathering.

*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

Website: [www.pccsf.org](http://www.pccsf.org)

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## My New Role for 2018 - 2021

by Pat Chan

This was my 4th Churchwide Gathering. My first one in 2000 was also held at Louisville. This time my experience was different because I was nominated to be the Asian American Member at Large. I attended Thursdays morning business meeting because all the nominees need to be present as part of the election of the 2018 -2021 leaders.

I was really touched that Laura Cheifetz, who that held the position 2015-2018 came by to introduce herself to me. Laura's father is the pastor at Covenant Church for the past three years and her mother Diana is also a pastor. Mary Wong Leong held this same position 2006-2009 and Jeanette Huie held this position 2012-2015, so I am the third woman from our church that will hold this position.

Saturday after dinner was when I was installed with other women with various positions for the next three years. We were presented stoles. It was so exciting to be in this large ballroom with over 1,600 mostly women and a few men. We all felt the love and support that evening.

The next three years will be led by a Korean American woman who I heard just finished seminary and also the first time a Korean woman will be our Moderator. It will be an exciting three years to work with Jenny (Jyung In) Lee and the whole team of women from all different backgrounds and from all over the United States. In mid September I will be going back to Louisville for orientation and training.





## IN CELEBRATION OF 30 YEARS OF PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

by Mildred Hall

-- Plenary Sessions --

The Official Bugler of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby played the Call to the Post opening our first plenary session. After that, there was a processional of Churchwide Coordinating Team members, the PW Staff, Global Exchange and other international guests before worship began.

In celebration of the 30th year of PW, much of the liturgy in daily plenary worship was adapted from previous Gatherings' liturgies. New liturgy was written by Sabrina Slater.



Dr. Allanda Small Campbell, Music Director of Spanish Fort Presbyterian Church, Spanish Fort, Alabama, was a welcome leader of music. We all sang joyfully in praise to God. Allanda not only led the community of almost 2,000 women and men and the choir in song, she also shared her beautiful voice in a couple of solo pieces. Words and music to our new theme song (*Arise and Shine!*) were written by Ann Weber, based on Isaiah 60:1-4.

The theme scripture was well illustrated through speakers and presentations that we witnessed each day in listening to interpretation of the Word and through watching videos showing PW's current activities as well as its 30-year history.

On our last night, to celebrate the 30 years, we feasted on dinner in the Grand Ballroom where we stayed for the evening's plenary. We witnessed the installation of newly-elected members for the Churchwide Coordinating Team (CCT). Twenty-four members plus sixteen Synod representatives make a total of 40 women on the CCT. Our own Pat Chan was installed as a new officer, elected to serve as a Racial Equity Member-at-large (representing the Asian Americans).

Sunday morning we celebrated communion and heard last words from speakers to wish us on our way home remembering to Arise and Shine!

We traveled and for four days enjoyed and learned from workshops, renewed old friendships and made new friends. I want to thank our Women's Fellowship and the English congregation for their support to us on this journey.

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### Planning for CWG

by Doreen Der-McLeod

**"The Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women is an amazing event. It's an opportunity to hear from inspiring speakers, learn more about ways to live out our faith, connect with dear friends, kindle new friendships, and much more. But underneath all of those activities, we gather because we are women of faith responding to Isaiah's invitation: Arise, shine, your light has come."**

1,600 women attended the Church wide gathering from Aug. 2-5<sup>th</sup> in Louisville, Kentucky. The CWG (Churchwide Gathering) is a triennial event sponsored by Presbyterian Women. This year I was asked to be on the planning team for the event.

(continued on page 22)

## **Planning for CWG** *(continued from page 21)*

The Planning Team was selected and formed about 6 months after our last triennial in Minneapolis so it takes 2 ½ years to plan the event. The planning team is broken up into teams or specific work groups. The work groups consist of the Exhibit Hall Workgroup, Business Meeting Work Group, Mission Partners Work Group, Plenary Work Group and Program Work Group.

I was on the Program Work Group which had responsibility for the Educational Opportunities or workshops for this event. Our first task was requesting suggestions for Educational Opportunity Leaders. We then review all the suggestions sent in and decided on leaders that could provide educational opportunities in 7 areas: Bible study, Mission, Justice & Peace, Community building, Leadership, Health & Wellness, Art & Media. We tried to have our leaders come from different parts of the country as well as represent the diversity in our country. But we also tried to use leadership in the PC(U.S.A.) i.e. staff from our national church to cut down on cost for travel. The plenary leaders were asked to do workshops as well. Our Educational Opportunity leaders did not receive remuneration for leading the workshops. However, we covered their travel, hotel, and registration.

This year we were able to offer 41 educational opportunities for those who participated in the CWG. It ranged from getting a preview of the next three years Horizon Bible Studies to Educational Opportunities on Disrupting Racism, Sharing the Story of Gun Violence, Creating Spaces: Exploring Young Women's Involvement in an Intergenerational Era, to name a few. Each attendee could select 3 Educational Opportunity Workshops for Friday and Saturday so they could attend 6 workshops in total over the 2 days.

To cut down on the cost of meetings, the whole planning committee of 20 people met face to face 2 times during the 2 ½ years, but did most of our work thru zoom meetings or telephone conference calls. We thank the PW staff for all their hard work in staffing the committees, but also for their follow up work with creating brochures, newsletters the worship booklet, and coordinating registration and housing for all the participants.

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#### **Upcoming Events** **by Tad Hopp, Linda Lee, Susie Wong**

- Sunday, Aug. 12      Packing school supplies for children living in Chinatown SROs after Tea time
- Sunday, Aug. 19      Is our second annual Pride Worship Service, with special music by 88 Keys Choir
- Sunday, Aug. 26      Personnel Committee reports to EWC. 12:30 pm
- Wed., Aug 29          The West Region of SF Presbytery gathers at First United PC
- Tues., Sept. 11       SF Presbytery Meeting at St. John's in SF
- Sunday, Sept. 16      Special presentation by Indonesian missionaries **Bernard and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta**
- Sat. Sept. 22          Horizons Bible Study author presentation at SFTS. 10-4 pm. Register and purchase tickets online at [www.sfts.edu](http://www.sfts.edu). The first page will have the link to details. This is open to everyone and not just women.
- Sunday, Oct. 7        World Communion Sunday & Collection for Peace and Global Witness
- Sat. Oct 13            Rise Against Hunger Drive, 10am at St. John's Presbyterian Church
- Sat. Oct. 27           Women's Fellowship Retreat