



Good News for the Pews

November 2020

A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 25

From Pastor Don

When I was interviewing with the Commission to be your interim pastor (in what seems like a long time ago) one of the expectations of the position was that I would keep the connection between PCC and the Presbytery of San Francisco open. As it happens I have always thought that volunteering with the Presbytery was a healthy and regular activity that pastors should try to engage. When I was a member of SF Presbytery years ago I was a member of Finance and Property Oversight Committee. When I moved to Boston, I was nominated very quickly to be on Boston's Committee on Ministry (COM). When I moved to Long Island Presbytery, I was nominated to be on their COM. It wasn't long after I moved back to the Bay Area that I was again nominated to COM here. It just so happens that I really enjoy serving on COM. There is something about interim work that I think lends itself to COM service.

Now, as it happened, after a few months I was elected as the Co-Moderator of the West Bay COM. I serve with Ruling Elder Betty Delaney from Ingleside Presbyterian Church, and we work together to moderate West Bay. We serve on the Executive Committee of COM with our East Bay colleague, Elder Roland Peterson. From there I was appointed to serve as the COM representative to the Presbytery's Mission, Vision, and Leadership committee, which would once have been called the Presbytery Council. It

is there that members of the Presbytery at large, and representatives of various standing committees, work with the Presbytery staff on strategic plans, as well as mission, visioning, and leading. What was one simple volunteer assignment has become rather more complex.

There are some notable changes happening at Presbytery. After Rev. Jeff Hutcheson, the Executive Presbyter, or Pastor for Mission and Vision, announced his resignation last February, there has been a significant shift in the presbytery staff model. We currently have a transitional model where Rev. Hutcheson's duties have been recast into three different people. We now have a tripartite model, with Rev. InHo Kim, Rev. Leonard Nielson, and Jennifer Sacramento Streett, each being the Presbytery Partner for Congregational Vitality and Clergy Support; Mission and Church Assets; and Operations and Presbytery-wide Communications, respectively. It may be that by May or June of 2021 this new model will be made permanent. There are many opinions, as there always are in presbyteries, some about process, some about function, some about goals. But regardless of those opinions, this new model represents a significant change. A change in leadership that goes far beyond just filling a vacancy with a new person. Myself, I'm not ready to share my thoughts about the change

(continued on page 2)

From Pastor Don *(continued from page 1)*

(because I want more data) but being a transitional minister, I am certainly intrigued by the boldness of the shift. My ministry for the last 6½ years has been all about how institutions navigate change and make new decisions, so this is kind of like catnip to me!

Another significant change at the Presbytery has been efforts to engage in the Matthew 25 initiative of the PC(USA). If you go to the Presbytery's Website you'll see two banners along the top of your screen: one that reads "PSF Anti-Racism And Justice Response" and underneath that "PSF COVID-19 Response." The shorthand Matthew 25 refers to an invitation for churches, mid-councils, and other groups within the denomination to act on Jesus's words from Matthew 25:31-46 and "calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor."

Our Presbytery has focused intently on the task of dismantling structural racism, specifically within our own structures: who leads, how committees are organized, and how they fulfill their mandates. It has been interesting to see the responses to the call to engage in anti-racism work. I have been paying attention to who is stepping forward, and who is hanging back. Our Presbytery has 68 congregations and about 10,000 members. Demographical, the Presbytery does not reflect the diversity of the four counties within its geographic boundary. Certainly

power and money are concentrated in the large, mostly white, suburban churches. I have to say that I am certainly more aware of that because I serve this majority Asian-(mostly, but not exclusively Chinese-) American congregation. It has been a remarkable season of growth for me to serve this community that matches my faith and my politics, but not my culture.

As we move forward in our Presbytery to live into our call to be a Matthew 25 mid-council, and as we grapple with the issues of these days, I would like to invite anyone and everyone to take a look at what the Presbytery is trying to engage in. Look at the Presbytery's website

<https://www.presbyteryofsf.org>). Also, if you want to learn more about the Matthew 25 invitation, check out the PC(USA) website (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>). Changes are afoot! And with God's help, we can participate with our sisters and brothers in Christ to responding to Christ's call as written in the Gospel of Matthew.

Yours in service to Jesus Christ,
Pastor Don

MISSION & EVANGELISM COMMITTEE TSURU FOR SOLIDARITY PROJECT

by Jeanine Lim

You may recall that before the pandemic, Ruth Sasaki and Clinton Huey of Tsuru for Solidarity came to PCC and made a teatime presentation. Tsuru for Solidarity is a project working to end detention sites, and support front-line immigrant and refugee communities that are being targeted by racist, inhumane immigration policies. Tsuru for Solidarity stands on the moral authority of Japanese Americans who suffered the legacy of U.S. concentration camps during WWII and who declare, “Stop Repeating History!”

At the teatime presentation, we were invited to participate in the nationwide effort to fold “tsuru” (“cranes,” in Japanese), as a sign of peace and healing. In Japanese culture, the crane symbolizes a hope for peace. The cranes we fold today are expressions of solidarity and support for children, families and communities who are under attack.



The initial goal of Tsuru for Solidarity was to collect 125,000 origami cranes, signifying the number of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during WWII. As of May, more than 213,000 cranes had been folded and strung in 4' lengths. Tsuru for Solidarity thereafter set a new goal of collecting an additional 400,000 cranes, signifying the number of immigrants incarcerated annually.

(continued on page 4)