

KENSINGTON PRESS

SEPTEMBER 2018

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear friends in Christ:

September is when we pick up the pace and begin another school year. Church programs and ministries that took a break over the summer, such as Godly Play, Family Sundays, and Sunday Seminars, gear back up. This fall, a couple of other initiatives, while not new, will be more prominent in our ministry together as well.

Last spring, the Session approved our congregation's becoming a member of the Marin Organizing Committee. The Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) is a broad-based organizing effort with no specific agenda other than the priorities brought by its members and the communities they represent. We've contemplated becoming a part of MOC for years. The incentive to take the plunge, finally, was the decision to shut down the REST shelter program in order to develop a "housing first" focus, rather than the Band-aid approach of nightly rotating shelters. REST was one of our core ministries for nine years, and our commitment to the men we served, many of whom became our friends, did not end when REST ended. That commitment will continue through the work of MOC. Our congregation is now one of the 20 Marin County religious institutions in MOC; other members include St. Anselm Catholic Church, the Marin Interfaith Council, the St. Vincent DePaul Society and First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael. Joy Snyder and Gina Guillet accepted the responsibility of being our congregation's "delegates" to MOC, and I will participate as a religious leader. We will be working with Marin County organizer Lizzy Gore and Bay Area organizer Anna Eng in the coming months to learn how our congregation can respond to the needs of the Marin community.

Over a year and a half ago, our congregation began working with a consultant from the Center for Progressive Renewal (whose tagline is "We believe your church's best years are ahead") in a project called

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Homecoming 2018 Ice Cream Social & Jazzfest

September 9th

Brought to you by our Youth Group

Welcome back to church!
Join us in Duncan Hall
at coffee hour for some
delicious ice cream
with all the fixings.
And bring a friend!



With live music by

The Barrelhouse Jazz Band



FAMILY MINISTRIES

We are looking for a Godly Play Teacher

We're advertising for a caring person to teach our children's K-5 Sunday school, the Montessori-based "Godly Play," every Sunday morning except the third Sunday of the month, from September through June. Hours: about 4/week, including setting up the Godly Play room and scheduling a second volunteer teacher for each Sunday. Pay: \$500/month. Godly Play teacher training is required but the church will pay to train an appropriate person. A full job description is available; background check and references required. Call (415-456-3713) or email Pastor Joanne Whitt, joannewhitt@togetherweserve.org if you or someone you know is interested.

Sunday, October 14: Blessing of the (Wild) Animals

October 5 is St. Francis' Day, a time-honored day for a "Blessing of the Animals" service in some traditions. We'll be celebrating World Communion Sunday on October 7, so our Blessing of the Animals observance will be Sunday, October 14, during the Sermon from the Steps. Our twist on this tradition is that we'll bless the wild animals that we enjoy in Marin. Please email Pastor Joanne Whitt your photos of Marin wildlife to joannewhitt@togetherweserve.org. We'll look at a slideshow of these coyotes, deer, foxes, skunks, raccoons, turkeys, etc. that share our habitat during the Sermon from the Steps, and ask God's blessing on them.

Family Sundays Are Back

Family Sundays are a new way to worship that we introduced last spring. Family worship is worship that includes everyone. Family Sundays will be the 3rd Sunday of every month. This month it's on September 16th.

What Family Sunday is NOT:

- It's not just for kids
- It's not just for families with children. As we sing every week, "You are a part of the family."
- It's not drastically different from our regular worship.

You will recognize the normal parts of our regular Sunday worship, in the same order as most Sundays.

What Family Sunday IS:

- It's a way to welcome our younger worshipers into the worshipping family
- It invites us to use more of our senses
- It teaches about worship as well as being worship
- It invites more participation (which means less sitting still and just listening)

We look forward to welcoming all kids of all ages, 0-104. In the coming months, we look forward to including more kids in worship leadership, as readers, musicians, artists, photographers, ushers and greeters. And we look forward to exploring this new worship format with...everyone.



Brother Fox returns to the Conant Lair.

*Brother sun, sister moon
Sister stars shine day and night
See them shine beautiful, radiant
Splendor of light*

*Brother wind, brother air
Fair and storm, all weather's moods
Colored flowers and healing herbs
Heavenly grace flows through you*

*So rejoice
For the heavens and earth
Are full of God's glory
Brother sun, sister moon*

From St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun, arr. by John Michael Talbot.

FELLOWSHIP

Dinner Parties

Good Food and Good Conversation with FPSA Friends

Join groups of First Presbyterian members and friends around the dinner table for a meal and a time to relax and converse together! These small groups of 8-10 gather in random groups three times during the year for a potluck dinner at a host's home. Sign up now to be included in the mix! Please email Martha Wall: marthamusic@comcast.net or call her at (415) 898-3331.



One of the dinner parties from last year. Photo by Martha Wall.



CELEBRATE!

Michael Swalberg Receives Highest Honor

Congratulations to Michael Swalberg on being awarded the Distinguished Service Award! The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) was created in 1940 to honor Order of the Arrow members, youth and adults, who have rendered distinguished and outstanding service to the Order on a sectional, regional, or national basis. The award is presented at National Order of the Arrow Conferences. Below read Michael's statement (from FaceBook):

"Things of the spirit are what count: brotherhood—in a day when there is too much hatred at home and abroad; cheerfulness—in a day when the pessimists have the floor and cynics are popular; service—in a day when millions are interested in getting or grasping, rather than giving." ~ Dr. E. Urner Goodman, founder of the **Order of the Arrow – Boy Scouts of America.**

"In October 2008, I was inducted into Talako Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's National Honor Society. This was the start of an incredible journey, one that would unfold in ways I never would have imagined.

On Tuesday, July 31st, I was presented with the OA's Distinguished Service Award (DSA) by one of my greatest mentors, Dr. Joe Barton. I was joined in celebration with other great mentors and friends.

Only 1,019 individuals have received the DSA out of the one million members in the 103-year history of the organization. I am honored and humbled in receiving this award. In truth, there are no words to describe what it means to me.

I could not have reached this point without the friendship and guidance of so many individuals. There are too many to name in this post, and for that, I am truly privileged.

However, I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to Talako Lodge and all those who encompass it – thank you for being a fantastic family to me these last ten years; to Joe, who has been there for me every step of the way; and to my family, Matthew, Lauren, and Steph, who have put up with my numerous conference calls over the years! Love to all of them, and so many others.

"For he who serves his fellows, is of all his fellows, greatest."

~ Dr. E. U. Goodman

WORSHIP

World Communion Sunday and the Peacemaking Offering October 7th

We celebrate the Lord's Supper with Christians the world over on Sunday, October 7th. Our festive worship service will feature special international music, West African drums, breads from different ethnic traditions, and the Peacemaking Offering.

If you choose, you may wear international clothing as part of our worship. In order to avoid "cultural appropriation," this is not an invitation to "dress up as" a person of a different ethnicity or nationality. Rather than wearing a "costume," we merely invite those who have clothing or accessories from travels or from residing abroad, as well as from their own ethnic background, to wear them if they choose. Many people were given gifts of clothing or jewelry by friends or colleagues in other cultures; this is the perfect time to wear those gifts.

Oxford Dictionaries defines cultural appropriation as "the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society." Unlike cultural exchange, in which there is a mutual interchange, appropriation refers to a particular power dynamic in which members of a dominant culture take elements from a culture of people who have been systematically oppressed by that dominant group.

It's often fine to take on aspects of another culture, whether it's putting on espadrilles or making coffee with an Italian espresso machine. The problem arises when somebody takes something from another less dominant culture in a way that members of that culture find undesirable and offensive. The point is that the more marginalized group doesn't get a say, while their heritage is deployed by someone in a position of greater privilege and out of a place of ignorance rather than knowledge of that culture. Wearing espadrilles to work is therefore different from wearing a sombrero to a Halloween party or sending a series of white models down the catwalk wearing their hair in cornrows. These are examples of someone who is pretending to be a race that he/she is not, and drawing upon stereotypes to do so.

Again, it comes down to an imbalance in power— to cultural power, historic and modern.



The Peace and Global Witness Offering: Blessed are the peacemakers

The Peace & Global Witness Offering is received during the Season of Peace, which ends on World Communion Sunday. However, you can help sustain the important PC(USA) ministries and programs that are supported by this important Offering by making an online gift at any time throughout the year.

Checks can be mailed care of
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Your local or mid-council portion of the Peace & Global Witness Offering could be contributed toward to the **Freedom Rising** fund for African American males.

CHURCH & SOCIETY

The following text can be found online at the Resources for the Peace and Global Witness Offering, at:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/freedom-rising-minute-for-mission.pdf>



the great needs facing his community. He was unafraid."

"Because of his life and witness, his community will never be the same. The churches that he motivated to join his mission will never be the same. Pittsburgh Presbytery will never be the same. And thank God that is so!"

Freedom Rising

Freedom Rising is a witness to the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ. **The Confession of 1967** says, "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"

Recognizing the symptoms of systemic oppression damaging the lives of African-American men, including mass incarceration, high rates of unemployment, and state violence committed against our black brothers, among others, the 222nd General Assembly established the **Freedom Rising** fund to facilitate the Church's response. A \$5-million goal has been established to fund pilot initiatives in five American cities—New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Charlotte, and Baltimore—that will respond to the needs for support, development, and healing and result in the thriving of African-American men.

The response in each city will take the shape of local needs and work with programs and agencies in their midst. This ensures community responsiveness and will maximize impact. For example, Pittsburgh will be working on a program of church-based mentoring for young black boys, while Cleveland is focusing its work on undermining white privilege and using arts ministry as a tool for its work.

The initiative bears the name of the man who traveled to the Assembly meeting in Portland to advocate its passage, Eugene "Freedom" Blackwell, who died of cancer two months after seeing the passage of the overture.

"Eugene Blackwell was a friend and inspiration to many. He brought together a coalition of Christians (in Pittsburgh) to invest in his community that otherwise might never have worked together," says Sheldon Sorge, general minister to presbytery in Pittsburgh.

"Freedom maintained great faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to do abundantly above all that we could ask or think. He lived in Scripture, then applied it to

And so, in the spirit of Freedom's life and ability to inspire Christians from diverse backgrounds to work together, this initiative invites the whole church to consider using the portion of the Peace & Global Witness Offering retained by the local congregation or mid council to support these cities in this initial work. By coming together, the church will, as the words of the Belhar Confession claim, "stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged."

For the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), this means standing with our African-American brothers in these five American cities, and by God's grace we will keep working until we all see Freedom rise.

*The following is just part of the Rationale for the overture that is referenced in the article above (**Freedom Rising**). The title given for this overture, which was passed in 2016, is "**The Plight of the African American Male**."*

The Plight of the African American Male

In 1999, the 211th General Assembly approved **Facing Racism: A Vision of the Beloved Country**, a comprehensive policy document that was to guide the church's ministry of "racial justice" into the twenty-first century. This document was to aid the PC(USA) to move beyond the task of legally dismantling racism to removing it from our lives and communities. The time is now. What are we doing?

We are now living in 2016, twenty-six years since the passing of **Overture 90/90*** and we find that the plight of the African American male in this country has not improved but indeed has gotten worse as evidenced by:

The shootings and beatings of African American males, including:

- Michael Brown, 17-year-old, Ferguson, Missouri
- Eric Garner, 43-year-old, New York City, New York
- Freddie Gray, 25-year-old, Baltimore, Maryland
- Kimani Gray, 16-year-old, New York City, New York
- Miles Jordan, 18-year-old, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

* http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/peacemaking/pdf/facing-racism.pdf

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- Trayvon Martin, 17-year-old, Sanford, Florida
- Tamar Rice, 12-year-old, Cleveland, Ohio
- Tyree Woodson, 38-year-old, Baltimore, Maryland

Murder as a rising and prolific cause of death in African American males: While only 6 percent of the overall population, black males accounted for 43 percent of murder victims in 2011. Among youth ages 10 to 24, homicide is the leading cause of death for black males.

The escalating and excessive incarceration of African American males: Nearly 3 million black adults were arrested in 2012. As of November 2015, blacks made up 37.8 percent of the jailed population but just 13.2 percent of the U.S. population. Of the 526,000 black males in state and federal prisons in 2013, 14.3 percent, or roughly 75,000, were between the ages of 18 and 24. There were 261,500 black people in local jails in mid-2013. In 2012, black males were six times more likely to be imprisoned than white males.

Deteriorating educational and employment opportunities for African-American males: Blacks make up 32 percent of the students being suspended and/or expelled from grade schools but only 16 percent of the student population. During the summer months (June–August) of 2013, just 17 percent of black teenage boys (ages 16–19) were employed, compared to 34 percent of white teenage boys. Overall in 2013, half of young black men (ages 20–24) were employed, compared to more than two-thirds of young white men. This employment gap persists as men get older.

PEDAL FOR PROTEIN

Join the 5th Annual Northern California Ride September 16-21, or September 29, 2018

Ride to support food pantries with healthy protein food

To Register for the Ride or to Donate:

www.imathlete.com/events/PedalforProtein
www.imathlete.com/donate/PedalforProtein5

The ride is organized by The Hunger Task Force of the Presbytery of the Redwoods, Patty Sanders, Ride Director, email:

PattyRedwoodsHAE@sbcglobal.net

100% is donated to support local food pantries & food justice projects.

CHURCH & SOCIETY

Puerto Rico Mission Trip: 10/27–11/4/2018

First Presbyterian San Anselmo will be sending a hurricane rebuilding volunteer team to Puerto Rico at the end of October! We hope you will consider joining the team! We will volunteer with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), at their site in Añasco, on the western side of the island. Hurricane Maria caused major devastation in Puerto Rico in September 2017. The population, struggles to rebuild and recover. Puerto Rico's poverty level of 43% is twice that of Mississippi, which has the highest poverty level in the 50 states.

Puerto Rico is a US Territory, so you don't need a passport to visit, and the currency is American dollars. Construction experience is not required. Our mission trip will be the week of Oct. 27–Nov. 4, 2018. The estimated cost for the week is \$600 for food and lodging, plus airfare. The volunteer housing is in a clean and modern building with a kitchen, living room, bathrooms, and bedrooms with 4 bunk beds each. Please RSVP by September 16, 2018.

Please send questions or comments to Lisa Cosby, LM_Cosby@yahoo.com.



After nearly a year, much of the damage caused by Hurricane Maria remains. Photo by Lisa Cosby.

CHURCH & SOCIETY

Rise for Climate, Jobs, and Justice Rally and March San Francisco, September 8, 2018

This will be one of thousands of rallies around the world and thousands of people are expected to participate here in San Francisco. Marchers will gather at Embarcadero Plaza at 10 am and then march to Civic Center Plaza at 11:00.

Many groups and delegations are scheduled to participate: indigenous people, environmental justice communities, labor groups, youth groups, elders, divestment campaigners, anti-fracking groups, etc., etc. We are signed up to meet and march with other faith groups. As such, we are invited to an Ohlone sunrise service at 6:45 am, as well as an interfaith service at 9:00, before the general gathering at 10:00.

Here are three web sites that will give complete information, including transportation:

<https://ca.riseforclimate.org/faith>

<https://riseforclimate.org/>

<https://350bayarea.org/rise>

Joanne quoted a priest a couple weeks ago: "The world needs anger. The world continues to allow evil because it isn't angry enough." She went on to say: "God gave us anger so that we might not just sit complacently by while God's children and God's earth are mistreated, excluded, abandoned, abused. God gave us anger so that we would act." Participating in this march is an opportunity to act.

Email Royce Truex at truex@pacbell.net if you have questions or want to march.

It precedes the Global Climate Action Summit*, also to be held in San Francisco September 12-14, demanding real climate leadership, no new fossil fuel projects and a just transition to a 100% clean-energy economy.

* <http://globalclimateactionsummit.org>



<https://350bayarea.org/rise>



Poster art by Columbian Graphic Artist Jhon Cortés



HIGH NOTES

...from the choir

We have a lot to be thankful for! In addition to the well-deserved praise we gave Maestro Canosa last month, we would like to express our

appreciation of a few people within the choir who do things that perhaps no one notices. If you changed a light-bulb in an empty sanctuary, did it really happen? Dave Jones recently spent countless hours with light bulbs. Changing them in fact, which, given where they are placed (church ceiling stratosphere), is no small task. Week after week, Martin Stevenson records the choir at Sunday worship. This is really helpful for us singers to hear.

We are also so thankful to have Al Flood and his Barrelhouse Jazz band who add a special touch to our Homecoming weekend. The choir always enjoys working with these musicians!

Choir will resume its regular weekly rehearsals on Thursday, Sept. 6, at 7:30 pm. Anyone is invited to join is! Questions? Just ask Linda lgprice57@gmail.com

WORSHIP

Christian Vocation Sunday September 2, 2018

Every year on the Sunday before Labor Day, we observe Christian Vocation Sunday and celebrate what Presbyterians refer to as “the priesthood of all believers” by hearing from three members of our community describe how they work out their Christian discipleship in the workplace. They tell us what difference it makes in their jobs that they are Christians.

A vocation (from Latin *vocātiō*, meaning “a call, summons”) is an occupation to which a person is specially drawn or for which they are suited, trained, or qualified. Though now often used in non-religious contexts, the meanings of the term originated in Christianity. Prior to the Reformation, vocation or calling was thought to be only for those who worked for the church as priests, monks or nuns. An important belief of the reformers John Calvin and Martin Luther was that God calls every person. Vocation is not just for pastors or those who work for the church.

God calls us to our life work and to a life of service in everything we do. “Christian vocation” refers to God’s call to daily service in the world through our jobs, talents and interests. A sense of calling is what gives meaning to our daily routine. Whether you are a butcher, a baker or a homemaker, your labors and talents are God’s gift through you to the world. But God’s call isn’t limited to our employment. The answer to the question “What I am supposed to do with what God has given me?” includes how we earn our paycheck and how we spend it. It includes how we spend our time outside of work. No one retires from God’s call. Retirement is a gift that allows us to serve in new ways.

Join us on September 2 for Christian Vocation Sunday, when we will hear from three church members about their sense of call:

Virginia Thibeaux, Office Manager, Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center

Shiloh Ferreira, 7th grade math teacher, Mill Valley Middle School

Irma Rivera Carlisle, Marriage and Family Therapist



CHURCH & SOCIETY

MOC and First Presbyterian San Anselmo Together!

By Joy Snyder

Our decision to join the MOC (Marin Organizing Committee) has already enhanced our connection to the Marin community-at-large. In the couple of months since joining, several of our members have attended one or more MOC-sponsored event ... all of which were valuable and increased our connectivity!

As your delegates to the MOC, Gina Guillemette and I (Joy Snyder) have met regularly with MOC leadership to clarify our goals, as well as to learn about other agendas they offer which we as a congregation might be interested in supporting.

On June 10th and August 1st, we were joined by Joanne Whitt (yay, thank you!) in attendance at the MOC Leader’s Meetings which are held every other month. These meetings are used for training in communication and community organization, as well as for updates on current events or “actions” to participate in, and the background as to why they’ve selected to support that particular issue or cause.

One of our specific goals in joining was to make sure that we are “at the table” when it comes to anything to do with the local homeless community. And so, on August 11th, 9 of us attended a “Housing First” update meeting at St. Anselm’s. Many of you attended our Dessert Buffet/Sunday Seminar for the follow-up/review of that information on the August 22nd after church in Duncan Hall. As you will/would have learned, “Housing First” takes several forms and is somewhat fluid, but the over-riding goal is an end to chronic homelessness in 4 years.

Next on our calendar is a meeting to be held on September 26th at St. Anselm’s, regarding an update on progress in that Housing First program. Examples will be presented and explored that will help us continue our forward momentum and desire to (literally) serve our homeless friends, “REST-style”, albeit at other sites.

If you wish to be kept abreast of such MOC and REST information and opportunities, and if you AREN’T already in the email group, email us at restintransition@gmail.com. We look forward to your participation in whatever form suits you. And please feel free to spread the word beyond our congregation; all are welcome to join our e-group!

MOC Press Conference Shares Some Results

By Joy Snyder

There were at least 5 members of FPCSA at the Emergency Press Conference called out by the Marin Organizing Committee (MOC) for noon on August 17th. The purpose was to make public the plight of some families in the Canal neighborhood, who have received notice of a 40% increase in their rents (e.g. from \$1900 to \$2700)!

Not many may realize that there is no cap on the amount of rental increase that Landlords may assess in Marin County. And particularly for these Hispanic tenants, the fear of contesting or confronting an owner (in this case, a new owner) is daunting. Nevertheless, these 40 families came together and said, "Enough." They approached MOC for help, and that path led to this Press Conference.

*Nevertheless, these
40 families came
together and said,
"Enough."*

At the conference, several of the families told their stories: about the very poor conditions at their complex (roaches, bed bugs, insufficient number of dumpsters, front doors that wouldn't lock, windows that won't close or won't open, etc.); about how some of them slept outdoors for months or went without meals, while waiting for this housing situation in the first place; how some have been tenants for 10 - 20 years; about kids saying that they will just quit school and find jobs to help with the rent.

The Superintendent of San Rafael Schools was there and spoke of the tremendous stress these children are experiencing and how much they are appreciated and valued.

Toward the close of the conference, it was announced that the landlord's lawyers have agreed to meet with MOC and that there is finally some hope that this will lead to a serious negotiation. This was certainly an opportunity to think globally, but ACT locally...with the MOC.



Sue Neil, Sita Khufu, and Joanne Whitt attend the noontime press conference called by the MOC.

DEACONS

Meet Your Deacon Sunday: September 16, 2018

Coming up on September 16 the Deacons are going to be on the patio after worship and are eager to meet with you face to face. On this day you will have the opportunity to Meet YOUR Deacon.

Yes, that's right! Everyone in the congregation has a Deacon who is here to be of service to you. For example, if you need a ride to an appointment or a ride to church, your Deacon can help make that connection. Or perhaps you would like someone to assist in preparing a meal for a day or two while you gather strength after an illness. The Deacons also deliver flowers at Christmas and other occasions to folks who might enjoy this cheerful gift, either at home or in the hospital. These are just some of the very helpful and personal activities that define what our Deacons do in our congregation and the wider community.

The Deacons will be offering snacks and treats as well, so pick up your cup of tea or coffee, come over to the tables on the patio and meet the friendly folks who are the Deacons of this congregation. There you will be guided to your Deacon where you can get better acquainted, ask questions, and enjoy the fellowship.



RESOURCES

Presbyterian “Per Capita” Contribution: The What and the Why

What is per capita?

The official definition: “Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian church through the governing bodies [mid councils] to participate equally, responsibly, and interdependently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; and of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a Reformed Church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians” (GA Minutes, Part I, 1995).

In essence: Per capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Said another way, it is a Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund – part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Because every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PC(USA)’s system of government, the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system should be shared by everyone as well.

Why is per capita important?

Per capita brings Presbyterians together – literally!

Presbyterians are connected in many ways, including our church government. We believe we discern best what God is calling us to do when we gather as mid councils, “seek[ing] together to find and represent the will of Christ” (Book of Order F-3.0204). Per capita dollars pay for the costs of holding a General Assembly – including paying for the travel, room and board of commissioners and advisory delegates, several of whom would not be able to afford these expenses on their own.

Per capita makes it possible for Presbyterians to govern ourselves the way we do.

Presbyterians have a form of government built upon shared power and mutual accountability as we seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. By providing the primary means through which commissioners and advisory delegates can gather to do their work, per capita dollars help to undergird our governance system.

Our Constitution provides a moral and theological compass that builds community and calls us to

Christian faithfulness in gratitude to God.

Per capita makes possible our effort for visible unity of the church of Jesus Christ.

The PC(USA), as with other faith traditions and denominations, is but a small part of the one church of Jesus Christ. We affirm that God’s call is for the church to be one.

Per capita makes it possible for us to maintain our historical awareness. Our historical heritage helps us make informed decisions for the future. The Presbyterian Historical Society is our national archives and historical research center. It collects, preserves, and shares the history of the American Presbyterian and Reformed tradition.

What is my per capita contribution for 2018, and where does it go?

Great question. Check in next month.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Contribute to Our “We’re All in This Together” Community Mural at San Anselmo Country Fair Day! Sunday, September 30th

On September 30th, we’ll greet our neighbors from our booth at the San Anselmo Country Fair Day street fair on San Anselmo Avenue. We’ll hand out free (compostable) cups of water and give all our neighbors an opportunity to contribute to our “We’re All in This Together” community mural. We’ll start the mural during the ice cream social on Homecoming Sunday. It is designed so that individuals can color in a square or shape, mosaic-style, with whatever color or pattern they choose. The end product will be a crazy quilt of color surrounding people in caring community with the message, “We’re All in This Together.”

Please consider signing up to spend 30 minutes (or more) with Pastor Joanne, greeting our neighbors in the booth. Sign ups start September 9.



Happy times from Country Fair Days past.

TRANSITIONS

Transition Support Group Fall Book: **Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race,** by Debby Irving

While the Transition Support Group usually chooses books from the “self help” section of the bookstore, this September the group has elected to read **Waking Up White**, by Debby Irving. Arguably, learning about our privilege and our racialized ideas is a form of self help—as well as help for our community and nation.

Debby Irving writes about her book: “**Waking Up White** is the book I wish someone had handed me decades ago. My hope is that by sharing my sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions, I offer a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. As I unpack my own long-held beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person, and wanting to help people of color, I reveal how each of these well-intentioned mindsets actually perpetuated my ill-conceived ideas about race. I also explain why and how I’ve changed the way I talk about racism, work in racially mixed groups, and understand the racial justice movement as a whole. Exercises at the end of each chapter prompt readers to explore their own racialized ideas. **Waking Up White**’s personal narrative is designed to work well as a rapid read, a book group book, or support reading for courses exploring racial and cultural issues.”
<http://www.debbyirving.com/the-book/>

Here is what reviewers have said:

“Debby Irving’s powerful *Waking Up White* opens a rare window on how white Americans are socialized. Irving’s focus on the mechanics of racism operating in just one life—her own—may lead white readers to reconsider the roots of their own perspectives—and their role in dismantling old myths. Readers of color will no doubt find the view through Irving’s window fascinating, and telling.”

~ Van Jones, Co-host, **CNN Crossfire**

“I read *Waking Up White* in one sitting. To say I loved it is an understatement. It’s such a raw, honest portrait ... Irving’s experience on display—warts and all—will help white people, who haven’t noticed the role systemic privilege has played in their lives, start to see the world in a new way.”

~ Jodi Picoult, author,

“Deborah Irving bravely describes her jolting and continuing journey from white oblivion to white awareness in an honest way that may inspire others to do such transformational work on themselves. She has courage in tracing many cultural and class assumptions that kept her for decades in a fog of racial denial and white dominance. This empathetic book can help white readers to dissipate the imprisoning white ignorance that we did not ask for but that has damaged our world and ourselves.”

~Peggy McIntosh, Ph.D., Associate Director, Wellesley Centers for Women; Founder and Senior Associate, National SEED Project on Inclusive Curriculum (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity)

The Transition Support Group meets every Wednesday morning from 9:00-10:30 am in the office conference room. After opening with prayer, the group looks at a Bible passage for about 10 minutes, and then checks in, sharing joys and concerns in a confidential setting. The last 20 minutes of the gathering is reserved for book discussion.



Update on Molly Morris, Former Intern/Director of Family Ministries

Molly Morris graduated from seminary last May, and has been accepted to a chaplaincy residency program at East Jefferson General Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana. She’s looking for a place to live and sends her prayers and good wishes.

SESSION

Good to know!

This year, every month, a member of Session chooses to read a book about racism and the black experience and reports back to the rest of the Session members about it. Session takes seriously our commitment to dismantle the deep-seated racism that is embedded in our society and protects white privilege.

WORSHIP

Worship in September 2018

September 2 Christian Vocation Sunday

Communion

"My Labor, My Work, My Ministry"

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Three church members will describe how they live out their Christian discipleship in the workplace:

Virginia Thibeaux, Office Manager, Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center

Shiloh Ferreira, 7th grade math teacher, Mill Valley Middle School

Irma Rivera Carlisle, Marriage and Family Therapist

September 9 Homecoming Sunday

"Old Dogs, New Tricks"

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

Mark 7:24-37

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching

September 16 Family Sunday

Reception of New Members

"Something to Show the Way"

Hebrews 12:1-2

Proverbs 3:5-6

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching

September 23 "Afraid to Ask"

Mark 9:30-37

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching

September 30 "Was God Involved?"

Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching



Another Country Fair Day blast from the past. Folding chair brigade. Or something like that. "It was fun, but man, were we sore!"

SUNDAY SEMINARS

Sunday Seminars in Autumn

Our autumn Sunday Seminars are taking shape with some interesting topics. Taking the lead from the summer sermon theme around community, the question is what is going on in our communities.

September 23 Classes, Groups and Clubs

(Duncan Hall) We will have tables for the open communities that meet here regularly. Look for the Book Group, Fitness Class, Closely Knit, Life Stories, and many more. If Erica has not contacted you about your favorite group, email her at ericajheath@gmail.com.

October 7 Guilds, Teams, Helpers, and Volunteers

How do we keep the church running? In addition to great staff we have a multitude of wonderful volunteers. Some groups like the flower guild are known and acknowledged and others are far behind the scenes like the counters and the church mice. We will again have table tops in Duncan Hall to trumpet the opportunities.

We hope to take a look at some social issues here in Marin. How much do Black Lives Matter in Marin? What are the problems faced by transgender people among us? (Joy has already had a great program on improving the lot of the homeless.) What do our police see and what are their biggest local issues?

September

2 (Labor Day weekend)

9 Homecoming Sunday Ice Cream Social and JazzFest

16 Meet your Deacon

23 Sunday Seminar First Presbyterian Communities of Clubs Groups & Classes

30 San Anselmo Country Fair Day

October

7 First Presbyterian Communities of Guilds, Helpers and Volunteers

14 Bread for the World

21 Sunday Seminar: Race in Marin???

28 Sunday Seminar: The Rev. Dr. Janie Spahr with Jordan Decker: "Beyond Pink and Blue" (See story on the next page.)



Turkeys in the neighborhood

Continued from Page 1

"Next Level." Our congregation has a pretty good handle on who we are and what God is calling us to do and be, but we needed some coaching in 21st century strategies for improving our visibility, welcome and outreach. Your Next Level Team – Laurie Buntain, Dave Jones, Margaret Melsh, Raquel Nelson, Martha Olsen Joyce, Robin Truitt, Vivian Volz and myself – will continue to apply what we've learned. We've already undertaken much needed repairs and improvements to the buildings (thanks to our mini capital campaign), updated our logo and website, and encouraged people to wear their new nametags. This fall we will work on how we extend hospitality to visitors and newcomers. With the help of Libby Davis, we'll update instructions and training for greeters. We'll invite the congregation to explore our practices around welcome, and we'll focus our work as a Session on this and the other priorities identified by our Next Level work. We'll update restrooms, improve the sound system and make more of the campus accessible and welcoming. All of this may not be completed by the end of the year, but we should have plenty to celebrate at the all-church Together We Serve dinner on November 11.

We'll offer opportunities for the whole congregation to learn more about the Marin Organizing Committee and our Next Level projects this fall. Watch the newsletter, the website, the bulletin announcements, as we celebrate renewing and strengthening our ministry.

Together we serve,
Joanne

SUNDAY SEMINARS

October 28: The Rev. Dr. Janie Spahr and Jordan Decker: "Beyond Pink and Blue"

Creating safe and caring places for transgender people and their families in both church and society is one of the most pressing challenges and opportunities for the Christian faith, community life and church growth today. Join this lively conversation with Janie and Jordan and learn more about how our community can meet this challenge.

Jordan Decker is a man on a Spiritual path that became an accidental activist. After learning 57% of Transgender youth will attempt suicide and battling his own depression and suicidal ideation, he came out once again to speak up for the leader of us, the transgender kids. He educates faith communities on Transyouth suicide prevention while offering safe post-op housing for gender conformation surgeries in the Bay Area.



First Presbyterian
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SUNDAY WORSHIP
10:00am
(Nursery Care)

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt
Pastor and Head of Staff

The Rev. Doug Olds

Parish Associate

Laurie Buntain

Church Accountant

Daniel Canosa

Director of Music

Tom Lannert

Church Custodian

Joanna Magee

Office Administrator

Audrey Mahler

Sexton

Natsuko Murayama

Organist

Martha Spears

Coordinator of

Older Adult Ministries

Mary Wright Gillespie

Associate Pastor Emerita

Sally Johnson

Director of Music Emerita

KENSINGTON PRESS

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Photographer

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Barbara Shindelus

Mailing

*Please submit stories by the 15th
of the month prior to publication.*

‘We The Same Color’

Rudy Perez-Diaz

I’m black and you black too
not in skin tone but deep in your roots.
You believe you’re better than me
but really I’m better than you.
I realize we’re all equal,
all men, women, and children too.
You could be white, so I’m white too,
you bleed the same color as I do.
Skin tone is nothing, that’s what’s got me bugged —
you see me and you’re quick to tuck your luggage.
I’m brown and you’re brown too,
we got the same frown on a bad day too.
You wanna fight me but I don’t wanna fight you
cuz if you lose I know what you’re gonna do,
come back with more or call the men in blue,
and they see color, just like you do too.
I’m black and you black too.
You white and me too.
You brown with a frown?
I’m brown with a frown just like you.
Now where in the backwoods
can we get along, me and you?



This young poet, Rudy Perez-Diaz, wrote the winning entry for the Marin Poetry Center’s 2017-18 high school poetry contest while he was incarcerated at Marin County Juvenile Hall, in exchange for some extra phone privileges. At the encouragement of a writing coach, he sat down and wrote everything he felt. Well done, young sir! (Marin IJ 8/27/2018)