

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

*Matthew 25:21*

## **Good and Faithful Servants**

Our denomination (and many other Christians) often talk about Matthew 25 as their guiding light. But it’s a long chapter, and usually the part of Matthew 25 we follow comes in verses 31-46. But before that comes the story of the very rich man who entrusts some of his wealth to three servants. While I often paraphrase God’s promise to Abraham, “I will bless you, , , , so that you will be a blessing,” this parable goes further, even admonishing us to make sure we are in fact passing on the blessings—even building on the blessings—that God has given us. While we like to quote the praise “Well done, good and faithful servant” which was given to the two servants who did something with the treasure entrusted to them, we don’t like to repeat Matthew 25:26-30, the curse against the servant who hid the treasure out of fear.

As I reflect on this last week, I see many ways Presbytery members have pleased God by using the gifts entrusted to them.

First I want to recognize some folks who have been great leaders and contributors to the ministry of this Presbytery, in many ways. At our April Presbytery meeting, we recognized Rob and Cyndie Crowell, who are headed for retirement. In fact, yesterday there was a joint worship service at Trinity Presbyterian Church, celebrating the ministries of both Cyndie, Trinity’s pastor, and Rob, pastor of Village Presbyterian Church in Arcadia.

We didn’t make clear that as Rob retires from his ministry at Village, he is also retiring from his chaplaincy work at Westminster Gardens. And another Presbytery leader, Diane Frasher, who came to us first as Stated Clerk and then as temporary pastor of Westminster Presbyterian in Temple City (now Live Oak), and most recently has been chaplain at Monte Vista Grove Homes, is also retiring from her position. Both Rob and Diane were honored and thanked by the respective communities they have served so well, and we as a Presbytery are grateful for their support of our retired church workers, and to House of Rest for funding these important ministries. We are in the process of reviewing the chaplaincy program, and will soon be opening up the positions for others who feel called to work with some absolutely amazing Presbyterians! Cyndie, Rob, and Diane have all served God in many capacities, utilizing the abundance and variety of gifts God has showered on them. Good and faithful servants indeed!

As a presbytery, we are also stepping up by offering the many and varied gifts God has entrusted with us as a body.

Last Friday, I was able to visit the apartment building on Figueroa in Altadena with gift cards funded by PDA. I was given the good news that the hot water in the building has been restored, and nearly all the apartments now have gas and electric, so the apartments are livable again. Also, the residents meet regularly, and NDLON (National Day Laborer Organizing Network, at <https://ndlön.org/>) and the Pasadena Community Job Center have done an outstanding job of helping them and many other immigrants understand their rights, so even in the wake of the massive raid in Pomona, the residents feel safer and empowered to live their lives in our community. Trinity Presbyterian has been supportive in very hands-on ways with the Job Center, just as Westminster in Pasadena is offering their

building to other churches, and will soon be hosting the ACTS Food Pantry, which was housed at Altadena Community Church before its building was destroyed in the Eaton Fire.

I mentioned last week that we will be donating to Door of Hope's matching grant drive. Door of Hope, with the leadership of Presbyterian pastor Megan Katerjian, is working tirelessly to find housing for displaced families in San Gabriel Valley. They were offered up to \$150,000 in matching funds, but as of last week, they had not yet reached their goal, even with the \$6,000 we committed to them. But we found out that the matching grant drive goes until May 18, so there is time to donate! Go to <https://doorofhope.us/> to give online.

And over the weekend, Lisa Hansen, pastor of Pasadena Presbyterian, represented San Gabriel Presbytery at a community leaders' breakfast hosted by LA County Supervisor and Chair Kathryn Barger. She offered PPC as a site for meetings between Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and community members who are struggling with the decision of whether to sell their land to developers, or whether to work with NHS to keep their land and rebuild. We celebrate the work of so many local nonprofits such as NHS, Habitat for Humanity, and Beacon Housing (an affordable housing group founded by a member of La Cañada Presbyterian Church) as well as Door of Hope and others. The *Los Angeles Times* just ran an article on the efforts of NHS; you can read it at <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-05-02/in-a-bid-to-blunt-disaster-gentrification-in-altadena-nonprofits-look-to-buy-burned-lots>.

Patrick Perry, chair of our Justice Peacemaking and Mission Committee, has been in meetings with the Eaton Fire Collaborative and others as we discern how to best help in the community rebuilding efforts. We hope to elicit major funding from our national church, including PDA but also the Presbyterian Foundation and PILP, for the rebuilding effort. We are already involved in community organizing work, and we are preparing to provide emotional and spiritual resiliency events for community members and leaders, with participation not only from PDA but spiritual directors and therapists who are members of San Gabriel Presbytery.

The work is ongoing—maybe just starting—but I am so grateful for the ways that our churches and our people are stepping forward and using our gifts for the sake of the most vulnerable among us. Surely we are encouraged that God is pleased with the ways we are maximizing the gifts entrusted to us. May we continue to be a shining light of hope for all our communities.

Blessings abound,

*Wenley*