

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it. *Psalms 24:1*

Restoration

This last Saturday was our June Presbytery meeting and annual Day of Service, and I thought I'd share a few highlights.

The meeting lasted almost exactly one hour as planned, but several important actions and updates were included. As I mentioned last week, we have lost several Presbytery members in recent weeks; we were saddened to learn that Rev. John Najarian, former pastor of Claremont Presbyterian Church, had died on April 11. As we said farewell to several beloved friends and colleagues, we also saw several new faces at the meeting and Day of Service, including several folks from Interwoven New Worshiping Community.

At the meeting, we voted to receive Rev. Trina Zelle, who has settled in Pasadena in her retirement. Trina has had extensive and varied experience in ministry, including pastoral ministry and community justice work. She has volunteered to help wherever the Presbytery needs her, and she has much to offer! The Administrative Commission for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church completed their work, with thanks from the Presbytery. Rev. Ally Lee is transferring to Greater Atlanta Presbytery, where she is serving as Interim Pastor of Fayette Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, Georgia. Sam Bang has resigned as CRE Co-Pastor for Northminster, and Rev. Charlie Campbell is continuing as half-time Pastor focusing on worship. And Rev. Elizabeth Wang's installation as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Altadena, was approved for Sunday, July 21, at 2 pm.

Arcadia Community Church, whose corporation name is Arcadia Presbyterian Church, has taken on a new name for their ministry, Journey Community Church, reflecting both their mission statement "Welcoming people on a spiritual journey to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ," and the regional reach of their ministry.

San Gabriel Presbytery and San Fernando Presbytery are co-hosting an International Peacemaker, Frances Namoumou from Fiji. She will be in Southern California September 19-25, 2024, and comes with expertise in Climate Justice and Ecological Stewardship, and Disaster and Displacement Management. She speaks English, so does not need a translator. She is open to meet with folks to do Bible Study and education on the impacts of climate change. If you are interested in having her speak, contact Wendy Gist at gist.wendy@gmail.com.

We heard an excellent presentation by Carmella France of [Door of Hope](#), recipient of this meeting's offering. Door of Hope is one of the few shelters that can house full families in private apartments, and they are preparing to open a fifth shelter soon. They also have done excellent work in helping people stay in their homes. Carmella reported that they invest on average \$5,000 to help a family keep their home with back rent and access to community resources; this is a bargain compared to the cost of over \$100,000 to reestablish a family if they are already homeless. If you would still like to give, you can do so at <https://sangabpres.org/donate/> until the end of June.

Mona Morales Recalde gave some encouraging updates from the Gabrieleno Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, including the quick trip to the White House for the signing of the expansion of the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. Mona acknowledged the relationship between San Gabriel Presbytery and the tribe that has continued since 1940, and offered the first verse of Psalm 24 to reflect our oneness as God's children on God's land.

Rev. Harlan Redmond shared a brief update on the partnership with Habitat for Humanity at Baldwin Park; the hope is that major construction will begin this fall. And he reported that the Eagle Rock/ Interwoven Administrative Commission approved the first phase of renovation work, to totally renovate the preschool building at Eagle Rock.

The theme of restoration continued after the meeting at Huhuugna, the site that is the first sovereign land for the Tongva people since Westerners moved in. About a dozen workers from Knox, Claremont, San Marino, Westminster Pasadena, and Interwoven helped to clear the land of invasive species, and learned a great deal from tribal members with extensive knowledge, both native and Western, on botany, fire management, and care of the land. It was a blessing to visit the land, which has many well-established oak trees, a building that will be used for meetings and education of Native culture, and space for ceremonies and celebrations of the tribe. It was moving to hear the coordinator say how important it is that for the first time in centuries, they can gather as a people without having to rent space or ask permission from someone else to meet. A young man from Interwoven was greatly honored when he realized that he was contributing to the restoration of the land that he had learned about in school, the first land given back to the first people of Los Angeles.

Many folks from El Monte Community, West Covina Community Fellowship, Emmanuel Hispanic, Praise, Calvary, Westminster Pasadena, Pasadena, Trinity, Live Oak, and throughout the Presbytery put together hygiene kits, including encouraging notes, for LA General Medical Center, and went through several boxes of memorabilia for Trinity Presbyterian Church, finding some important documents and photos!

As it happens, I preached at La Verne Heights Presbyterian Church yesterday, and got to see the progress they are making on a major renovation of their fellowship hall and office building. La Verne Heights is also the church who counts among their members Mona Recalde and other members of the Tongva tribe, and Samantha Johnson, the Tongva land coordinator, expressed appreciation for being in the Presbyterian church. It is good to witness forms of restoration on their campus.

This Wednesday, June 19th, is Juneteenth. Juneteenth marks the eventual end of slavery in the United States, in 1865. And June is Pride Month for the LGBTQIA community. Days like Juneteenth and Father's Day and Pride Month, and even days like our Day of Service, give witness to the perseverance of God's people seeking human rights, freedom from fear and oppression, care for our loved ones, and faithfulness to God's will for God's people and all of Creation.

May we continue to glimpse and nurture God's kin-dom of mutual care for each other and the land we inhabit. Thank God for San Gabriel Presbytery.

Peace,

Wendy