

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" *Isaiah 52:7*

### **World Communion and Connectionalism**

As I write this column we are coming up on World Communion Sunday, though when you read this we will have just celebrated it. World Communion Sunday is a good reminder that we are connected through our faith to people all around the world. In September I was reminded of this connection through visits and visitors. We both brought and received good news and good tidings and heard how peace and justice are being promoted throughout God's beloved community.

During the second week of September, Via International hosted a small group from our water purification system team during a day trip to Tijuana. We met at Casa de Luz migrant shelter where we discussed and envisioned a water system that would provide clean drinking water for the many international migrants who find temporary shelter in this place and for the Migrant Kitchen run out of Casa de Luz which provides meals every Sunday for people at Border Church on the Tijuana side of the wall. We had a chance to work on the plan collaboratively with Manuel, the water system distributor; Irving, the director of Casa de Luz; and Aida, a Via International staff member. The input from each of these partners continued to improve the plan as we talked things through, so that by the time the visit was over we had a good, practical design.

Upon leaving Casa de Luz we went with Aida to another location where Via International has been given use of an existing building where they will be opening their own migrant shelter for women and children. We toured the soon-to-be shelter and walked through the large grounds and adjoining 6-story building that houses an orphanage, a chapel, and rooms for lodging Via International work/study groups. Via International has invited our Presbytery to partner with them in their new endeavor as is appropriate, so we are in discussions as to what that might look like.

During a month each fall the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program welcomes International Peacemakers from all regions of the globe to share their stories with Presbyterians around the U.S. These International Peacemakers visit churches in hosting presbyteries and those of us who attend their presentations come away more knowledgeable as to current realities and often challenged to figure out how we can engage in the broader struggle they and their communities are facing. We were fortunate to have two International Peacemakers in our region this year.

Right in the middle of September SGP had International Peacemaker Rev. Hiheon Kim from South Korea in our midst. He shared some of the history of Korea, including its division and questioned why foreigners had been given the right to divide his country. His message ultimately called for a peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, and we are asked to join in praying for this.

In the second half of Sept. Frances Namoumou, the International Peacemaker from Fiji, was with us. Her focus was the climate crisis, environmental stewardship, and climate migration management from the perspective of a resident of an island nation. We learned how strong the connection is for indigenous islanders to the land and sea where they live and their ancestors have lived, and why this is the case. We learned that for islanders the sea rise is not seen as vertical, but as horizontal because horizontal distances of land are disappearing. Frances told us stories of communities that have already had to leave their ancestral homes and the challenges they face. Her work with the Pacific Council of Churches has her traveling to communities throughout the Pacific doing the best

she can to help communities that are losing their homes contemplate what's next. We were encouraged to do what we can to reduce climate change at all levels.

On September 30 Joseph Russ, the PC(USA) Coordinator for Migration Issues, Advocacy, and Mission in the Northern Triangle of Central America spent the evening at Claremont Presbyterian Church. Joseph was a vital player in coordinating the launch of the Mesoamerican Migration and Mission Network, which I and several other members of the Presbytery attended in March. He remains engaged with the Network Leadership Team and works on education and advocacy opportunities along with partners throughout Mesoamerica.

What a rich world community we are fortunate enough to interact and partner with. Have a good, blessed week!

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.