

“Because of the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon us,  
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.” *Luke 1:78-79*

### **The Next Dawn**

This weekend has been a big one, for me at least.

On Saturday we had our year-end Presbytery meeting, with some annual business and more:

- We elected leaders for 2026, including Helen Darsie moving to Moderator of the Executive Commission, Deidra Goulding to Moderator of the Presbytery, and RE Yvonne Harmon of Northminster as Vice Moderator of the Presbytery. Yvonne has just completed her term as Moderator of the Synod and then the Synod Commission of Assembly, and I have always been impressed with her faithfulness and dedication. We also elected Millason Dailey of Calvary South Pasadena as Teaching Elder Commissioner, and Leslie Gonzalez of Puente de Esperanza as Young Adult Advisory Delegate for General Assembly 2026, in Milwaukee. We did not have a nominee for Ruling Elder Commissioner, so we will still take nominations until November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- We approved the budget for 2026, continuing the apportionment at \$70/member. The budget reflects a new funding source, through the use of the former Village Presbyterian Church campus.
- Justice, Peacemaking, and Mission reported on several ministries, including grants from the El Monte Initiative to Community El Monte’s food pantry (\$15,000) and Puente de Esperanza’s CaliCenter (\$30,500); the food delivery program for immigrants and other at-risk families, run by Santa Anita Family YMCA, the recipient of this month’s Presbytery offering (you can still give through <https://sangabpres.org/donate/>—go to “Give to Presbytery Offering”); and the upcoming request from PDA to establish disaster case managers in highly trusted churches to work with underserved communities needing assistance to recover from the Eaton Fire.
- Education, Equipping, and Empowerment shared plans for leadership training in the new year, with an all-Presbytery meeting probably in September.
- We approved the request from Filipino Community United Presbyterian Church in Azusa to change their name to Love Community Church SGV. This name change signifies their commitment to broadening their ministry to all races and sexual/gender identities.
- We approved continued funding of Live Oak Community Church and Interwoven New Worshiping Community, and heard inspiring stories of their ministries from pastors Andrew Ritiau and Harlan Redmond.
- We elected the Rev. Dr. Lisa Hansen to be our next Executive Presbyter!

Thanks to La Verne Heights Presbyterian Church for hosting. This was a special time, because we enjoyed their new fellowship hall, which is now called “The Gathering Place.” Like Sibana’gna, this new site has been a catalyst for new ministry, and it’s wonderful to see their beautiful new facility. And oh yeah, we had a great lunch and I am overwhelmed with the love that was shared—with me, but I also saw how much we enjoyed being together.

As it happens, yesterday was a big day for the church where I will probably be worshiping regularly in 2026, Altadena Community Church, because they called their new pastor. So it became very apparent that this weekend was all about new beginnings—celebrating the growing new ministries at Live Oak and Interwoven, welcoming new leadership for the Presbytery including a new Executive Presbyter,

seeing the fruits of new sites for ministry, and noting new leadership for a partnering denomination's church that is currently nested at one of our churches, Westminster Presbyterian, while they recover from losing their campus in the Eaton Fire.

The lectionary gospel passage for this coming Sunday, Reign of Christ Sunday, references the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, signaled by the birth of a child. We remember that the birth of this particular child would grow up to be John the Baptist, a great prophet who yet announced that the salvation of Israel would come through another, Jesus of Nazareth. I think of this because the dawn of God's grace has broken many times in addition to the one great dawn, the dawn on Christmas Day. Even after the darkness of 2025, there is a new dawn breaking before us, and there is much to look forward to in 2026. Thanks be to God!

With thanks, to you and to God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wendy", written in a cursive style.