

**APPROVED!**

Per capita rate for 2023

Budget to be approved at the February meeting

Synod Loan to **Federated Placerville** for solar panels

AC members

Authority delegated to VIM

Validated Specialized Ministries

**2023 Meeting Dates:** Feb. 11, May 6, Sept. 9 & Nov. 4

Special Presbytery meeting March 25th re: GA amendments

**ELECTED!****First Term Nominees**

RE Marsha Cook--

Mission Support

MWS Stephen Moon--Council

MWS Kristin Saldine--PJC

RE Ann Johnson--

Synod Commissioner

MWS Sarah Nave--

Vitality in Ministry

MWS Craig Wright--

Prep for Ministry

**Re-elections**

MWS Melissa Tidwell,

RE Deborah Luthi to

New Ministry Initiatives

MWS Mike Umbenhaur,

RE Alice Sundquist to

Vitality in Ministry

RE Lynda Mendoza,

MWS Jim Stochl to

Budget & Finance

MWS Judy Davis to

Committee on Representation



**The Rev. Dr. Grace Suwabe** was elected and installed to a three-year commitment to be Vice-Moderator, Moderator and Chair of Council. Grace is pastor of First Pres. Marysville.



*Outgoing Moderator Pat Terry*



*Installation of new Vice Moderator Grace Suwabe and Moderator Aart van Beek with Mary Westfall and Pat Terry*



*Outgoing Council Chair Joshua Trautmann*



*Zoom Tech Host Steve Netiss*

**LAMENT**

Following the long tradition of God's people in difficult moments and seasons, **Transitional Presbyter Mary Westfall** led us through the pattern of lament: *addressing God, cry-complaint, petition, praise or blessing*. Psalm portions were read followed by a time of reflection on prepared questions.

*"My God, my God, why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish."*

Near the end of our meeting, Mary shared a couple of examples of the move from lament to praise in our presbytery--the exciting stirring of the Spirit at Trinity, Stockton and in the Ethnic Concerns Consultation.

While session and congregational meetings need to begin and end in prayer, that's the minimum! Sessions, as members and as a body, are to continue to deepen their relationship with God, and equip people in the variety of ways we relate with God, including lament.

*Thank you to all participants! Shout out to those who planned this meeting: Pat Terry, Mary Westfall, Joshua Trautmann, and Aart van Beek. Thanks Stephen Moon for 3 mtg pictures!.*

**STORYTELLER**

Vulnerably sharing her experience escaping Vietnam, **Bethany PC member Nga Chau** gave us a glimpse into her journey to the US and into her journey of faith. See p. 2. Thank you to the Committee on Representation for this meaningful feature of our meetings.

**RESOURCES**

referenced in the meeting

**Administrative Personnel Association**  
--for church staff: [pcusa-apa.org](http://pcusa-apa.org).

Tim Janis

--music during lament: [timjanis.com](http://timjanis.com)

*If We're Honest* by Francesca Battistelli

--song sung by Carmichael PC:

[musicnotes.com](http://musicnotes.com), enter title for sheet music

**General Assembly Amendments**

--one liner descriptions:

[statedclerks.org/resources/](http://statedclerks.org/resources/) & select "Amendment List - Goodwillier"

**3 Synod Mission Grants**

--available to churches:

[synodpacific.org/synod-grants/](http://synodpacific.org/synod-grants/)

## NGA CHAU, Bethany PC

In 1975 when South Vietnam fell to the Communists, many people tried to escape from Vietnam. I was living with family in a small town. My father committed suicide six months after the fall of South Vietnam because he was working as a doctor for the French when France colonized South Vietnam, and he felt his family was in danger from the Communists even though he was already retired.

My two brothers and my brother-in-law were sent to the re-education camp, a jail. I was not allowed to go to college because my family was connected to the former government. Instead I was sent to the fields for hard labor.

Eventually I was allowed in college for the government needed teachers. I still was being sent to the fields to dig trenches on the campus.

I met a friend, Kim Chi, who gave me the idea to escape from Vietnam. I came back home from school to visit and met a teacher from the high school who was rebuilding an old fishing boat to escape from Vietnam.

So I left Vietnam with my brother and my friend Kim Chi on October 22, 1980 in the old fishing boat with the teacher and a total of 47 people. Most of us were hidden under a canvas so it appeared a small group of people were going fishing in the ocean.

October was the storm season in Vietnam. In the ocean we experienced several storms and lost direction. We were just floating on the ocean. We saw many ships passing by. They took our picture but passed us by without stopping.

We were on the ocean three days and the third night there was a big storm coming. We were bailing water out of the boat. With the big storm coming we knew we would not survive the storm. We knew we would either drown or be killed by pirates that were around in the ocean. Pirates were robbing escapees, killing the men and raping the women.

The teacher who was in charge told everyone to pray to whatever God they believed in. My father had been Catholic and my mother Buddhist. I was on the boat praying in Buddhist prayers. I was looking at the dark water and wondering if I was going to die in this water.

Then after my prayer I looked up, and I saw a small white triangle in the midst of the dark. That triangle kept coming closer and then there was an American ship with the American flag. That big commercial ship turned to protect us from the waves. They lowered a rope ladder, and we climbed up and were rescued. After we were on the ship, we could see all the small lights out in the ocean. The ship's captain told us those were the pirate boats. He said either we would have died that night from the storm or from being killed by the pirates.

The ship had seen us from far away, and the second in charge told the captain that if they turned around and stopped to rescue us, they would miss their deadline in Thailand. But the Captain told him that he was a Christian and he could not let those people die that night. He called back to his company and the commercial ship turned around and rescued us all.

We were taken to Thailand, and we were put in a refugee camp there. Every night the men in our group would surround the women's section to protect us and keep us safe from the pirates who might come to rape the women refugees. My brother and I were baptized by the American missionary at the refugee camp. We were baptized in the ocean.

Four months later, my brother and I and my friend Kim Chi, were sponsored by a Vietnamese Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We were there for a month and then came to Sacramento because Kim Chi had a brother who had come a year earlier to Sacramento from Vietnam.

We were living near Sacramento City College and attending an Episcopal Church nearby. The minister there told us that Rev. Ninh Van Nguyen had a Bible Study Group at Bethany Presbyterian Church. So we came to Bethany.

I went to college for ten years to get my Masters Degree in Social Work. During that time I worked at the South East Asian Assistance Center at Bethany Presbyterian Church which was directed by Rev. Nguyen and later Jan Hunt. I have just retired after 34 years as a social worker in the Child Protective Services Program for Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services.

My husband Manh Ong and I have two married children and two grandchildren. We have been members of Bethany since 1983.

## RECOGNITIONS

Deetje Rotinsulu Tiwa (right) is leaving GKI; Susie Cauchi (below left) and Bonnie Burrows (below right) of St. Andrew Yuba City received Level I certification with APA!

