
The Weekly RAG

For the United Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Chinatown and Donaldina Cameron House

Sunday, April 15, 2018

Today is the Third Sunday of Easter. Pastor Kimberly is on Study Leave this week. We welcome back to the pulpit, the Rev. Deb McGuire.

Happy Birthdays

April

Joshua Chuck
Terry Leong
Henry Solomon Wong
Henry Lew
James Caldwell
Hilda Aladeen
Kathy Tong
Martha Yick
Mikayla Wong
Dayton Leong
Alfred Hall
Christopher Chan

Women's Fellowship

W.F. will meet at **Cameron House** and **not** PCC on Monday, April 16th for dinner and study of Hope in Sabbath Rest. "Sabbath rest is more difficult to maintain in America. Yet, if we keep what Sabbath we can, we find our hope rebuilt." Let's discuss together as we look at Cloud of Witnesses: The Community of Christ in Hebrews. Read Lesson 7 in your study book. And, in addition, or if you do not have study book, read these scriptures: Hebrews 11:1-3; 3:1-19; Psalm 95; Hebrews 4:1-11 and 6:9-12.

Dinner? Want to bring Dessert? Let Mildred know. Otherwise, come at 7:30 ready to discuss with Linda leading us.

Presbytery Day

Join us for the next meeting of SF Presbytery. We will be meeting at Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley. Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger, author of *Canoeing the Mountains* and

Vice President of Fuller Seminary, will be our guest speaker. His lecture is entitled "Becoming an Adaptive Presbytery".

Dr. Bolsinger will speak from 1 to 3 PM. There will be a brief Presbytery plenary meeting from 10 to 12.

Celebrate the Gifts of Women

On Sunday, April 29th, the Women's Fellowship of PCC will lead the service as we Celebrate the Gifts of Women. Rev. Charie Reid will be our guest preacher that Sunday. It is sure to be a very special service.

Regional Presbytery Gathering

Our next gathering of the Western Region of the Presbytery will be held on Wednesday, May 30th at Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church in SF. The gathering will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. More information to come but for now, mark your calendars and plan to join your fellow regional cohorts for an evening of discussion and food.

Cameron House Carnival Prep

On April 22nd, the congregation will be going up to Cameron House after worship to share a meal and assist the Friday Night Club kids in Carnival preparation. We plan to work from 1pm to 4pm on that Sunday. Club leaders can't predict where they will be at in terms of Carnival preparation on that day but we should be prepared to help with both Carnival game making and prize making. You should wear comfortable clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and also protective glasses or other assists for making prizes. Also, if you plan to work on Carnival concession, Anson said bring work gloves for yourselves and power tools if you can bring them.

Tea Time for April

The Deacons would like to give special thanks to the following people for taking the time to provide treats for Tea Time for everyone to enjoy.

4/15 Birthday Cake & Donor's Treats

4/22 Al & Shar Hall

4/29 Gilbert & Eunice Lee

If you're interested in providing treats, please sign up with Mary Wong Leong or on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. If you'd like to make a monetary donation towards tea time, see Dayton Leong. We also are in need of volunteers to help clean up after Tea Time. If you are available to help, please stay after Tea Time.

Lectionary Readings

April

15

Acts 3: 12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3: 1-7

Luke 24: 36b-48

22

Acts 4: 5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3: 16-24

John 10: 11-18

Minute for Mission

A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) delegation recently visited Sri Lanka, where they learned about the lives of tea plantation workers and the implications for PC(USA) mission work in Sri Lanka.

“In 2016 alone, the U.S. imports of tea and spices from Sri Lanka amounted to \$65 million,” said Valery Nodem, the Presbyterian Mission Agency associate for international hunger, who accompanied the delegation. “It’s important that we learn more about people who produce these goods for the world, and what are their general work and living conditions. As a ministry of Compassion, Peace and Justice, the Presbyterian

Hunger Program works with the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka to connect with the realities of tea plantation workers, and to accompany their efforts to live a better and dignified life.”

The plantation people of Sri Lanka harvest some of the world’s finest tea, yet they don’t get to enjoy it themselves. Instead, they are allowed to take only the bitter dust of the leaves. It’s a metaphor for their lives.

Tea is Sri Lanka’s largest cash crop and the gold standard for quality. The country supplies more than 50 percent of the world’s market, but the families working on the tea estates, some for many generations, are among the poorest in the island nation. About 40 percent of the babies born to these families are underweight. When they are born, their parents are not required to register them with the government, but they are required to register with the plantation. The situation hasn’t changed in more than 150 years. An average worker receives the equivalent of about \$39 a month. The superintendent of the tea estate is usually paid the equivalent of about \$657 a month.

Although women do most of the picking, the cultural norm is such that most wages are picked up by the husbands. Alcoholism is rampant on the plantations, and often the men use the money to fuel their addictions. When women take their bags of picked tea to be weighed, they are not allowed to see the scale. They are forced to take the word of the men in charge.

Although Sri Lanka has a high urban literacy rate — more than 92 percent — the literacy rate on the plantations is only 66 percent. Schools are not well maintained and lack qualified teachers. In fact, about 20 percent of the teachers are volunteers. The poor educational standards give these children little hope to qualify for universities and technical colleges.

Within the plantation system, free housing is offered to workers, but the housing often lacks proper ventilation and adequate sanitation. As many as seven to 10 family members live in one room.

A PC(USA) partner, the National Christian Churches in Sri Lanka (NCCL), is working with the Sri Lanka Malayaha Tamilar Rights Coalition, a group advocating for the rights of the minority Malayaha Tamilar community. Last year the groups worked to prepare a review assessing the human rights situation of the community. NCCL's work centers on human rights issues and fair labor practices in two of the nation's primary economic strongholds, tea plantations and the garment industry.

"Sri Lanka's Malayaha community has a tragic history of discrimination, exploitation and violence," said Lalinda Wickremeratne, an NCCL staff member who works with the tea plantation families. "They were brought from India to work in Sri Lanka's plantations in conditions of slavery during colonial times, and that exploitation continues."

The Rev. S. Devadasan, a Methodist pastor and member of NCCL, is also a plantation-born Tamil. Since becoming ordained, he has worked to help the people of the tea plantations live a life of dignity and hope. He believes the church has a responsibility to serve this marginalized community.

"It is the right time for the churches in Sri Lanka to give leadership, vision and direction to the people of the estate communities who are struggling," he said. "The incarnation affirms the presence of Jesus Christ with the suffering. The church represents Christ in the world, so we cannot neglect anyone or any community, because we are all God's children."

Rob Fohr, director of faith-based investing and corporate engagement at the PC(USA) and lead staff person to the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI), accompanied the delegation in response to the General Assembly's directive to ensure the companies held by the investing agencies of the PC(USA) appropriately monitor their suppliers. "MRTI engages with publicly traded corporations held in the portfolios of the Board of Pensions and the Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)," he said. "MRTI for many

years has done advocacy with companies in a variety of industries on supply chain responsibility; that is, ensuring that companies maintain high labor standards for the suppliers throughout their supply chain."