
The Weekly RAG

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

Sunday, September 9, 2018

Today is Pastor Kimberly's last Sunday with us. Please make plans to stay after worship for a special luncheon in honor of her.

Happy Birthdays

September

- 8 Cynthia Joe
- 10 Liane Chan
- 11 Winchell Quock
- 13 Siu Ying Fong
- 15 Frances Ma-Siu Ping Low
- 17 Alton Chinn
Alena Wong-Ja
- 19 Ann Hotta
- 22 Kevin Toy
- 26 Lena Ami Chinn

Upcoming...

- September 9 - Pastor Kimberly's last worship with us followed by Sabbath Sunday lunch.
- September 15 - DINKS & SINKS Toy Packing for Philippines
- September 16 - Sermon and tea time presentation by Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta
- September 22 - PW Horizons Bible Study at SFTS
- October 7 - World-Wide Communion
- October 27 - Women's Fellowship Retreat
- November 4 - All Church Congregational Meeting

DINKS & SINKS

The DINKS & SINKS (Double Income No Kids/Single Income No Kids) will gather on Sat. Sept. 15, 2018 to pack boxes and send them off in time to reach the Philippines before Christmas. If you are available, please join the group in packing and dinner. They will begin at 4:45-5:00PM for sorting and packing. Ask Eunice or Gilbert for the address. They plan to have dinner out after 6:00PM and if you plan on attending, please RSVP so they can have a count of how many for dinner reservations. Afterwards, the group will return back to Eunice and Gilbert's for coffee, tea and dessert. Let's make it a potluck dessert. For more information or to RSVP, speak to Nancy Chee or Gilbert Lee.

Guest Speakers

Special Speakers - Sept 16.
Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, Presbyterian World Mission co-workers in Indonesia, will share their experiences with us in worship and a special lunch discussion time. Their mission is "to seek reconciliation, justice and peace between Muslims and Christians and help our neighbors, especially women and children, escape from poverty. Farsijana is working with Duta Wacana Christian University to bring hope to our Muslim neighbors."

Fundraiser for Karina Howe

Please join us for a fundraiser for Karina Howe on September 23 from 11:15 am-1:15 pm, in the Fellowship Hall. We will have hand crafted jewelry, greeting cards and Hawaiian ribbon leis. All proceeds will go to the family for medical costs. For more information please see Pam Jang.

Save the Date

Women's Fellowship Retreat will be on October 27, 2018. Mark your calendars and make plans to be there.

Tea Time for September/October

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.

- 9/9 Sabbath Sunday Lunch provided in honor of Pastor Kimberly's last Sunday
- 9/16 Mary & Dayton Leong
- 9/23 Birthday Cake
- 9/30 Belinda Hum

- 10/6 Sabbath Sunday
- 10/14 Harriet Hall

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

September

9

- Proverbs 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23
- Isaiah 35: 4-7a
- James 2: 1-10, 14-17
- Mark 7: 24-37

16

- Proverbs 1: 20-33
- Isaiah 50: 4-9a
- James 3: 1-12
- Mark 8: 27-38

Minute for Mission

Descendants of former slaves and slave owners transcend shared history

After service of reconciliation, they're now having dinner together in each other's homes

The plaque describing the shared history of two Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) churches is on prominent display for everyone to see as they exit the sanctuary of the 3,000-member First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. Underneath the Scripture passage declaring "there is neither slave, nor free" from Galatians 3:28 are these words:

“Among the 12 founding members of First Presbyterian Church in Greensboro in 1824 were the enslaved servants of the Rev. William D. Paisley (founding minister) and Robert Carson.”

And then you see the names: Tony, Milly and Molly Paisley and Kezia Carson.

“It’s very hard to say we were slave owners,” said First Presbyterian elder Margaret Arbuckle. “But you can’t move beyond racism until you acknowledge what it is.”

The enslaved members at First Presbyterian could only sit in the church’s balcony, which was the hottest place to be in the summer and coldest in the winter. In 1867, four years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, 37 formerly enslaved members withdrew from the congregation — and with the presbytery’s help established Saint James Presbyterian Church.

“The stories we were told is that they were tired of the balcony,” said Saint James elder Lynette Hawkins. “So, they up and left to start our church.”

For 150 years the two churches shared that history and heritage, but neither congregation knew the other very well. But seeds of change were planted in 2015, when First Presbyterian formed a task force, chaired by Arbuckle, to study the effects of racism in the world. And then in 2016, PC(USA) Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston identified racism as a congregation-wide concern.

Diane Moffett, then pastor at Saint James Presbyterian, shares a moment with First Presbyterian pastor Sid Batts in 2017, after their joint reconciliation service with a plaque acknowledging that formerly enslaved First Presbyterian members left to start Saint James. Batts is holding a communion plate that Moffett presented to First Presbyterian on behalf of Saint James. Courtesy of First Presbyterian Church
“That helped our session see racism as not just a political, but spiritual, issue,” Arbuckle said.

Arbuckle served on a hospital board in Greensboro with Saint James’ minister at the time, the Rev. Diane Moffett, who is now president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Knowing the work First Presbyterian was doing on racism, Moffett approached the church about having a joint service of reconciliation, as part of Saint James’ 150th anniversary, to acknowledge how both churches came to be.

“Both congregations needed to understand how wrong it was,” she said, “before we could move forward together.”

To prepare for the joint service, which was held in October 2017, the congregations began holding joint events, watching the PBS series “Race: The Power of an Illusion” and reading books like *Waking Up White*.

During the service, both choirs sang. Moffett and First Presbyterian’s senior pastor, the Rev. Sid Batts, preached. Together, they participated in a litany of lament, confessing that from the beginning their community had been divided by racial inequality.

Afterward, people lingered. They felt good about what they’d just experienced. Hawkins kept thinking about those who had been enslaved.

“What would they think of us now, forming equal kinds of relationships?” she asked with a sense of wonder in her voice. “By the grace of God, we’ve come a long way.”

“Everyone came through the front door that day,” said Arbuckle. “Only white people sat in the balcony.”

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First Presbyterian’s executive pastor, the Rev. Neil Dunnavant, credits Moffett with having the vision of getting the congregations together in a way that brought healing. When everyone wondered what to do next, she had another suggestion: Form dinner groups made up of members from each congregation to have meals together in each other’s homes.

The meals would give members a chance “to break out of our exclusive boxes, to get to know each other,” Moffett said.

Hawkins and Arbuckle, who helped plan the service of reconciliation, are now having dinner in each other’s homes. They feel as if they’ve broken through the barrier of “let’s talk about this but be nice.”

“If something comes up that we need to address, I can call her,” Hawkins said. “We’ve listened to each other enough to where we can be honest.”

Moffett, who has always had a focus on racial reconciliation in her 30 years of ministry and community work, felt the presence of her ancestors on that day when the two churches came together to acknowledge their shared history.

“As believers and people of faith, we will not be silent,” she said. “We will continue to advocate for love, which is justice in the public square.”

First Presbyterian is also continuing to study and reflect on racism. They are hosting a citywide event later this month with Debby Irving, author of *Waking Up White*, about the responsibility Christians have to address the impact of racism in daily life, within the structures of communities and churches.

Paul Seebeck, Mission Communications Strategist, Presbyterian Mission Agency