



# Good News for the Pews

May 1, 2017

A Quarterly for the English-Speaking Worshipping Community

Issue No. 11

## Prayer Poem "New Life"

As the womb of nature opens to birth new life,  
we celebrate your regenerative energy, life-giving God.  
That which lay dormant is resurrected;  
that which appeared dead is now alive.  
As buds cannot resist the sun's power,  
the power of your Son's love  
is irresistible to all who feel its embrace.

As we celebrate the Easter season, O God,  
may we be open to rebirth in our lives;  
to the river of blessings that will flow anew;  
to the growth that will be manifested through our prayer lives;  
to the fruit that will spring forth from our expanding love.  
We sing your praises for the rejuvenation of our being. Amen.

(Taken from *Seasons of the Spirit*)



The transition from winter to spring has long been used as a metaphor for Easter. God created the fabric of life to be a cycle – the dormancy and cold of winter makes way for the brilliant new life that comes in spring as leaves reappear on trees that have been dormant and flowers bloom once again.

(continued on page 2)

I had my own unique celebration of spring this year – it happened when I finally decided to take down my Christmas tree. This was noteworthy because it was not until after the spring equinox near the end of March. I realize that is very late, but there are a couple of things to keep in mind that led to my delayed dismantling this year. I don't put my tree up until Christmas Day itself, and normally take it down around mid-February (and when you think about the fact that most people put their tree up after Thanksgiving at the end of November and leave it up until after New Year's, it is not so long a time).

This year, however, I was not ready to take mine down mid-February. My sister and I had decorated it together on Christmas Day, and as we hung each ornament on the tree, we also shared the story that accompanied each one – commenting that some of them had been in our family for generations. This was a very special time we shared together and the lights on the tree also provided hope and comfort during the long winter season of rain and storms. As I am sure you can understand, I was reluctant to part with it.

But then somewhere near the end of March I could feel Spring making its way through the earth and I was finally ready to take it down. After carefully putting all the ornaments back in their boxes and moving the tree outside, I created a little celebration of spring on the table where the tree had stood, and above it all I hung the watercolor painting my sister painted two days before she died.

Prior to that I had the painting custom framed and the mats around the picture really make the vibrancy of the colors in the painting stand out. There is a bright yellow sun in the far right corner with beams streaming down. There are purple tulips in the foreground amidst tall grasses, and a bright blue sky above it all with three birds flying overhead. The picture itself seems sunny and happy and since she said she really enjoyed the watercolor class where she created it, I like to think she was in a happy place when painted it. The painting for me now symbolizes an Easter kind of hope and resurrection spirit.



Her loss is still great in my life. There are days when the grief still takes my breath away – or when I feel the heaviness of it all or the weight of managing her affairs. But when I look at her painting I do feel that I am able to connect with her sunshine spirit, and I am glad she was in her happy place for that moment. I like to think that may be a glimpse of what heaven is like for her – a bed of tulips and a bright yellow sun with a bright blue sky on a carefree kind of day. That, for me, is a reminder of resurrection. God brings new life in a variety of unexpected ways – including the reminders of spring that surround us. I know my journey of grief and recovery is not over yet, I know it is not all wrapped up on Easter Sunday morning – but I do continue to believe that God brings new life out of loss and out of the things that we may struggle with in life. I have confidence in this because of the reminders we see around us in nature every day.

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## Prayer Poem (continued from page 2)



The day after Easter was Christie's birthday. It was a Monday, so I had already planned to take the day off. I was trying to figure out what to do to honor her when I remembered that she used to ask me all the time (lovingly nag me a bit about it, really) if Derek and I had gone to Muir Woods yet, since he lived so close to it up in Mill Valley. The answer was always, "No". She would ask 'Why not? I would always reply, "We are too busy or Derek doesn't like the crowds, or. ." There was always some excuse. But on April 17<sup>th</sup> I decided this time, we were going to go and Derek was game to go with me. The cathedral like redwoods were breathtaking and the constant murmur of the stream as it babbled along the trail consoled my soul. By the time we finished our hike I felt as if I had been held by the grace of God and felt a kind of spiritual renewal that was regenerative – a bit of resurrection within my own being.

As I reflected on that day, I realized that I was grateful to Christie – because not only did I do the hike in *honor* of her, but I did it *because* of her – because she had always been nagging me to do it – and because she used to often say 'Life is about more than just doing chores' (meaning one should not only use their day off to just do laundry and errands, but take the time to really live life). Because of Christie I experienced a bit of renewal AND even bought a one-year membership to Muir Woods (surprisingly inexpensive!) so we could go back any time – while also making a donation to a local nature conservatory in her honor and in honor of Earth Day.



It was nice to know that my sister is still inspiring me – and perhaps even still guiding me, from her new vantage point in heaven.

How might God be calling you to have your own experience of regeneration or renewal this Spring? God's resurrection power might come in big or in small ways – but it still reminds us that Christ is risen. May that give us all comfort and encouragement and hope as we travel through life together, taking time to celebrate and enjoy life along the way.

## Our Deacons

by Richard Jann

Your deacons, our deacons are chaired by Dayton Leong. He may be a chair, but never a table. Deacons have six members and three vacancies. We meet once a month.

We have

- 1) Started a monthly birthday cake for church family
- 2) Tracking old and new members and visitors
- 3) Rotate kitchen clean-up after tea time
- 4) Sign up readers, tea timers, ushers, drivers for several members in need of rides. We encourage all to participate and share in the life and work of our church. You don't have to be a deacon to help
- 5) We encourage wearing name tags every week at worship for recognition and inclusion
- 6) Deacons welcome any and all suggestions to help us grow in making our church experience more vibrant and our walk with Christ more meaningful. Suggestions: perhaps a picnic, pot luck, New Year's party, etc.

Have a blessed day. In Christ. Blessings.

Your Deacons: Dayton Leong, Pat Chan, Stuart Go, Rachel Wong, Des Ng, Richard Jann and anyone else wanting and willing to answer the call.

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## One Thing We Heard

by Linda Lee

Our Worship Discussion on March 19 lifted up voices from our diverse worshipping community about "what feeds you in worship?" Reverend Kamal Hassan stressed that listening is a form of love, and the importance of just hearing one another. One thing we heard throughout our conversation is that we enjoy being in community together—playing, eating and sharing.

So Worship & Nurture decided that we will experiment with Sabbath Sunday once in a while and our June 4, 2017 Sabbath Sunday will be "Pizza & Play". We will have pizza and fellowship at Culbertson Hall in Cameron House. Join us for games, singing and sharing as we celebrate being church family! We will also continue to receive suggestions and ideas about worship using a "post-it" board in the Women's Fellowship Hall each Sunday during Tea Time. Submit comments about music, sermon or theme topics, visual and other interactive activities by leaving a post-it note for W&N Committee.

If you did not receive an email with the attachment of the Worship Discussion Notes, or wish to have a hard copy, please request one from Tad Hopp or Linda Lee.

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## Upcoming Events

by Linda Lee

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|--------------------|--|
| May 7, Sunday      | Communion and Sabbath Sunday                     |
| May 26-29, Fri-Mon | Koinonia Retreat at Westminster Woods            |
| June 4, Sunday     | Communion and "Pizza & Play"                     |
| TBD                | CCU Sports League Kick-off                       |
| June 11, Sunday    | Commissioning of Summer Leaders and Volunteers   |
| July 30, Sunday    | Summer Service Worship (Sharing from volunteers) |
| August 6, Sunday   | Youth leave for Westminster Woods                |



## A VIEW from the PEW----featuring items from YOUR point of view

### TRUMPED BUT NOT TRAMPLED -- USA—USA—that’s “US ALL” in my mind by Shar Hall

On Jan.20, 2017 in his inaugural speech, President Trump did not mention us (yellow and red) when he named white, black and brown people. Are we the forgotten people he conveniently forgot? I guess I should be glad that he didn’t label us negatively but at the same time, what are we to him—nothing?

“We’re going to build a wall and Mexico is going to pay for it.”  
“We’re going to repeal Obamacare.”  
“We’re going to ban the Muslims from coming into our country.”

He accused the press and media of “fake news” and relegated the White House Press Corp to somewhere away from its previous access.

He’s doing his best to undo everything the previous administration enacted. He and his “elite \$\$cabinet” are slashing budget items affecting people’s well-being and increasing the military budget.

All of the above shows the lack of thoughtful planning, foresight and *compassion* for people of our country and the world. He doesn’t seem to have the understanding that we live with others in this one place called Earth!

Now he has given the 2020 Census Bureau instructions NOT to count the LGBT population!

I urge each one of us to speak out, stand up and not allow our rights and the truth be trampled on by this Trump administration.

No matter where you live, you can do your part in preserving our democracy. Do not think that your voice is “just me” or that no one will hear you. By doing nothing, you are being complicit and letting someone else speak for you. Don’t be trampled!!

Call, e-mail and write your Senator and Congressperson. Write or e-mail the Editor of the newspaper of your city—do something to follow up on something you feel strongly about that needs to be addressed.

Remember—USA is the United States of America, which means all of us together!

“Some came in the ship called the Mayflower many years ago, some in a ship just days ago, but we are all in the same boat.” I don’t know who said it, but it’s worth remembering!

What does the Lord require of us—to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.





In the last week of March 2017, PCC Mandarin Youth Fellowship hosted a two day/three night retreat at Alliance Redwoods Conference Grounds. Led by Missionary Hao, we gathered to study a simple but important theme – “How to Pray.”



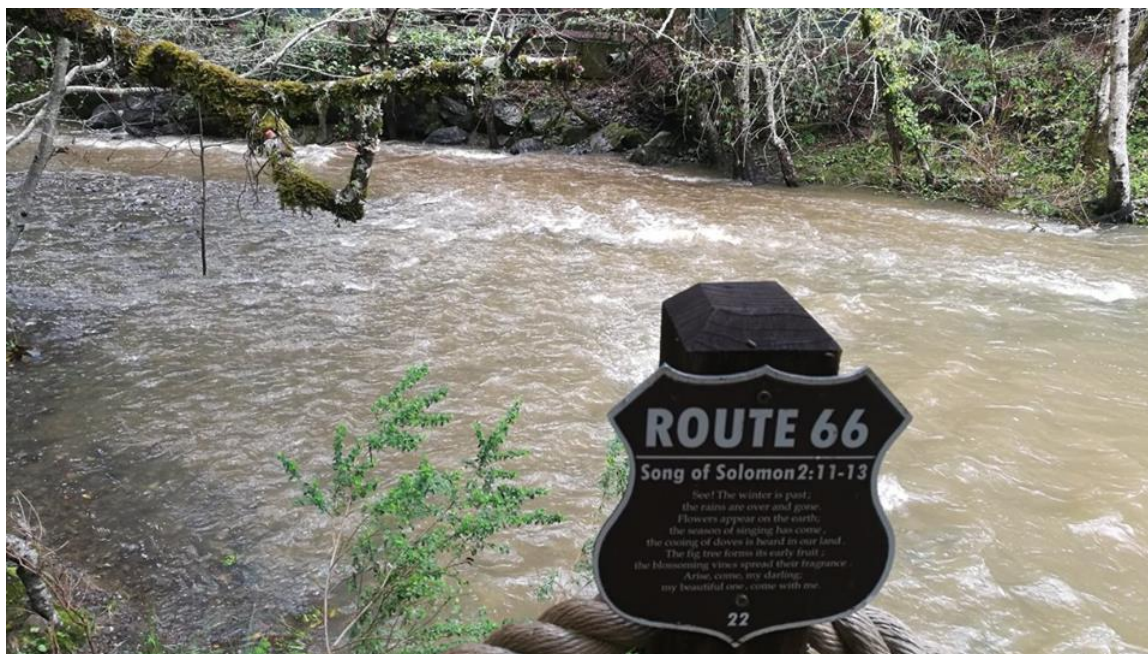
As we studied 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus,” we found that this passage has indeed inspired our youth to discover how to face challenges in daily life. In particular, varied individuals ranging from high-school students to working adults, at this moment, could fully merge to study the words of God. We learned that praying to God is neither a mechanical process nor a repetition. Instead, we want to faithfully communicate with God and pray for His kingdom and will. God will listen and will give us our needs.

After a series of study each day, we went hiking and exercising. Immersing into a green and refreshing Spring season, we hiked at some trails nearby the site called the Route 66 where many Bible verses are fastened in the corners. This was a quite unique experience as our youth tried to find as many Bible verses as possible over the pathway. To close our retreat, we had a campfire Saturday night and Sunday worship the next day. We glory, we pray, and we praise our God.

*(continued on page 7)*



**Mandarin Youth Fellowship** (continued from page 6 )



On the way driving back home, we even saw a full rainbow across the field. Praise the Lord! We all have been the sheep under His guidance. Overall, this was a memorable retreat with a lot of laughs and insights!

## Meet Deacon, Patricia J Chan



I became a member of PCC in my mid 20's. Before joining PCC I was attending the First Chinese Southern Baptist Church across the street from my house. I attended Sunday School til high school. I learned a lot of the Bible stories. I even helped with their Vacation Bible School each summer.

I am involved with the Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery. I was the Resource person. I gather information to share at our meetings which we have four times a year. At the moment I am the Together in Service person. I keep track of all the projects that the women in different churches are involved with. We decided that we do not have to make and send off the items to other churches or countries because postage is so expensive. Many of the women are making items to help the people in their local communities.

I am also the Treasurer for the Cameron House Women's Guild. We only meet twice a year so this position is not time consuming at all. I enjoy meeting people from the Bay Area. I enjoy hearing their stories and experience.

Many of you may know that I am a member of the Chinatown YMCA. I still enjoy going to my Zumba dance class on Mondays and Wednesdays evenings and sometimes Saturday mornings. When I can, I attend the Aqua Fit class. We have a new Aqua Zumba instructor. She substituted one Sunday so I was able to get a taste of that class. Boy, was it hard. The water resisted my moves. Miriam is teaching on Thursday morning at the pool and on Saturday morning she is teaching regular Zumba.

This year I even squeezed in time for the Opera, Ballet and Musicals. Yes, ask me about *Hamilton*. (April 18th)

I am taking the one year position as a Deacon. I enjoy being a Deacon. I like helping and serving our congregation.

In June I will be traveling to Japan with Elvie Owyang (Covenant PC member) and in mid July, I will be going with a small group on a cruise to the Caribbean. I will be on one of the large ships with the Royal Caribbean, the one with the rock climbing wall and zip line. Let's see if I can even get my chance with the thousands of people on board the ship. This will be a different experience for me since I've been cruising with the Princess line.



## Clerk of Session Membership report for year-end 2016

**Former Clerk of Session Report: Eddie Kam** - Below are key PCC 2016 statistics that was supposed to be reported to General Assembly; however, deadline was missed.

Our total membership as of 12/31/2016 was 238. Below is a breakdown for each Worshipping Community (WC) either through baptism, transfers or members returning back to the active roll. Decreases were primarily deaths and 2 moving to inactive rolls in the English WC.

Worshipping Community	Ending 2015 Count	Increase	Decrease	Ending 2016 Count
Cantonese	30	12	2	40
English	136	2	3	135
Mandarin	53	11	1	63
Combined	219	25	6	238

- Between 2015 and 2016, our combined average worship attendance dropped an average of 1 attendee or 0.56% reduction in comparison to a drop of 31 attendees or a reduction of 13.7% in 2015.
- 95.8% of our members are Asian
- The combined age distribution of members are:

Age bracket	Count	% of total
25 and under	18	7.6%
26 – 45	37	15.5%
46 – 55	41	17.2%
56 – 65	52	21.8%
Over 65	90	37.8%

Clerk reminded from a polity standpoint, as well as reporting the correct membership for Per Capita purposes, each Worshipping Community needs to report membership gains (baptisms, transfers in, confirmation) and losses (transfers out, moved to inactive roll, deceased) during Session meeting so that it's included in the minutes. Any additions in December can be captured retroactively in the November 2016 Session meeting minutes but Clerk needs to know by following year in January. Persons baptized but not considered a member, for Per Capita purposes, should not be reported.

Congratulations to Greg Chan and Jeanine Lim Chan as they both retired from their jobs this year. In March they were able to visit with their daughter Kati who is working and living in Connecticut. Kati is a Physical Therapist and she is in the process of job hunting. She is open to living in a different state. Maybe, she will get lucky and move back to California. Stay tuned...

Vivien and Kimball Wong were able to get away for a short time in March to visit with daughter Chelsea and her husband Andrew in Scotland.

Cindy Joe and Chris Chua's sister Amelia traveled to South Africa. We need to hear about their African safari experience.

Scott Barlow and Susie Wong's daughter Alena is teaching English in Malaysia for a year. They plan to visit her at the end of May. We can't wait to hear about their trip.

Congratulations to Sareen and Scott Li they are proud parents of their third child, a baby girl named Arabelle. She joins big brother Rex and big sister Charisse. The proud grandparents are Lianne and Terry Leong. I hear that older daughter, Shellie and her husband Patrick are expecting baby # 2 in August. The youngest daughter, Stasia and husband Tim, are also expecting baby # 2 in July. The children are so lucky to have cousins to play with. Stay tuned for updates.

Lenora Lee had her film *Light* shown at the CAAM film festival in March. The film was inspired by the life of Bessie M. Lee who lived in New York; she spent two years as an indentured servant. Lenora was able to share this film in Eugene, Oregon, New York, Chicago and Minneapolis/St Paul. Cindy Joe, Benson Toy and I were able to join proud parents JoAnn and Alson to see this film at the Mission District. Lenora is working on another project. Stay tuned for more details in the coming months.

Covenant Presbyterian Church host a program call To Love and Care four times a year. This program serves Mentally Challenge Adults who live in group homes in the Bay Area. Lunch is served, arts and crafts and simple games are the usual activities. I am looking for more donations of door prizes. Thank you to those who donated earlier this year. The participants were happy to pick out their prizes. I am looking for small stuffed toys, stickers, cute and useful trinkets. Slightly used is okay. Simple puzzles and puzzle books, costume jewelry, playing cards, key chains. No breakables. Please give to Pat Chan. Questions to me too. Many thanks.



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