



Why the Camino de Santiago?

By PASTOR ERIC O. LEDERMANN

Embarking on a pilgrimage like the Camino de Santiago is not only a journey across physical landscapes but through the spiritual terrain of one's beliefs. Many have asked why I want to take on this 500-mile trek across the north of Spain. In response, I find myself contemplating the significance of this ancient path through the lens of the Reformed Christian tradition as I carry in my heart the desire for a deeper connection with God, fellow pilgrims, and the rich Christian heritage that lines the Camino.

The Reformed tradition has been characterized for most of its 500 year history as a progressive way of living one's faith. The very essence of the tradition is the belief that God did not stop speaking after the Book of Revelation was written. Rather, as

our friends in the United Church of Christ say in their catch phrase: "God is still speaking!"

To that end, a pilgrimage like the Camino is an invitation to be changed. Not only will the grueling 15-mile-a-day average walk like change my body, so, too, it is likely to change my mind and soul, along with meeting other pilgrims and experiencing the rich Spanish culture along the way.

The Call to Pilgrimage

The call to the ancient spiritual practice of pilgrimage is grounded in the understanding of God's guidance and providence.

The Camino de Santiago is for some a test of physical endurance. But for many it is a sacred journey, a response to the spiritual longing to draw nearer to God. As I prepare to walk this path, I am reminded of the Presbyterian belief in discerning God's will through prayer and reflection, trusting that each step on the Camino is guided by a higher purpose, and allowing the path itself to change me inside and out.



Along the Camino de Santiago the yellow scallop shell marks the trail and leads the way. According to legend, Saint James' body was transported back to Spain on a boat made of a single scallop shell. The shell became a badge of honor for pilgrims and proved they had visited the city of Saint James (Santiago de Compostela).

can happen at a café over café con leche (a special cappuccino like drink popular in Spain). The Camino becomes a living embodiment of the both the life and body of Christ, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose as we journey together toward a common destination.

Solitude and Reflection

Through the history of the Christian faith moments of solitude and reflection have been valued, seeking God's presence in the

Communion on the Camino

The Presbyterian tradition places a strong emphasis on community and shared worship experiences. The Camino de Santiago offers a unique opportunity to engage in communal prayer, fellowship, and shared sacraments with fellow pilgrims, and not always in the forms we're used to experiencing Sunday morning. Shared sacraments

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*This issue of the
UPC NEWS & Current Events
is brought to you by...*
the word...

Humanity

late 14c., "kindness, graciousness, politeness; consideration for others," from Old French *humanité, umanité* "human nature; humankind, life on earth; pity," from Latin *umanitatem* (nominative *humanitas*) "human nature; the human race, mankind;" also "humane conduct, philanthropy, kindness; good breeding, refinement," from *humanus* (see *human* (adj.)). The dense of "human nature, human form, state or quality of being human" is c. 1400; that of "human race, humans collectively" is recorded by mid-15c.

WHY THE CAMINO?

Continued from page 1

quiet moments of life. The Camino offers pilgrims ample time for personal introspection. As I traverse the landscapes, I anticipate moments of prayer and contemplation, allowing the serenity of the journey to deepen my connection with God and provide insights into my spiritual journey. I, in turn, hope to bring those experiences back with me as they find their way into our shared communal life at UPC.

Embracing Simplicity

The Christian tradition has also often embraced a simple and humble approach to faith. The Camino's pilgrim life, characterized by modest accommodations and reliance on basic necessities. Walking the Camino can be an exercise in embracing simplicity, shedding unnecessary distractions, and focusing on the fundamental aspects of faith and life.

Heritage and Tradition

The Camino de Santiago is steeped in Christian history, with its routes connecting to the grand tapestry of the Church's past. As a Presbyterian pilgrim, I look forward to engaging with the rich Christian heritage the Camino offers. The journey offers a connection to the broader Christian narrative, reinforcing the sense of continuity and tradition alongside the ever-changing landscape of biblical and spiritual understanding.

Walking the Camino de Santiago holds

profound meaning for many. Each pilgrim has their own intention. But for me, the 20-year desire to walk the Camino has been grounded in the conviction of God's guidance in my life and that of those around me, the richness of communal experience, the opportunity for personal reflection in another space that is unfamiliar and gets me out of my comfort zones, the simplicity required for the journey, and the desire for a deeper connection with the Christian heritage. As I embark on this spiritual journey, I carry with me the hope that the lessons the Camino has to teach me will continue to shape and reshape me long after I return. I also carry in my heart the relationships that continue to shape and sustain me (that includes you, UPC!), and the anticipation of a deepened relationship with God and a richer understanding of the Christian narrative that unfolds with each step.

While the destination is the ancient City of Saint James (Santiago de Compostela), where the relics of Saint James are believed to be, a pilgrimage like the Camino de Santiago can be a journey of self-discovery. I carry with me the hope that the lesson the Camino has to teach me will continue to shape me.

You'll hear from me one more time in the April newsletter. There I will share ways you can be a part of my sabbatical pilgrimage, including a way for you to track my progress with GPS! But, for now ... ■

*Be of good courage
and know that you are loved!*

MONTHLY DRIVE 'n' DROP

March 3, 2024 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Normally First Sunday of each month! Drop off at church!

Here are the items needed for TCAA and UPC Refugee Ministry



TCAA needs

- breakfast items
- towels/washcloths
- baby wipes
- travel snacks
- canned goods

REFUGEE needs

- laundry & dish soap
- shampoo
- conditioner
- body wash & lotion
- snack items

Financial contributions may be sent to the office. Make checks out to "TCAA" and reference "Food Pantry" or to UPC and reference "Refugee" in the memo



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UPC NEWS & Current Events is published monthly. Submissions of announcements, stories, op-eds, and reflections on recent events at UPC are welcomed.

Requirements:

Announcements: 500 words or less
Articles/Reflections: 1200 words or less
Letters to the Editor: 750 words or less
Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space available.

**Send submissions
by the 20th of each month to:
newsletter@upctempe.org**

Helping Children in Uganda

Meet Vanessa Mutuuwa



By **KATHY WAGNER**
Presbyterian Women Treasurer



Vanessa Mutuuwa

Last year several women from UPC had the chance to learn about “Prepare the Way Ministry” in Uganda. Dr. Bill Campbell shared his ministry at the PW gathering at Desert Palms Presbyterian church in Sun City West. The PW of Desert Palms has been involved with this ministry for several years, including traveling to Uganda to assist.

Prepare the Way Ministry has been in ministry since 2003 and currently ministers to Uganda and East Africa. The ministry supports two farms growing vegetables & fruits, cows for milk, chickens for eggs and meat, and five professional fishponds with thousands of fish. The ministry has a youth center, schools, and dorms for orphaned or high-risk children. It is a Christian ministry with three churches and a Bible college.

In exploring how we might be able to help, we learned about Vanessa. The PW Circle that was sponsoring her could no longer do so. If another sponsor was not found, she would be forced to leave school and marry. Since time was of importance to keep her in school, four UPC women pledged \$25 per month for a year. Now we are looking for others to join us in supporting Vanessa. We are hoping to have 12 supporters, which would be \$100 a year.

Helping children, especially girls, is a priority of Presbyterian Women. If supporting Vanessa is a ministry that interests you, please contact Kathy Wagner @ kwagnersunlakes@gmail.com or (602) 741-3192. ■

Deacon Honorary Plant Program

Would you like a flower or plant displayed during worship to recognize a special person, a wedding anniversary, someone who passed away, or a special occasion?

Contact Deacon Jay Young at JeyYoung@cox.net, and let him know who you would like to honor or memorialize. Be sure to include:

- the Sunday you prefer for your recognition;
- whether you want to keep the flower or plant, or have it given away; and
- send a check for \$15 paid to the UPC Deacons with “honorary plant fund” in the memo line. You can also pay online at www.upctempe.org/donate (let Jay know if you plan to pay online)—choose “Deacon Honorary Plants” from the fund options. ■



Christian Education Partners With MSJP For Mission Month

By SUE SCHNEBEL

Christian Education was delighted to partner with MSJP for Mission Month which focused on pollution and *The Plastic River*. To maximize our children's understanding of this important world issue, the Children's Moment and Bible Time combined efforts for a comprehensive study. The children learned about decomposition, recycling, microplastics, nurdles and the enormity of plastic in our rivers and oceans and its effect on all God's creatures. Lessons included Bible passages, children's books, technology, music, and art. Each student received a tailor-made book entitled *Let's Investigate Plastic Pollution*.

Special thanks to Miss Jan for her creative lessons, and, of course, our children for their desire to make our world a safer place for all. ■



Miss Jan and the children making a timeline of plastic decomposition.

Presbyterian Women's Corner

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates

By SUE SCHNEBEL

March 24 Annual Palm Sunday Brunch and Auction

Please join PW for a delightful brunch on the patio outside Fellowship Hall (weather permitting). Suzanne Niemann is putting together a wonderful auction/sale with proceeds going to PW's mission work. Should have items to donate, please reach out to her.

April 7 Gifts of Women Sunday

PW has been working on its annual Gifts of Women Sunday service that celebrates all women. This year our theme is Gathering the People of God. To celebrate the special women in the lives of the congregation, UPC will be selling small bouquets of flowers. Funds received through this campaign will Build PW's Annual Fund, which supports all PW ministries and programs, at all levels of the organization.

April 21 Birthday Offering

The Birthday Offering is one of Presbyterian Women's two offerings. Grants from this offering give women a tangible way to celebrate the blessings in their lives. The Birthday Offering funds 5 projects each year in amounts of \$75,000 to \$150,000 each. UPC has always been generous in their donations.

May 27 Annual PW Spring Luncheon

All women are welcome to attend this luncheon as we induct new officers and celebrate our work through faith, food, fellowship, and fun. Details will be available as we get closer to the date. ■



Easter Lilies for 2024

By NANCY MARTIN and
DIANE HILLYARD

UPC Deacons are happy to help you honor people close to your heart this time of the year. You may want to lift up a family member or friend whose memory is special to you on Easter, for example. Or you may want to honor someone you know by giving them a lovely plant to show you care. This could be a great opportunity to show your gratitude or recognition to those whom you value for their hard work and/or help when you need it.

Think about someone who puts their heart into preparing for church service every week. Remember “it takes a village.”

Aren't we thankful for so many people on staff or on the Sanctuary committee as well as various board members. Remember the folks who lead caring missions... and the list goes on. It is an honor to be blessed with beautiful music, a clean campus and weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters keeping all of us aware of important news, isn't it?

Can you believe it? Easter is approaching on March 31, 2024. On March



10th, 17th and 24th the Deacons will have a table on the patio after worship to accept your donation of \$15.00 for an Easter lily or plant in memory of loved ones or to celebrate someone “special” to you. Your plant will be placed in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday service at 9:30 a.m. You may pick up your plant after the service or if you would like to donate yours to a home-bound church member, please indicate that when you sign up.

As an alternative to Sunday morning sign up, you may use the online giving button from upctempe.org/donate, contact Diane Hillyard at (480)730-1328, or leave a check at the church office payable to UPC with “Easter Lily” written in the memo line.

The Deacons are grateful for your support and we pray that you have a Blessed Easter. ■

Diamondbacks vs Phillies

By LAWN GRIFFITHS

The Arizona Diamondbacks are an MLB team based in Phoenix, Arizona. Since their inception in 1998, the Diamondbacks have captivated fans with their dynamic style of play and commitment to excellence. They play their home games at Chase Field and a handful of West Division titles and a World Series title under their belt. The team is a huge draw in Phoenix, and

Chase Field is a gorgeous place to catch a game.

Congregational Involvement and Outreach Committee has secured 25 tickets for seats behind home plate (third level) for the Arizona Diamondbacks' Faith and Family Night game on Friday night August 9. For a second year, UPC families and friends will be attending the scheduled game between the D-Backs and Philadelphia Phillies. They are the teams that vied for the National League

pennant last fall, won by the D-Backs. A group of 22 from UPC saw the Faith and Family game last August.

Save the date. Seats are in three rows of section 316. The infield seats are \$27, early bird pricing. We have made a \$100 deposit to secure the seats. We will collect the funds from attendees in the days before the game. If interested, please let Lawn Griffiths know at tempelawn@msn.com. ■

A long, long way from home...

By DAN ABBOTT

They are children, really;
Old enough to hold a stick to pretend to fight,
Old enough to kick a ball made with old rags,
Old enough to hide, and hide again,
And old enough to play a sort of game of cricket.

Yet, too young:
To know where they are being taken,
Too young to know that home may never be home again,
Too young to know the language of their new land, and
Too young to know who their new friends may be.

And,
Late at night, huddled by the frightening wall,
In the desert cold, with wind whipping through the cactus,
And the occasional rain chilling to the bone,
Excitement and adventure turn to fear.

Children
are the victims of powers they know nothing about,
And people who examine them with disdain and hostility.
Who create a memory bank of frightening experiences,
And a vast population of people living in the shadows.

Come to the border for 45 minutes, American politician, and
Look into the eyes of a child from Ecuador, or Senegal,
And then, return to your comfortable home
And pretend that you understand.

Does God Cry?

The concept of God Crying is Largely Metaphorical.

By BEVERLY PHILLIPS

"Most definitely not!" Some people would say. Why would God cry? He is all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present. He knows what is happening and what is going to happen. So, no. He doesn't cry. He is not bothered by emotions. As we seek to grow closer to our God, we try to describe her with words. We can experience God in our lives, but when we try to name the Divine we always have to use metaphors. The concept of God crying is largely metaphorical. It's a way

to humanize divine emotions that are beyond human comprehension. If he is a God of love how could he not cry over all the sufferings of his beloved children and the whole of creation.

The New Testament tells us quite clearly that Jesus cried. Jesus is God in human form who came to reveal himself so if Jesus cried, that tells us that God cries. During his earthly ministry Jesus cried. The Gospel writers recorded three specific times Jesus cried. Thinking about when Jesus cried, we'll also learn why God cries.

While the crowds were celebrating the approach of Jesus to Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday — Jesus cried because he knew something they didn't know.

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. (Luke 19:41-44)

Jesus cried for his people because he

knew Jerusalem was going to be destroyed and it broke his heart.

He also cried in his time alone with the Father. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, being fully human, cried when fearing his own coming pain and suffering.

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions

with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission (Hebrews 5:7). Jesus being fully human cried feeling his own pain and suffering.

Jesus cried when Lazarus died.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept (John 11:32-35).

Jesus wept is the shortest verse in the Bible and has been subject to speculation of why he wept. Some say he wept because he loved Lazarus. Others say he wept in frustration due to the lack of understanding from Mary and Martha. Another possibility is that he shared Mary's pain and cried with her. All of them are possibilities. However, that he felt her pain and cried with her fits the of God revealed in the Old Testament. Isaiah says he is afflicted when his people are afflicted. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. (Isaiah 63:9).

The Torah, the five books of Moses or the Pentateuch, is the cornerstone of Jewish scripture. It comprises the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These sacred texts contain the laws, commandments, and narratives that form the foundation of Jewish faith and practice.

In the Talmud, a vast compilation of Jewish legal discussions, interpretations, and debates, there is a passage that suggests God shows empathy toward his creation. Specifically, it mentions a scenario where the angels were about to sing for joy when the Egyptians were drowning in the Red Sea during the Exodus. However, God silenced them, declaring, "How dare you sing for joy when my children are dying?" (Talmud, Megillah 10b and Sanhedrin 39b) God feels sorrow when people whoever they are and whatever they have done.

There is a quote often attributed to the Talmud that says, "Be very careful if you make a woman cry, because God counts her tears."

Whenever you cry in sorrow or affliction God is crying with you. The Psalmist writes:

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book." (Psalm 56:8). ■



*"Be very careful if
you make a woman cry,
because God counts
her tears."*

Session Update—January 2024

By **BRIGITTA KUIPER**

Clerk of Session

The January Session meeting was held on January 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Session welcomed three new Session members to the meeting: Faye Gardner, Worship; Jim Hershauer, Stewardship, and Sue Schnebel, Christian Education. The meeting opened with prayer by Ruling Elder Paul Green.

- Highlights from the January Session meeting include:
- Session members discussed several items of correspondence from Grand Canyon Presbytery: Imbalance Report, the Presbytery Operations Committee Memo and the Call to the Annual Presbytery Meeting to be held January 27, 2024.
- Appointed Brigitta Kuiper to the position of UPC Clerk of Session for 2024.
- Received the Monthly Finance Summary for December. December receipts exceeded the budget and expenses were on target. The end of the year budget broke even.

- Moved Jack Armstrong's membership from Member to Member-Homebound Active.
- Approved the submission of the PC (USA) Earth Care Congregation application.
- Approved UPC to host Project Connect in April 2024, a one-day event that provides services for people experiencing homelessness. UPC has hosted this event for the past two years.
- Approved replacing the HVAC unit for the choir room and Fellowship Hall foyer, at a cost not to exceed \$8,253, as part of scheduled maintenance.
- Approved the 2023 Annual Statistical Report to the PC(USA).
- Approved a request from the Xeriscaping Planning Team to solicit donations for the Xeriscape Project.
- Approved a Mission Engagement Trip, in collaboration with Presbyterian Women and the MSJP Commit-

tee, with Frontera de Cristo Presbyterian Border Ministry in Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico. The trip will be held Saturday, November 9, 2024 through Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

The meeting closed with prayer by Ruling Elder Joan Grey. ■

2024 Session Members

RE Paul Green, *Administration Ctte/ Nominating Ctte/*

RE Joan Grey, *Worship Ctte*

RE Lawn Griffiths, *Congregational Involvement and Outreach Ctte*

RE Sue Schnebel, *Christian Education Ctte*

RE Catherine May, *Mission, Social Justice and Peacemaking Ctte*

RE Jim Hershauer, *Stewardship Ctte*

RE Alan Sweeney, *Administration Ctte/ Personnel Ctte*

RE Faye Gardner, *Worship Ctte*

RE Molly Winkler, *Finance Ctte*

TE Eric Ledermann, *Moderator*

Heartfelt Thanks

By **JOANNA (JO) FANCHER**

HEARTFELT THANKS to the UPC Choir and Congregation for the many Birthday Cards (over 20) that I received for my 94th Birthday. I also had visits from Jean Luce, Carol Rickel and Chuck and Judy Riden. Even some nurses stopped in to have some of my Birthday Cake and wish me well. In the photo, I am holding a sketch of Fancher Hall, the Administration Building, on the Houghton University Campus [Houghton, New York] where I attended college and where my Father was also a professor. ■



PC(USA) Celebrates the Gifts of Women

By SHANI E. McILWAIN

Presbyterian News Service

Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries has resources to help faith communities celebrate

Nothing says “sisterhood” or calms nerves better than finding your favorite shade of red lipstick right before a Zoom interview and seeing your interviewee wearing almost the same shade of red lipstick. That familiar feeling is a gift in and of itself. The Rev. Dr. Anita Wright, who serves Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montclair, New Jersey, was selected to be the liturgy writer and preacher for this year's Celebrate the Gifts of Women. On Sunday, March 3, churches can share these gifts and use the resources provided by the office of Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries.

Wright believes that when we center women and their gifts, we are recognizing that women have always been present in religious life and in the life of the church. For millennia, women have been unnamed and marginalized, often set to the side. In this honoring of the contributions of women, everyone wins, and God gets the glory, Wright says.

Wright chose Proverbs 31:10-31 to help illuminate this year's theme, “Wonder Woman: Real or Myth?” because of her own lived experience of believing this Proverbs 31 woman was unattainable. Wright said, “I wanted to

approach this text as a way of reclaiming her, of reclaiming what's there. I mean, if it made it into the canon, then let's deal with it — good, bad, or indifferent.”

Asked to describe what a wonder woman looks like, Wright walked through two scriptural passages, Numbers 27:1-11, the account of the daughters of Zelophehad, and Proverbs 31:10-31, both showing what can happen when women advocate for themselves and others.

Today's wonder woman is an advocate, Wright says. She uses her resources and means to help the poor and needy. The Proverbs 31 woman is a woman of wealth and resources who uses that power in the marketplace. The daughters of Zelophehad collaborated, advocated for themselves, and helped create policies that uplifted generations after them. If we are going to be the wonder women of today, Wright says, “you're going to recognize us.”

How do churches and congregations celebrate the gifts of women beyond one Sunday service? Wright says it is imperative to address pay equity. According to a 2020 survey by Church Executive, the pay gap between male and female pastors is as high as \$12,000 annually. Data shows that salaries for female clergy start at lower levels than men and the disparity is consistent over time. Addressing pay equity is the first step to celebrating the gifts of women, according to Wright.

Wright further states that “instead of



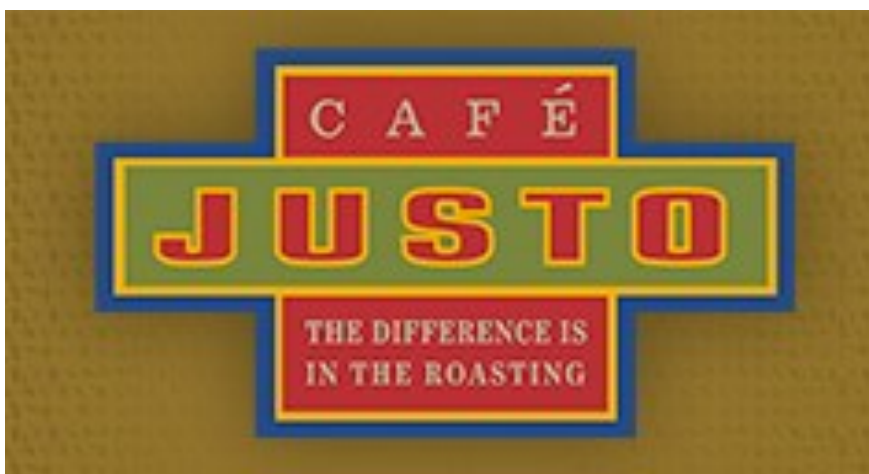
The Rev. Dr. Anita Wright

speaking over, take the time to stop and listen. Name the names of those who have paved the way, who have long since been unnamed. We can go back several generations to get [their names and stories] and celebrate them. And then teach them to others so that they understand as well.”

Wright cites 2 Timothy 2:2: “and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.”

“Once we've known better, I think the church can help us by changing or teaching a new way of going and being so that we don't find ourselves in a situation again,” Wright said.

Wright will be preaching at the Chapel service for the PC(USA)'s national staff on Wednesday, March 6. The service will be made available on the PC (USA) YouTube channel. ■



Café Justo is a Grower owned Coffee Cooperative based in southern Chiapas Mexico, formed to address the poverty and migration from Mexico to the U.S.A.

It's all about pure coffee.

For sale Sundays after worship

\$10 per 1 lb. bag

Whole or Ground Beans

Thank You For Your Support

By PASTOR LUC DERATUS

Harmony Ministries

“Greetings to you Pastor Ledermann and church congregation in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the savior of our life. Praying that the good Lord will continue to keep you all in good and perfect health. He is able. Thank you for the support received to help the work of God in the field of Haiti, to purchase food, school supplies and medicines for the medical clinic.

Please keep us in prayer also, because there are gangs, and kidnappers who have terrorized the population. We are doing our best to keep the work going. Here are some pictures of the students at Port-au-Prince Leogame. Be blessed.” ■



Pastor Luc (center) speaking to the first graders along with teachers giving instructions.



Pledge of allegiance



Children happy to receive supplies



Children at Port-au-Prince receiving supplies



Monday Meditation with Vasu Bandhu

Mondays 12:00 pm—12:45 pm, Virtual on Zoom

Start your week with some guided meditation led by Vasu Bandhu, AFN's Interfaith Manager. He serves the Buddhist community as Bhikkhu (monk) in the Dhammapada Sangha (Zen Buddhism), assisting in the practice and teaching of the principles, ceremonies and rituals. RSVP: <https://form-usa.keela.co/monday-meditation>



URI Global Prayer Gathering

Every Friday Morning 7:15 am—7:45 am (Zoom)

Participants are invited to offer brief described prayer intentions, either aloud or using the chat box, which will be read aloud near the end of the session. Respecting the various paths, all are encouraged to offer prayer intentions in the language of faith or spiritual expression that is most comfortable for them. If you would like the Zoom link, have questions, or would like to suggest a participant, please contact Sally at smahe@uri.org.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2024 AT NOON

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN POOR AND IMPACTED PEOPLE, CLERGY, AND ADVOCATES IN YOUR STATE!

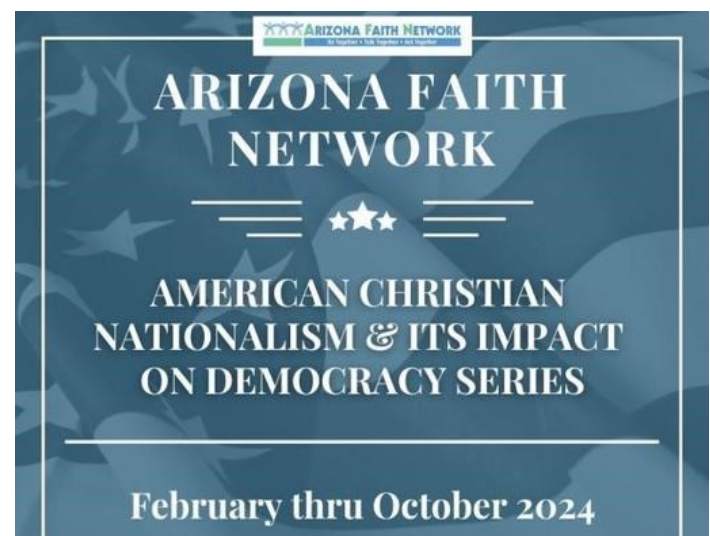
MASS POOR PEOPLE'S & LOW-WAGE WORKERS' STATE HOUSE ASSEMBLIES & TO THE POLLS

A DAY OF NATIONALLY-COORDINATED, SIMULTANEOUS DIRECT ACTION ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Mass Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Moral March

Arizona State Capital, 1700 W Washington St, Phoenix, AZ—Assemble at 11:00 am. Program starts at 12:00 pm, Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza

RSVP: For more information, contact Arizona Poor People's Campaign at arizona@poorpeoplescampaign.org



Tue Mar 26th 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Join the AFN community for a 75 to 90-minute webinar series engaging with a number of National and Local Faith Leaders. Form more information: [Click here](#)

Learn more about the Arizona Faith Network by subscribing to the newsletter at:

www.arizonafaitnetwork.org/subscribe

Xeriscape Project Update

“Caring for Creation—A Call to Action.”

By HELEN GRIFFIN

We started at a point of alarm, even outrage, in June 2022. In a Minute for Mission, worldwide climate crisis, Arizona’s dwindling water supplies, UPC’s heavy use of water for grass, and the higher cost of our outside water were all mentioned. A rousing sentiment to move toward water conservation became a focal point.

Since that time, much work has been done by many to sort out what we wanted and how we could do it. A Water Conservation Task Force emerged. That group set a goal of preserving and caring for what we already have on campus while reforming it into something more respectful of God’s creation. Priorities for any changes were Low water use, Low maintenance, and Low cost, our three L’s. Work began but we did a lot of fumbling at first. The project was huge. The main step we all agreed upon was to get rid of the grass. We needed to find out how to move to xeriscape, a method of landscaping that requires little or no irrigation or other maintenance, also known as water-conserving or drought-tolerant landscaping.

Our original thought was to kill the grass, throw down gravel, and put up three trees. That was beginner’s error! We have since learned that lots of ground cover is needed to dissipate heat that comes with the introduction of gravel, city code has many landscape requirements for commercial properties, and we had to somehow submit a plan to the city that would meet their approval. Let’s just say that was a task too big for us alone.

After seeking advice and bids from arborists, landscapers, designers and contractors, we hired Pamela Johnson (PJ) as landscape designer and Troy Dane as landscaper to install the project. PJ saw our campus as a palette for an artistic landscape design that would have color, definition, cohesiveness, a home for people and pollinators alike, and would meet our three L’s. The plan she developed is extraordinary!

While PJ designed, we sought possible help with funding the project. The city offers three opportunities which we will pursue. Turf Conversion projects can receive a rebate of half the project costs up to \$20,000. A Cost Match Tree Program will allow us to purchase five

trees at half price. The Water Efficiency and Education Grant could provide half of the project’s cost up to \$60,000—a big caveat is that the \$60,000 is divided among all acceptable applications. Pray for no other applicants!

PJ presented an initial and a final plan to us, kindly interpreting it to the congregation. We then proceeded with the arduous task of submitting the plan to the city for approval. Argh! The frustrations were many: tech helped to upload the plan, returned red lined, revision with help from the senior city planner via a TEAMS meeting and a conference call, submission of a revised plan requiring more tech help. We now await final approval.

Mission Month exhorted us to care for God’s creation, to tread lightly. Xeriscape is a move in that direction. A fundraising team is set to go. Our campaign is dubbed “Caring for Creation -A Call to Action.” It is a definitive way to get up, go ahead, do something, move! The campaign will run from March 1-April 22 (Earth Day). Let’s all healthily support this project for the health of God’s incredible gift to us. ■



We are a Matthew 25 church

Building Congregational Vitality • Dismantling Racism • Eradicating Poverty

Learn more at:

pcusa.org/matthew25

Worship Volunteer Schedule

Below is the schedule of worship volunteers for the next month. If you are listed and have a conflict, you are asked to please find a replacement and then contact Ruling Elder Sada Reed, co-chair of the Worship Committee.

To volunteer or get on one of the rotations, contact Joan Grey! Thank you!

March 2024

Sanctuary Readiness Team.....Larry Seubert

Mar 3—3rd Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Chris Casanova
Children's Moment Chris Casanova
Worship Tech..... VACANT, Chris Trella

Mar 10—4th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Nob Ichishita
Children's Moment Pastor Eric
Worship Tech..... VACANT, Sada Reed

Mar 17—5th Sunday in Lent

Liturgist Jim Hershauer
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech..... Chris Trella, VACANT

Mar 24—Palm Sunday

Liturgist Faye Gardner
Children's Moment Faye Gardner
Worship Tech..... Sada Reed, VACANT

Mar 28—Maundy Thursday (at Gilbert Presbyterian)

Liturgist VACANT
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech..... VACANT, VACANT

March—April 2024

Sanctuary Readiness Team..... Larry Seubert

March 31—Easter Sunday

Liturgist VACANT
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech VACANT, Chris Trella

Apr 7—2nd Sunday of Easter / Gifts of Women Sunday

Liturgist PW
Children's Moment PW
Worship Tech VACANT, Chris Trella

Apr 14—3rd Sunday of Easter / Earth Day Sunday

Liturgist VACANT
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech VACANT, Sada Reed

Apr 21—4th Sunday of Easter

Liturgist VACANT
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech Chris Trella, VACANT

Apr 28—5th Sunday of Easter

Liturgist Nob Ichishita
Children's Moment VACANT
Worship Tech Sada Reed, VACANT

UPC Book Club — Mar 22 at 7 pm

Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt

Remarkably Bright Creatures, is an ultimately feel-good but deceptively sensitive debut about what it feels like to have love taken from you, only to find it again in the most unexpected places. "Memorable and tender." —*Washington Post*.

It also explores a number of themes, including: Grief and loss. Cameron is haunted by the abandonment of his mother, and he is constantly searching for a sense of belonging. This theme is explored through Cameron's relationship with Tova and Marcellus.

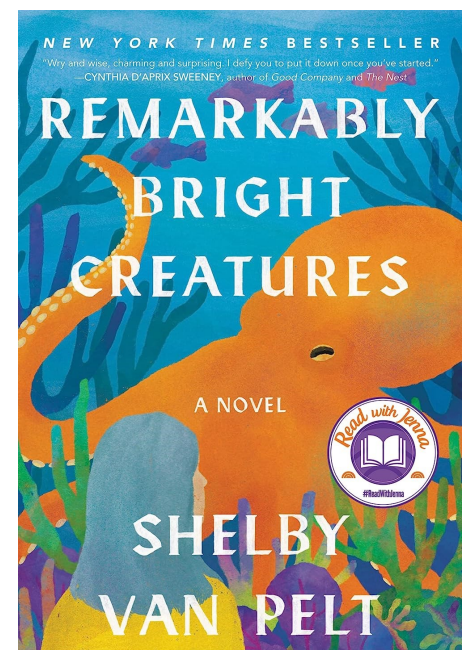
Shelby Van Pelt's debut novel is a gentle reminder that sometimes taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible.

After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the

Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago.

Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors—until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova.

Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late. ■





- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Bill Shelden | 21 Reza Foladi Nejad |
| 5 Allison Johnson | Samira Rouhani- |
| Lauren Horne | Maryani |
| 7 David Hardy | 24 Jey Young |
| 11 Chip Silcox | Margaret Branson |
| 14 Dana Prestly | 25 Kayla Horne |
| 19 Bev West | |
| 20 Katie Casanova | |
| Fred Boyd | |

If you see a birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please let the office know as soon as possible.

Stay Informed on All-Things-Presby!

PC(USA) News

Available in a daily or weekly digest format. www.pcusa.org/newsupdates

Presbytery of Grand Canyon Weekly E-focus Newsletter

News and views from our presbytery. pbygrandcanyon.org/subscribe-to-efocus.

PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

Housed across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court in what is referred to as "the God Box," the OPW is the PC (USA)'s advocacy and information center in Washington, D.C. Sign up for OPW Alerts and be an advocate! www.votervoice.net/pcusa/home. Learn

more about the OPW at:

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington.

Presbyterian Historical Society

Organized in 1852, the PHS is the oldest denominational archives in the U.S. and serves as the national archives for the PC (USA) and its predecessor denominations. PHS exists to collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian and Reformed experience. www.history.pcusa.org.

The Presbyterian Outlook

An independent magazine covering all things Presbyterian — \$19.95/year, 18 issues (pres-outlook.org).

Presbyterians Today

Award-winning denominational magazine published by the PC(USA). Also available in a free twice monthly e-newsletter. Get a free 1 year subscription!

www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/today



Monthly prayer guide...

- ✘ All of creation, and for the strength of our leaders to stand up for environmental conservation.
- ✘ Those affected by natural disasters around the world.
- ✘ Communities bearing the weight of poverty, prejudice, and violence in their streets and neighborhoods.
- ✘ Those struggling with mental and physical illness.
- ✘ Migrants, especially those separated from families and those dying in the desert in a desperate search for a better way of life.
- ✘ LGBTQIA+ persons who continue to

- suffer from prejudice, marginalization, and discrimination.
- ✘ Elected & community leaders, that they can bring peace to our nation and world.
- ✘ The people of Ukraine.
- ✘ The people of Israel and Palestine, that peace make break out instead of war, that hostilities may end and understanding begin, that people and leaders may see one another as fellow creations of God rather than enemies.
- ✘ Religious leaders of all kinds, that they may have the courage to preach and teach love, compassion, and restorative

justice.

- ✘ UPC Officers: elders, deacons, trustees (see a full list at www.upctempe.org/leadership).

Prayer requests may be sent to your neighborhood deacon or Pastor Eric at pastoreric@upctempe.org.

If you have a prayer request you would like shared during Sunday worship, text it to (480) 256-8216 on Sunday morning.

UPC Calendar

Submit corrections, additions, or deletions to the church office at
(480) 966-6267 or upc@upctempe.org.

Check online for updates or to subscribe on your computer or device:

www.upctempe.org/calendar

March 2024

Fri, Mar 1

- 12:00 pm Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)
- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal:
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 2

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 9:00 am Baseball Card Show (FH)

Sun, Mar 3

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (Rm 3)
- 11:00 am Youth Fellowship (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am Adult Christian Education (Z)
- 2:00 pm Membership Inquiry Class (ZP)
- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)

Mon, Mar 4

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Administration Committee
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Wed, Mar 6

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 10:15 am Office Calendaring Meeting (CR)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Mar 7

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)
- 11:00 am Tempe Interfaith Fellowship (Z)
- 7:00 pm CE Committee (ZU)

Fri, Mar 8

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 9

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 8:00 am Men's Breakfast (MR)
- 10:00 am Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)

Sun, Mar 10

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)

- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (Rm 3)
- 11:00 am Youth Fellowship (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am Adult Christian Education (Z)
- 2:00 pm Membership Inquiry Class (ZP)

Mon, Mar 11

- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 12

- 7:00 pm Finance Committee (ZU)
- 7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)

Wed, Mar 13

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Mar 14

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)
- 7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Mar 15

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal: UPC
- 7:00 pm Friday Night Book Club (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 16

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 8:00 am Congregational Work Day (Campus)
- 10:00 am Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)
- 2:00 pm Sarah "Bunny" Turner Allen Memorial (S, FH, K)

Sun, Mar 17

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children's Bible Time (Rm 3)
- 11:00 am Youth Fellowship (Rm 9)
- 11:00 am Adult Christian Education (Z)
- 2:00 pm Membership Inquiry Class (ZP)
- 3:00 pm Session Commission re: New Members (ZP)

Mon, Mar 18

- 9:00 am Election Day Set Up (FH)
- 7:00 pm Board of Deacons (ZU)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 19

- 5:30 am Maricopa County Election (FH)
- 6:30 pm CIO Committee (ZP)

- 7:00 pm Board of Trustees (ZU)

Wed, Mar 20

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 12:30 pm Chinle Circle (MR)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Mar 21

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)

Fri, Mar 22

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal: UPC
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 23

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 8:00 am Congregational Work Day (Campus)
- 10:00 am PW Palm Sunday Brunch Set-up (FH)
- 10:00 am Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)

Sun, Mar 24

Palm Sunday

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am PW Palm Sunday Brunch (FH)

Mon, Mar 25

- 6:30 pm PW Kayenta Circle (MR)
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Mar 26

- 7:00 pm Stated Session (S, Z)

Wed, Mar 27

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Mar 28

Maundy Thursday

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)
- 1:00 pm PW Online Bible Study (Z)
- 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday (UPC, S)

See CALENDAR on page 16

Location/Room References:

(CH)-Choir Room (CR)-Conference Room/Office (COR/Rm7)-Community Room (FH)-Fellowship Hall (HSR)-High School Room (MSR)-Middle School Room (K)-Fellowship Hall Kitchen (L)-Lounge (MG)-Memorial Garden (MR)-Meeting Room (N)-Nursery (PO)-Pastor's Office (Rm#)-Room Number Indicated (S)-Sanctuary (Z)-On Zoom

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CALENDAR

Continued from page 15

Fri, Mar 29

Good Friday

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal: UPC
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Mar 30

Holy Saturday

- 8:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 10:00 am Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)

Sun, Mar 31

Easter Sunday

- 6:30 am Easter Sunrise (Neil G. Giuliano Park, Tempe Town Lake)
- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)

April 2024

Mon, Apr 1

Pastoral Staff Holiday

- 4:30 pm ACE Team (ZP)
- 7:00 pm Administration Committee
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Apr 2

Pastor Eric—Sabbatical thru July 1

Wed, Apr 3

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 10:00 am Office Calendaring Meeting (CR)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Apr 4

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)
- 7:00 pm CE Committee (ZU)

Fri, Apr 5

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal: UPC
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Sat, Apr 6

- 7:00 am I-HELP Guests Depart
- 7:15 am Baseball Card Show (FH)
- 10:00 am Migrant Trail Walk Organizing Committee (ZP)

Sun, Apr 7

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

- 9:30 am Worship Service (S, ZU, YouTube)
- 11:00 am Children’s Bible Time (Rm 3)

11:00 am Youth Fellowship (Rm 9)

11:00 am Adult Christian Education (Z)

Mon, Apr 8

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)

Tue, Apr 9

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

- 7:00 pm Finance Committee (ZU)
- 7:00 pm Worship Committee (ZP)

Wed, Apr 10

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

- 9:00 am Lectio Divina Bible Study (ZU)
- 3:45 pm Worship Planning Team (ZU)
- 5:15 pm Wednesday Church Dinner (FH)
- 6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice (S)
- 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Thu, Apr 11

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

- 8:00 am TOPS (MR, COR)
- 7:00 pm MSJP Committee (ZU)

Fri, Apr 12

Family Promise (MR, K, L, Rm 2-3)

- 3:00 pm I-HELP (FH, K) Meal: UPC
- 8:30 pm AA Meeting (Rm 7)