

October 2019

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

In the autumn, when the weather in northern climates turns cooler and the leaves fall from the trees, our Jewish neighbors celebrate Sukkot, the Feast of the Tabernacles, or Booths. Originally a fall harvest festival, the prototype of the American Thanksgiving, Sukkot is observed by building a temporary ramshackle hut outside and eating meals in it, as the Hebrew farm ancestors in Biblical times did at harvest time. The hut is built to last for the week of the holiday and then is to be dismantled, but more often than not, the wind and weather saves the trouble of taking it apart by blowing its walls down halfway through the holiday.

Jewish Torah says that even if one or two of the four walls have collapsed, it is still a proper hut in which to observe the festival. Many Jewish rabbis have used this object lesson to preach an abiding spiritual principle to their people. When part of your world is collapsing, make do with what you have left and don't stop celebrating.

I think our faith is also about having that kind of spiritual resilience. To keep on celebrating, praising God, forgiving our neighbor, turning the other cheek, giving thanks in all circumstances, praying and working for justice, responding to need wherever it arises, even if some part of our earthly tents may be crumbling to the ground.

As the anniversary of the Tree of Life tragedy approaches, I hope we will remember to celebrate and savor the life that we have been given the privilege to live, regardless of our present circumstances, or our awful memories.

Peace!

Vincent



SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

October Worship and Preaching

October 6 – World Communion Sunday, I Timothy 1:3-8, “Too Long Silenced”

October 13 – Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, “Take Detours Seriously”

October 20 – Luke 18:1-8, “Prayer That Makes a Difference”

October 27 – II Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18, “Come Before Winter”

What the Pastor's Reading

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Second Half of Life, Richard Rohr

Active Hope, Joanna Macy

Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans, Karen Leonard

The Kids Stewardship Club will be meeting during the Community Dinner on October 6. All ages are welcome to help us plan out next adventure.

Keeping Kids Safe at Sixth

We feel that it is important to be transparent about all the steps we take here at Sixth Presbyterian Church to keep our children and youth safe.

When we baptize a child we promise “to guide and nurture this child, by word and deed with love and prayer, encouraging him or her to know and follow Christ and to become a faithful member of Christ’s church.”

In keeping with this often-repeated promise, we seek adult leadership that is able to provide healthy, safe and nurturing relationships, and to create an environment in which those relationships can flourish. Sixth Presbyterian Church makes responsible efforts to assure that persons placed in positions of responsibility for children and youth church will carry out their duties in accordance with our Christian commitment and with the law.

We are doing this in the following ways:

- Safe Child Policy codifies our commitment to providing a safe, nurturing, Christian environment by making every responsible effort to protect children and youth from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
 - The policy is reviewed each the Christian Education Committee and if changes are necessary are approved by the church Session. Our policy was most reviewed/ revised and approved in April on 2018. The policy is available on our church website.
- We also have a General Health and Safety Policy to help us provide loving care and ensure the safety of young people attending Sunday School, Extended Session, and in our church nursery. This policy is also available on our church website.
- All employees and volunteers are required to obtain clearances in accordance with the regulations set by PA. State Department of Human Services. Copies of clearances are kept on file in the church office.
- All Sunday School teachers and child care staff are considered Mandated Reporters and are provided with training and information on recognizing and reporting child abuse as it is defined by the state.

For more information about preventing/ reporting child abuse can be found at: www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov

—Jenny Newman

BAKE SALE

The Kids Stewardship Club will holding a bake sale after worship on Sunday, October 20. Come and purchase some home-made treats made by our kids.



October Youth Group Happenings

Sunday School: Sunday school class for junior and senior high will be held each week (10 - 10:45 am). Join Jenny Newman for discussion on the week’s scripture passages, current events, and other assorted topics. There will be snacks!

Youth Fellowship Time

October 10: Thursday, 6 to 7:30 pm at Crazy Mocha

October 17: Thursday, 6 to 7:30 pm at the church

October 25, Fall Gathering: Friday, 6 to 9 pm at the church. Youth are invited for games, a movie, snacks and fellowship.

Questions? Contact **Jenny Newman at (412) 720-6392 or Jennyrunew@gmail.com**

October Adult Education, Sundays at 10 am

Newcomer “Meet and Greet.” Have you been visiting Sixth for worship? Pastor Vincent wants to invite you to two possible “meet and greet” sessions: October 6, Sunday, at 10 am in the church parlor, and/or October 6, Sunday, at 5 pm in the church basement for dinner (dinner is free). The purpose of the get together is to become better acquainted with other newcomers to Sixth, get to know the Pastor, ask questions about the church, and explore in a simple Bible study where you are in life right now. You can come to either, or both!

October 13, No class – Women’s Weekend

October 20, *The Homeless Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy.* Tracing the transformation of homelessness from being a social-justice issue to one with solutions based on medical models and zero-sum-games analyses, Elizabeth Beck and Pamela Twiss explore how government policies and practices have served to shape our limited response to the problem. Equally important, they consider how a more just, human-rights-based approach might be effected. Join our own Dr. Pam Twiss for a thoughtful discussion!

October 27, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus.* On this somber first anniversary of the Tree of Life shooting down the street, we will consider Dr. Amy Jill-Levine’s provocative work on the overstatements and misperceptions that are alive and well in churches with regard to Judaism. We will take a hard look at how the Christian Scriptures have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the rise of anti-Semitism in our world.

Stewardship: Why I Give

“Life engenders life. Energy creates energy. It is by spending oneself that one becomes rich.” –Sarah Bernhardt

Every year as we approach our stewardship campaign, we hear lots about what we are doing with the money raised. The *whats* include such things as running the building, funding staff, supporting charity work and important political issues.

Those can become line items of a sort, not illuminating at all. One’s impulse is to want to learn more about them, but time is limited and our gas bill is, well, our gas bill.

I have been thinking more about why I give. While it has much to do with supporting our church’s work, it is equally about personal benefits that accrue to me from worship and my connection with the congregation that our church houses. Put another way, I am supporting the existence of a personally important place in my life.

Within this congregation, acceptance is the given. Personal relationships build from there. For me that acceptance includes access to people with whom I can rationally discuss political and theological differences. A blessing in our divided world.

On Sunday mornings, I find a place of calm peace, a place where my thoughts can settle down. A place of at least temporary relief from the anger and anxiety that is part of life.

Perhaps most importantly, this church offers me the opportunity to immerse myself in purposeful work helping others. That is redemptive.

Maya Angelou had it exactly right when she told us how giving is good for the soul: “I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”

I feel that. That is why I give.

–Rob Beswick

Notes from the September Session Meeting

(NB: notes from Session are pulled from yet-approved minutes)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (from session meeting 8/7/19)

- Gun Safety Committee Chair emailed some edits prior to the meeting...the monetary figures noted for Gun Safety under Committee Information was reportedly from 2018. Current 2019 donations were as follows: \$1000 to Cease Fire, \$400 to Black Women for Positive Change, \$400 to Jamal House of Peace, and \$200 to Mom's Demand Action. \$173.35 remains for any newly identified issues.
- ⇒ Motion (during the meeting) to approve the minutes was carried without further alterations.

CLERK'S REPORT

- Worship Attendance 8/11:90; 8/18:82; 8/25:90; 9/1:78; 9/8:125; 9/15:139 9/22: 125
- Pastor Kolb performed the wedding of Keith Gillogly and Brittany Page at Fred Rogers's former studio on September 21, 2019.
- Elder Carol Emerson shared a thank you email from Sister Janice for the donation of shoelaces and belts for the border project and encouraged collecting these items ongoing as there is always a need for more.
- Pastor Kolb explained that Elder Marcus Robinson needs to resign from his elder position (class of 2020). Session is thankful for his service. The Nominating Committee has been notified and will seek to fill the unexpired term.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FINANCE (Mary Radcliffe):

- Treasurer's report, August Financials, and draft 2020 church budget discussed.
- Transfer of investment portfolio discussed, waiting on incorporation letter from ~1850s before transfer can be finalized.

HOUSE (Leslie Kaplan):

- Pittsburgh Historical Landmark Grant for repair of stone coping along top of the building will be half of the requested \$5000 (\$2500).
 - Heating is off due to electric system and leakage, but the contaminated wires were not live so plumbing repairs will continue soon.
 - 3 ACs were replaced/installed.
 - Graffiti and trash on front steps were a problem over the summer, installation of trashcan and ashtray near incidents were discussed.
 - Annual heating system inspection was scheduled with Sembower Mikesell.
 - Church was struck by lightning...Mariani & Richards Inc.'s estimated repair, replacement and labor for damaged stone gable and also for damaged cement blocks on ramp wall to be \$6580.
- ⇒ Motion to approve Mariani & Richards Inc's estimate of \$6580 for scope of work was approved unanimously. An insurance claim will be filed for damage, and ramp wall repairs funds will come from budget line item 257 (Capital Campaign).

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROJECTS (Leslie Kaplan and Lauren Ward):

- Kitchen remodeling and Ridinger room beams are complete. Outdoor railing scraped, sanded and repainted, project nearly complete.
 - Bathroom upstairs...needs automated/self charging battery powered device door opener and grab bars mounted, will be under budget with Greg Winner's donated labor.
 - First stained glass window may be reinstalled by end of year, pursuing painter.
 - Chair lift contractor chosen/proposed.
- ⇒ Motion to approve purchase of PT-S Liftkar for 2nd floor access at the price of \$6387.65 (which includes

training of 2 people), to be funded by Capital Campaign budget line item 257, was passed unanimously.

- Other ideas: kitchen tour, ramp tour, stained glass ornaments, visit to Hunt Glass on Oct 3 @ 10:30am (limited capacity)
- ⇒ Motion to increase the Capital Campaign funding goal by 14% from the previous amount of \$380,000 to a total of \$430,000 for 2020 was passed without objection.

PERSONNEL: Employee Health Care

- ⇒ Motion to create a draft budget that would allow for an increase of 3% in salary for all staff for the 2020 calendar year, and \$486/month as a healthcare plan benefit for any full- or part-time staff person who doesn't opt out was passed without objection (of note – pastor's salary and health benefit offerings are separate).
- ⇒ Motion to provide an additional \$2500 for payment of fourth quarter 2019 healthcare plan premiums for two employees in immediate need for healthcare, from surplus found in session discretionary fund line item 556, was passed without objection.

DEACON'S REPORT (September meeting)

- Deacons plan to continue community dinners where food and some youth programming are provided, next one on 10/6. The Session moved, seconded, and passed the approval of the 10/6 dinner.

REPORT FROM PRESBYTERY

- A new minimum standard was passed recently requiring that all part time church pastors have a menu of options for pension and medical insurance.

OLD BUSINESS

- Disaster plan revisions read. It will be approved at the November meeting
- Possible future stained glass dedication will be evaluated by focus committee, convened by Kit Ayers.

NEW BUSINESS

Pastor Kolb was approached to be the new president for the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) Lengthy discussion occurred, anonymous vote was taken...majority voted that it was okay for Pastor Kolb to move forward with this if he chooses to.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- Church and Community Committee (Tom Twiss)
- ⇒ Motion to endorse the 4K on Saturday Oct 19th to benefit mental health services in Gaza for traumatized children was approved without objections (this was deemed to be a relief effort rather than a political statement).
- Sixth was approached to show and publicize a Palestinian film in November showing nonviolent resistance. A subcommittee (Kit Ayers and Lauren Ward) was formed to further evaluate how this might affect Sixth Church's relationship with other surrounding houses of worship, to be voted on via email prior to next month's meeting.

Christian Education:

- The following educational opportunities were approved:
 - Oct 20 – The Homeless Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy, presenter church member Dr. Pam Twiss
 - Oct 27 – The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus, book discussion
 - Nov 3 – The Death Penalty and the Tree of Life Shooting, discussion led by 2 Dor Hadash synagogue leaders
 - Nov 10 – Lazarus: A Look at the Sixth Presbyterian Church Commissioned Choral Work led by church members Sue Koehler and Linda Davoli
 - Nov 16 or 23rd – Opening to Grace Retreat Day 9:30am-4pm led by Rev. Betty Voight (limited to 4 participants)

⇒ Motion for Rev Maggie Smith to preach on Sun Nov 17th was approved with no objection, so ordered.

Fellowship

- Planning for November's Stewardship Reception, focusing on being as environmentally friendly as possible with regards to supplies, recycling and low waste.

Stewardship / Annual Campaign

- Lift Every Voice is this year's theme...singing and lifting voices in both celebration and in concern when we see inconsistency with values. Brochure has been drafted...testimonials in place, pie charts and pictures laid out, pledge card will be inserted, Sixth Sense will explain the campaign goals.

NEXT MEETING: October 23, Wednesday, 7pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Joy, Clerk of Session

Stewardship 2020: Lifting Our Voices

Our community life is shaped in great part by "lifting our voices" in recognition of all that God has done for us (Psalm 98). God calls us to sing in celebration and joy, but God also expects us to lift our voices and speak out when we see injustices and witness events that our faith would ask us to reject.

Our 2020 annual stewardship campaign asks us to consider "lifting our voices" in both joys and concerns. We are fortunate to have a generous congregation whose financial gifts help us to take care of our church home and reach outside our doors to care for others. While we have been able to cover salaries for our five church employees, we have not offered health insurance as part of our compensation. As a church community committed in our social mission to healthcare and a living wage for employees, it naturally follows that our congregation should, as we are able, provide healthcare to our own employees.

On September 25, Session voted to provide all our employees a base healthcare plan premium as part of their total compensation package. By the grace of God, increases in Sixth Church giving and the timing to enter into plans during open enrollment through the Board of Pensions allowed us to take this important step. (The Board of Pensions administers plans for Presbyterian congregations.)

We have crafted the 2020 church budget with our healthcare insurance needs in mind, and we now ask you, the members and friends of Sixth, to consider increasing your annual pledge by 3-5 percent to help us achieve a total of \$380,000 in pledges for the year. We also hope that new members – even friends of Sixth – consider helping us to achieve this goal so that we can take care of our employees and reflect the values we ask others to hold as Christians.

You should receive more information about the annual stewardship campaign in the mail in mid-October, and we hope that you can join us in worship on November 10, when we will officially launch our 2020 annual campaign. That day, Sixth will celebrate the premiere of a choral work composed by Daniel Elder and commissioned by the choir with generous support from a friend of Sixth Church. This piece will be dedicated on that date by our Music Director, Gail Luley, together with the church. We hope that you will join us for this special worship service filled with music. Indeed, music is central to our worship experience at Sixth, and it connects deeply to our ministry and to a mission shaped by a desire to create a loving, just community.

Blessings,

The Stewardship Committee (Carol Emerson, Patty Halverson, Peter Kaplan, and Lauren Ward)

Better Know a Committee: Fellowship

Want to get involved in the life of the church, but aren't sure where to start? This Q&A is the first in a series to help make committee information more accessible to congregants. Completed Q&As will also be compiled on the Sixth website.

What does the Fellowship Committee do? The Fellowship Committee provides food for church events. “Big” events are the Christmas Dinner, Church Picnic in June and other events that are part of the church liturgical life. Smaller events happen throughout the year – receptions after memorial services, special receptions after worship to honor or commemorate an event...

Who might be interested in joining? Anyone who enjoys working with others on food prep, or cleanup. The events have a Beginning, a Middle and an End... and then we are done until the next one! Most of the planning is done by the chairs of the committee (currently Jan Myers-Newbury and Sharon Manley)

What do you get out of participating? The chance to work with a lot of really fun, hard-working people – on a limited basis!

What is the time commitment? Whenever an event is on the horizon, the chairperson emails everyone on the committee, outlining the various tasks for that event. Folks on the committee reply with their availability (or lack thereof), and what parts of the event they can commit to. We understand that not everyone is available for everything, and that's OK as long as each person responds. Otherwise she/he will get a follow-up email...

Nearly all planning and communication is done by email, but this only works if folks respond!

How does someone get involved? You express your interest and give Jan Myers-Newbury your email address. It's that simple! janmyersnewbury@gmail.com

CROP Hunger Walk Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary!

Got your sneakers broken in? It's time to join the Sixth Church team in the 2019 CROP Hunger Walk. SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, October 13, at 2:00 in the afternoon.

The CROP Hunger Walk, now 50 years old, is an ecumenical event which primarily benefits the national and international relief efforts of Church World Service. In addition, 25% of the funds are returned in a grant to assist the East End Cooperative Ministry and the Wilksburg Community Ministry in their efforts to alleviate hunger. This effort is an extraordinary example of how modest individual donations, and modest individual efforts, can pay off in

very big ways when they are combined. It's amazing what your dollars can do.



This year each team in the Pittsburgh walk will be eligible for the Golden Sneaker Award, which will go to the team with the most participants who raise at least \$25 each. [Go, Sixth!]

You can walk one mile, you can walk six miles, or you can sponsor a walker. There will be opportunities to sign up or donate at church, but – even better – you can do it NOW at <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/pittsburghpa/sixth>

–Sue Koehler and Pam Twiss, coordinators of the Sixth Church Walk

October 2019 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Matt Cummings Kyle Esbin 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	2 Kevin McCann 11:00 am, Bible Study	3 Claire Bertolet Kirk Howe 10:00 am, Hunt Glass Studio Tour 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	4	5 7:00 pm, NA
6 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 5:00 pm, Deacons Community Dinner (Ridinger Room) 8:00 pm, NA	7 Erik Fogt 7:00 pm, NA	8 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	9 11:00 am, Bible Study	10 Patty Halverson Metta Loyd 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	11 Women's Retreat	12 Women's Retreat 7:00 pm, NA
13 Women's Retreat 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	14 7:00 pm, NA	15 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	16 Lori King 11:00 am, Bible Study 6:00 pm, Deacons	17 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	18 Helen Franz	19 2:00 pm, Alopecia Support Group 7:00 pm, NA

October 2019 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
20 Jenny Newman 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	21 7:00 pm, NA	22 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	23 Stuart Gaul 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:30 pm, Session	24 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	25 6:00 pm, Youth Group Fall Gathering	26 7:00 pm, NA
27 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 12:00 pm, Christian Education Committee 8:00 pm, NA	28 7:00 pm, NA	29 Stuart Gaul, Jr. 6:30 pm, Healthy Pastors, Healthy Congregations Seminar 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	30 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, 14th Ward Democrats	31 Peter Koehler 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal		



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We are an open and affirming community of faith in Jesus Christ. At home in an urban neighborhood of many faiths, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. In worship, study, and fellowship, we celebrate our Presbyterian roots and find joy in our diversity. We strive for the grace to love one another as we seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit, working for justice and serving as stewards of God's wondrous creation.



The Deadline for the November newsletter is October 15th. Please email articles and announcements to Amy in the church office (office@sixthchurch.org).

You can also put printed copies on her desk.

Thank you!

Food for Thought...

“We are all quite afraid of the days ahead and of losing him....Just pray that we will live it well.” – Ann Pavilonis in a letter to Henri Nouwen

“I remember Alan Watts asked me one day, ‘Joe what kind of meditation do you do?’ I said, ‘I underline sentences.’” – Joseph Campbell

“To eat of the fruit means to leave the garden because the fruit speaks of other things, other longings. So at dusk you say goodbye to the place you love, not knowing if you can ever return, knowing you can never return by the same way as this. It may be, some other day, that you will open a gate by chance, and find yourself again on the other side of the wall.” – Jeanette Winterson

“Let’s state it clearly: One great idea of the biblical revelation is that God is manifest in the ordinary, in the actual, in the daily, in the now, in the concrete incarnations of life, and not through purity codes and moral achievement contests, which are seldom achieved anyway.” – Richard Rohr