

October 2021

# 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 often, 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.

Our faith in the pandemic has been about this kind of 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 3 – World Communion Sunday, Mark 10:2-16, "Til Death Do Us Part"

October 10 – Mark 10:17-31, "This Guy Thinks It's All About Him"

October 17 – Mark 10:35-45, "Let's Go Over This Again"

October 24 – Mark 10:46-52, "I Was Blind, But I Think I See"

October 31 – Mark 12:28-34, "Not Far"

## What the Pastor Is Reading

*The Biggest Bluff: How I Learned to Pay Attention, Master Myself, and Win,* Maria Konnikova

*The Death of Jesus,* J.M Coetzee

# Notes from the September Session Meeting

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

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes from the August 29th 2021 Session meeting were presented to the Session for approval
- **Motion to approve** as written
- **Motion passed** unanimously.

## CLERK'S REPORT

- Worship attendance: Worship: 8/29—61 (YouTube), 32 (in-person); 9/5—65 (YouTube), 46 (in-person); 9/12—59 (YouTube), 65 (in-person); 9/19—38 (YouTube), 62 (in-person); 9/26—63 (YouTube), 51 (in person)
- Nominating Committee:
  - The Session reviewed two options related to the Nominating Committee in order to accommodate changes that were a result of the by-law amending process. The Session indicated its preference for the current nominating committee to serve the first half of 2022 for the purpose of presenting a slate of officers who will begin work in June of 2022.
- Roll Removal
  - After satisfying the guidelines for removal as detailed in the book of order, the clerk and moderator of the Session, Joseph Ashenden and Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb, presented inactive members for removal from the rolls:
    - Donna Bash
    - Bridget Duffy
    - Jacob Gordon
    - Bobbie Johnson
    - Michael Moran
    - Andrew Morgan
    - Alice Vernon
    - Phyllis Vernon
  - **Motion to approve** the removal of congregants from rolls
  - **Motion passed** unanimously
- Clerk of Session 2022
  - Joseph Ashenden submitted his resignation as the Clerk of the Session at the end of the 2021 year.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- **FINANCE:**
  - Finance Chair Frank Davoli presented the September financials for review.
  - After reviewing the September financial report, the Session ordered a comprehensive budgetary financial review to be completed to ensure the accuracy and necessity of line items.
  - Per the bylaws, the Session approved the following member as officers of the corporation in May of 2021,
    - Frank Davoli, President
    - Beth Hazlett, Vice President
    - Carol Emerson, Secretary
  - **Motion to approve**, at the request of the Treasurer, that the Session approve the officers above to have access to, and be signatories on the church accounts
    - **Motion passed** unanimously

- **STEWARDSHIP:**
  - The Executive Committee voted to increase the proposed 2022 budget based upon the following factors:
    - An upcoming storm water fee from the Pittsburgh Water and Sewage Authority
    - The goal of maintaining and caring for current staff members
    - The need to meeting the mission goals of the church
    - The need to responsibly fund the livestream
  - **Motion to approve** the setting of the challenge budget goal of \$448,555 and the household goal, asking each household of Sixth to prayerfully consider adding 3% to their current 2021 pledge and make that their commitment for 2022.
  - **Motion carries** with one objection
- **HOUSE:**
  - House co-chair Tom Juring is working with Leslie Kaplan to organize and pay for sidewalk shoveling services for the 2021-2022 winter season.
  - The House committee is working to plan for the upcoming PWSA stormwater fee as well as continuing to monitor the progress on the sanctuary window restoration.
  - House co-chair Greg Winner reported on the following project:
    - The scheduling of gutter cleaning services
    - The scheduling of furnace service in order to increase ventilation in the Sanctuary by constant fan usage.
- **PERSONNEL:**
  - Gail Luley submitted her letter announcing her retirement as music director of Sixth Presbyterian Church to the Session on 9/26/2021. Her retirement is effective 12/31/21..
  - It is with gratitude for Gail's service and her significant contributions to the life, worship, and fellowship of the Sixth community that the Session receives her resignation.
  - Personnel Committee Chair Phyllis Rupert outlined a request to form a search committee for the position of music director that consists of two choir members, one worship committee member, and two at-large church members--to include a newer member and one with familiarity in family, youth, and children; a Personnel Committee Liaison; and the Rev Dr Vincent Kolb, Ex-officio.
  - **Motion to approve** the use and creation of a search committee to take action in revisions to the position description, communicating the opening through fruitful channels, the sourcing of candidates (with particular attention toward diversity of candidates), interviewing individuals, and the presentation of a candidate for selection.
  - **Motion passed** unanimously
  - **Motion to approve** the Rev Dr Vincent Kolb's request of Study Leave for the week of November 8-14
  - **Motion passed** unanimously
- **BUILDING REQUESTS**
  - No building requests were submitted.
  - Sixth Presbyterian Church was notified that it will not be open on election day as a polling place.

#### DEACONS CARE LIST

A brief update was provided to Session regarding members of the congregation who require care and assistance.

#### PRESBYTERY REPORT

Elder Kit Ayars presented a report from the September 2021 Presbytery meeting for the Session to review.

#### OLD BUSINESS

A note of gratitude was received from Amar & Sharmila BK for the funds

provided for them through the Simmons fund.

Amar and Sharmila BK will provide a new proposal to the Session for supporting their work in Nepal

## NEW BUSINESS

- Week for Prayer of Christian Unity
  - Rev. Natalie Hall, the Interim Rector of Redeemer Episcopal Church, approached Rev. Kolb and Rev. Liddy Barlow, the Executive Director of Christian Associates, with an idea to observe the annual week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25. This commemoration would be based on resources offered by the World Council of Churches, that emphasize an observance that acknowledges our painful Christian history as well as our real differences with regard to what Christian faith means in our divided world.
  - The Session indicated its initial interest in Sixth Presbyterian Church participating in this observance pending further details.
- Ordination and Installation of Session members
  - Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need to be socially distanced, the ordination and installation of the Session members will continue to be delayed until a time it is determined to be safe.
- September 26th, 2021 Sermon
  - Session members presented concerns related to the way in which Session's participation in approving a statement condemning white supremacy was portrayed in Dr. Kolb's 9/26 sermon.
  - The Session participated in a thorough discussion regarding its interaction with the Justice Team's drafts of the statement condemning white supremacy.

## COMMITTEE MINUTES

- **Christian Education**
  - The Session ordered that the Sunday school program not resume until after the October 2021 Session meeting in order to make a responsible decision regarding resuming in-person programming.
  - Elder Carol Emerson reported in celebration that Linda May will serve as Liaison for Blessed by the Educators organization.
- **Worship Committee**
  - The Worship committee presented the following **motions for approval**:
    - The Worship committee recommends that the Session approve communion for World Communion Sunday on October 3, using the self-contained communion kits that have already been purchased.
    - Worship committee recommends that the Reopening Task Force/Worship committee/Staff will be convened via zoom to craft changes in protocols, that will be recommended to the Session for approval via an email vote.
    - The Worship committee recommends that the Session approve the Rev. Liddy Barlow, the Executive Director of Christian Associates, to fill our pulpit on Sunday, November 14, when Vincent is on study leave.
    - **Motion Passed** unanimously
- The Session also reviewed committee reports from the Gun Safety and Earth Care Committees

**NEXT MEETING:** October 27th, 2021 at 7 PM.

## What We're Reading / Watching / Listening To / Doing

Peter Gilmore: For the first time since the theater viewing more than 30 years ago, I watched the wonderful German movie *The Nasty Girl*. In a way, it's a quirky coming-of-age comedy... until our hero decides to discover the truth about her Bavarian town during the Third Reich. And then Sonya becomes the reviled eponym. Initially she imagined the good Catholic citizens resisted the Nazis. They did not – and insisted their secrets remain hidden. This is based on a true story.

Kirk Howe: I've been trying to do a new recording every week for YouTube. For this week's recording I returned to my '60s folk-singing days. [https://youtu.be/hk\\_AamqwjCk](https://youtu.be/hk_AamqwjCk)

Jennifer Joy: I'm totally binge-watching *Jane the Virgin* on Netflix – so much fun!! I'm depriving myself of way too much sleep, though. The first season is from 2015 so I guess I'm last to this party, but I don't care!

Kate Kennedy: Everything by James Lee Burke

Lori King: Reading *Rise of the Warrior Cop* by Radley Balko and listening to the new season of *This Land*

Amy Whipple: I took HBO Max up on their half-off offer and finally watched Jean Smart's love letter to me (that's how TV works, right?), otherwise known as the show *Hacks*. Amazing.



## October Birthdays

October 1 ..... Matt Cummings

Kyle Esbin

October 2 ..... Kevin McCann

October 3 ..... Claire Bertolet

Kirk Howe

Harry Kirk

October 7 ..... Erik Fogt

October 10.....Patty Halverson

Metta Loyd

October 16.....Lori King

October 18.....Lennon Franz

October 20.....Jenny Newman

October 23.....Stuart Gaul

October 29.....Stuart Gaul, Jr.

October 31.....Peter Koehler

# Christian Education Updates

We will continue to hold our Christian Education programming as we have been for the last few weeks. Our current goal is to limit the length of time our young people will be spending in our building while providing some opportunity for us to gather in person.

## Here's What's Happening:

- Nursery Care for infants and toddlers is provided during the worship service. Childcare staff are required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 and wear a mask.
- Sunday school for children in **preschool through third grade** is held during Extended Session each week during worship. Children will be dismissed from the sanctuary during worship following the Time for Children and will be brought back as a group to the sanctuary at the conclusion of the worship service. We will use the Primary Sunday School Room or the Ridinger Room depending on the size of the group. We will abide by the safety guidelines listed below. For the time being, Sunday school for grades four and up and youth group fellowship time will continue virtually.
- There are two weekly opportunities for virtual Sunday school for all ages via Zoom: **10 am Sundays** and **6 pm Thursdays**. The sessions will last for 30 minutes. We will be posting weekly Sunday school resources and a children's bulletin for those participating in Sunday school and church at home.
- Youth Group for grades six and up which will be held weekly on **Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:30 pm**.
- Additional outdoor activities and gatherings for children, youth and their families may be planned with masks being required for all unvaccinated individuals.

We will continue to monitor the rate of community spread and adjust programming and protocols monthly for all in-person gatherings for children based on the CDC's recommendations for school and day care facilities, state regulations, county health department guidelines, and all guidelines and requirements established by the leadership and Session of Sixth Presbyterian Church. Our next step will be to resume in-person Sunday school for grades four and up.

## Safety Guidelines:

- Masks will be required indoors for all staff, teachers, and volunteers. Masks for children over age 2 who can wear them will be required while indoors.
- A combination of portable room HEPA filters, window air-conditioning units, and open windows will be utilized to provide room ventilation.
- In good weather, we will be able to take Sunday school/extended session students outside to meet in designated spaces on the front stairs or front yard.
- Rooms/spaces used for Sunday school, nursery, and extended session will be cleaned after each use. Toys and materials used will be set aside for cleaning following each session.
- Social distancing will be practiced. We will provide enough crayons, pencils, arts and craft supplies to limit sharing.
- Kids/staff/volunteers will use the restrooms one at a time unless assistance is needed.
- Parents/students will be reminded to follow all guidelines in our existing General Health and Safety guidelines/policy [Health and Safety Policy](#)

- Completion of our registration form for children and youth will be required for all those attending Extended Session, Sunday school, and all other in-person programming. Visitors and those not in our registration system will be asked to provide contact information. [Children and Youth Registration](#)
- We will keep attendance lists for all kids and adults for the purposes of contact tracing.
- Training will be provided for childcare staff, teachers, and volunteers about all health and building safety protocols.
- Self-Screening/Contact Tracing: Anyone testing positive after attending service or church program is asked to please report it to a church staff member right away so we can do contact tracing. For everyone's safety, we ask that people please stay home if you or anyone in your household has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days, or if anyone is currently experiencing or has experienced COVID-19 symptoms.



## CROP Hunger Walk – Sunday, October 10 at 2 pm

The CROP Hunger Walk will be back in person this year! Sixth Church has been a significant participant in this important effort during the walk's 52-year history. Come and join us!

There will be one major change in logistics in the interest of safety. We will still meet at our usual location, South Avenue Methodist Church in Wilkinsburg, but the gathering will be in the church's expansive side yard rather than indoors. All registration be handled ahead of time, either by the individual church team or online.

You are encouraged to sign up online. When we ran a remote walk last year, everyone registered online, and it worked well. We'll still make it possible to sign up in person when we gather for worship, but we encourage you to take that step right on your computer.

Here is our team site, where you can sign up to walk or make a donation:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/sixth-presbyterian-church-of-pittsburgh>

CROP raises money for Church World Service programs around the world – to fight hunger and to develop sustainable agricultural practices. If you'd like to know more about the important ways your money is being used, check out this site. Every time we go there, we are convinced about the good and important work being done! Give a family hope for their future.

<https://cwsglobal.org/about/>

– Pam Twiss and Sue Koehler, co-chairs

WALK. GIVE. CHANGE THE WORLD.

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2021

CROP HUNGER WALK

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Ending Hunger One Step at a Time

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 CWS

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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 Oct. 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...

"I loved Autumn, the one season of the year that God seemed to have put there just for the beauty of it." –Lee Maynard

"And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves." –Virginia Woolf

"Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale." –Lauren Destefano

"Is this not a true autumn day? Just the still melancholy that I love – that makes life and nature harmonize." –George Eliot

"How beautifully leaves grow old. How full of light and color are their last days." –John Burrows