

April 2023

# Sixth Sense

## From the Pastor

It's not uncommon for there to be multiple stories to explain things in this world—even if some are fiction. For example, nearly half the country still believes the story that the 2020 Presidential election was stolen, despite all evidence to the contrary. Throughout life, we are presented with competing stories as to why things are the way they are. We have to determine which story is true; which story will guide our living.

There is more than one story about the empty tomb. One explanation in Matthew's gospel is that Jesus' disciples stole his body in the dead of night. Death is death. Accept it. There is a limit to what God will do. Jesus was crucified and the powers of this world won. That's one story. There's another story, first told by the angels, and then by the women... that the love of God can't bear to stay away. Just as God chose to take on skin and be born in Bethlehem because God couldn't bear to be away from this world so, too, even after the world responded to God's radical love with violence, God chooses to come back. God refuses to let love die.

I am grateful to be the Pastor of a congregation who lives the story of love that refuses to die. I am looking forward to observing the Passion story with you.

Peace!  
Vincent



All ages are invited to experience the Easter story through a story walk featuring the children's book "Twas the Morning of Easter" written by Glenys Nellist and illustrated by Elena Selivanova. The story boards will begin outside on our front lawn (weather permitting). Come follow along and gather some Easter Eggs along the way. There will be Easter activities and refreshments for Sunday school student and their families in the Ridinger Room during the Sunday school hour. Join us!



## April Worship and Preaching

April 2—Palm Sunday, Matthew 21:1-11, "Blessed Are the Meek"

April 9—Easter Sunday, Matthew 28:1-14, "Two Stories"

April 16—Rev. Sarah Robbins preaching

April 23—Earth Care Sunday, Genesis 1:26-31, Psalm 46:1-7, "Dry Land From the Waters"

April 30—Rev. Sarah Robbins preaching

## What the Pastor Is Reading

*Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation*, Barbara Brown Taylor

## CDC Community Risk and Worship

Masks are required in the building while Allegheny County is in a "medium" or "high" CDC community risk designation; N95 or similar masks are preferred while in "high." Masks are welcome while in "low."

# April Youth Group

(6th grade and up)

**Thursday, April 6:** Youth volunteering/serving meals at Hot Metal Bridge's The Table from 5 to 7 p.m. / Meet at the church at 4:30 p.m. for transportation with Jenny or meet at Hot Metal. You must RSVP to Jenny if you will be attending.

**Thursday, April 13 - 7:30 p.m.** In-person at the church.

**Thursday, April 20: 6 –7:30 p.m.** Virtual games and fellowship via Zoom. Link will be emailed.

**For more info email Jenny Newman**  
***Jennyrunew@gmail.com***

**Easter Sunday School and Child Care:** There will be no Sunday school or Extended Session on Easter Sunday, Children are invited to participate in our Story Walk and activities in the Ridinger Room starting at 10 am and sit with their families during the worship service. There will be childcare for infants and toddlers in the church nursery during the worship service.

**Vacation Bible School:** We will be collaborating with East Liberty Presbyterian Church for Vacation Bible School this year. Changemaker Lab VBS will be held June 26-30, 9 am to 3 pm at ELPC for kids in pre-K (age 4 and potty-trained) through grade 5 (completed). Youth in 6th -12th are invited to sign up as volunteers and adult volunteers are needed as well! To register for VBS or to volunteer here is the link!

<https://cathedralofhope.org/ministries-programs/children-youth-ministries/vacation-church-school/>

The VBS theme this year is Changemakers Lab, a place children will learn that everyone can make a difference in the world! Through five Bible stories, we'll explore examples of people who experienced and brought about a change in the world around them. These people provide a model for asking hard questions, working together to solve problems, reaching across differences, caring for all people, and imagining a new world. Through worship and drama, Bible study, STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, art, math), and active games, children are invited to see and experience the transforming love of God.



**Middle School Mission Trip with ELPC:** Mark your calendars! Youth who have completed 6th, 7th, and 8th grade are invited to participate in a mission trip from July 5-8. The trip is being planned by leaders at East Liberty Presbyterian Church and the group will be staying at Camp Crestfield and participating in a variety of service projects in the area. Jenny Newman will be going along if any of our students are participating. More information will be coming soon. Please let Jenny Newman know if anyone is interested.

# Meal Train for Chris and Dante

On behalf of the Deacons, I'd like to thank all of you who generously showed your sympathy and care for Chris and Dante MacDonald by providing meals for them. Chris has been so grateful for your previous meals, which have made their life a little easier and reminded them how much we care. Chris said they'd be glad for more of your delicious offerings.

The Deacons would like to continue to provide a meal for them every other week. So as not to overwhelm their freezer and coordinate our efforts, the Deacons are continuing our list of those willing to participate. Please contact Linda Davoli at [davoli.editorial@gmail.com](mailto:davoli.editorial@gmail.com) or (412-243-0656 landline) to claim your week in April through June.

Chris has said Mondays and Tuesdays are preferred since it's easier for him to be home then.

—Linda Davoli



## Deviled Egg Taste-Off

IT'S BACK!!! One of the most anticipated aspects of Easter Sunday Fellowship is surely the Sixth Church Deviled Egg Taste-Off. Participate—if you wish—by bringing in a plate of deviled eggs. Take them to the downstairs kitchen before the start of worship. The more eggs, the merrier! Thank you!

## Live-Stream Helpers Needed

We are seeking some additional helpers to run the live-stream and sound system during our Sunday morning worship. This job requires that the operator turn on the equipment, start the software, step through each item in the service, and make minor adjustments as needed. There is a small stipend offered for performing this service. You will receive training. Contact Kirk Howe at [howeks@yahoo.com](mailto:howeks@yahoo.com) or 412-343-7438 if you or someone you know is interested.



## April Birthdays

April 1 ..... Sue Koehler

Diana Wood

April 2 ..... David Rothenberg

April 6 ..... Kate Davoli

Barb Parees

April 8 ..... Sheila Kier

April 9 ..... Bill Beggs

April 10.....Opal Middleton

April 12.....Peter Bower

April 16.....Meg Cummings

April 17.....Kathy Heron

April 18.....David Bennett

April 21.....Jane Fox

April 23.....Tom Juring

April 26.....Russ Loyd

Tyler Middleton

April 27.....Frank Davoli

April 29.....Carol Ladebue



# Better Know the Leadership Class of 2026

## Deacons

**Marnie Bertolet:** Marnie Bertolet has been a member of Sixth Church since about 2003. She has served previously, once as a deacon and once as an elder, as well as being on various committees such as More Light, Justice, Earth Care and the Knitting group. Her day job is with the University of Pittsburgh. She lives in Squirrel Hill with her two children, Claire (10th grade) and Elly (12th grade), and Mark (her husband). Marnie reduced her church activity during the pandemic and is excited to get involved again in Church life as a Deacon.

**Elliott Hilton:** Elliott Hilton is a new member to Sixth Presbyterian Church. He has previously served as a deacon at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio (a More Light congregation) and at Greenfield Presbyterian Church in Berkley, Michigan. Elliott is employed as Director of Dining Services at Sisters of St. Joseph in Baden.

**Gail Luley:** Gail Luley was appointed Director of Music at Sixth Presbyterian in the spring of 1996. She held this position until December 31, 2021, when she retired. She officially became a member of Sixth Church in 2004, during Beverly James' tenure as Interim pastor. Gail's association with church work began long before her time at Sixth Church.

Gail comes from, as she likes to say "a long line of Lutheran teachers and preachers." Her parents were both Lutheran elementary school teachers (her mother was also an organist), and her father was ordained into the ministry when she was in sixth grade. She wants you to know that she has had an up-close and personal experience with the ups and downs and the ins and outs of church work and that ---surprisingly to her---she still wants to be connected to a church, to Sixth Church.

Despite her life-long involvement in church work, she has never been a Deacon, but is familiar with the valuable work they offer. She looks forward to contributing to the work of Sixth Church in this new way.

## Ruling Elders

**Sara Berg:** Sara Cuadra Berg has been a member of Sixth Presbyterian Church since 2007. She and her husband, Chris, have two daughters who grew up at Sixth and were active members in the children and youth groups, as well as the choir.

Sara has been an active member of Sixth, having served in the Christian Education committee when Jenny Newman was hired as our Christian Education Director, as a Deacon and member of the Church and Community Committee, and as an officer of Session for two different terms. Additionally, Sara served in the Pastor Nominating Committee when Pastor Vincent was called to ministry with our church family.

Sara, a native of Nicaragua, and her husband Chris, hosted several groups of youth and adults on mission trips to Nicaragua. They were instrumental in our church's development of a relationship with El Porvenir, a community of organic coffee farmers that we continue to support through our Church and Community funds.

A social worker by trade, Sara works as the Director for Program Success for Communities In Schools of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County (CISPAC). Through her work, she serves children and families in the greater Pittsburgh region, addressing issues of poverty, racism, social justice, individual and community trauma, and gun violence.

Sara is honored to be nominated to serve as an Elder once again and looks forward to building closer

relationships with the many new members and visitors who make up the beautiful family we call Sixth Presbyterian Church!

**Joan Markert:** Joan Markert is originally from Illinois. She graduated from Grinnell College and CMU. After working for four years at the Repertory Theatre in St. Louis in the winter and at Totem Pole Theatre in central Pennsylvania she spent 2 years in Los Angeles working in television and theatre. Returning to Pittsburgh in 1978 she worked with one of the costume rental companies until she landed a job in the costume shop of the Pittsburgh Playhouse of Point Park, then College, now University. She continued in that position for 39 years enjoying creating costumes for professional theatre, college productions, ballet and Playhouse Junior and teaching costume history and costume construction. In her “spare” time she also worked with PICT Theatre, Prime Stage, the Jewish Theatre of Pittsburgh, South Park Theatre Company and other local performance companies. In 2014 she received the Anne D. Mullaney Inspiration Award from PICT Theatre and in 2019 the Pittsburgh New Works Festival honored her with their Lifetime Achievement Award. She “retired” from Point Park at the end of 2020 but still teaches part-time and helps out in the costume shop as needed. She has been a member of Sixth Church since 1991, if she remembers correctly.

**Tom Twiss:** Pamela and I started attending Sixth in 1991. We moved to eastern Pennsylvania for a few years, but when we returned, we joined Sixth in 1999. I was a member of session in 2017-2019 when I also chaired the Church & Community Committee. Since then I’ve remained active in C&C and in the Sixth Justice Team.



## Notes from the March 26 Congregational/Corporation Meeting

*(NB: notes from yet-approved minutes)*

The following motions were presented:

- Motion: Deacon Linda Davoli, moved the following slate of officers for the Session, Class of 2026: Scott Bell, Sara Berg, and Tom Twiss to be installed, and Joan Markert to be ordained and installed. There were no nominations from the floor. The motion to close nominations was made, seconded, and passed. The congregation cast a unanimous vote for the slate.
- Motion: Deacon Linda Davoli moved the following slate of officers for the Deacons, Class of 2026: Marnie Bertolet, Elliott Hilton, and Robin Holtje to be installed and Gail Luley to be ordained and installed. There were no nominations from the floor. The motion to close nominations was made, seconded, and passed. The congregation cast a unanimous vote for the slate, which included one more member than in recent years.
- Motion: That the following at-large church members serve on the congregational nominating committee for 2024: April Clisura, Mary Crossley, and Peter Gilmore. The Session and Deacon representatives will be chosen at a later date. There were no nominations from the floor. The motion was made, seconded, and passed to close the nominations. The congregation approved the slate unanimously.
- Motion: Deacon Linda Davoli moved that the 2023 Nominating Committee be dissolved. She concluded with many thanks to that committee, Chair Mary Lang, Nora Johnson, Mary Radcliffe, and Amy Whipple. The motion was seconded and the congregation voted unanimously to dismiss the Committee with thanks.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Clerk of Session

# Notes from the March Session Meeting

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

## **CLERK'S REPORT:**

- Worship Attendance: 2/26, 88 (in-person), 69 (YouTube); 3/5, 96 (in-person), 87 (YouTube); 3/12, 75 (in-person), 53 (YouTube); 3/19, 80 (in-person), 42 (YouTube); 3/26 (in-person), 75 (YouTube)
- There was no correspondence or building requests this month

## **REV. BRIAN WALLACE:**

Rev. Kolb introduced Rev. Wallace noting that Rev. Wallace was joining the meeting to discuss contingency plans available through the Presbyterian Church USA's Board of Pensions. Should Rev. Kolb need to take short term or long term disability, the Board of Pensions now has such a plan in place, funded by .5% of the current dues. For short term disability, the plan allows for a congregation to hire a part-time pastor at 60% of the current Pastor's salary. This allows the congregation to hire part-time temporary supply and still pay their pastor. Rev. Wallace explained the process for seeking support from the Board of Pensions that there would be Teaching Elders available for preaching, moderating Session, and for pastoral care. Rev. Wallace will be available to Rev. Kolb and the Personnel Committee as need arises.

In the meantime, Rev. Kolb made arrangements for weekly back-up and for scheduled vacation and Study Leave.

Rev. Wallace prayed for our congregation and Rev. Kolb. He and the incoming Session members and Personnel committee member exited the meeting.

## **OMNIBUS MOTION:**

Following clarification of what changes were made in the Funeral, Wedding, and Catering Policies (#7), Peter Watt-Morse moved that the entire Omnibus Motion be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

- Motion to approve the minutes of the Session Stated Meeting, February 22.
- Motion to approve the Congregational Meeting minutes, March 26.
- Motion to approve Ruling Elders Pam Howe and Peter Gilmore as Commissioners to Presbytery on May 18 at 1:00 p.m.
- Motion to approve Maunday Thursday Service & Agape Meal, April 6 at 7p.m., and the Deviled Egg Easter Sunday fellowship.
- Motion to approve the Pastor's vacation for April 10-16 (Pastor's final week of 2022 vacation, 5 weeks of 2023 vacation remaining).
- Motion to approve the Pastor's Study Leave for April 24-30 (1 week used, 2 weeks remaining).
- Motion to approve updated Funeral, Wedding, and Catering policies.
- Motion to approve a Congregational Meeting (approved electronically prior) on Sunday, March 26, to elect Ruling Elders, Deacons, and the 2024 Congregational Nominating Committee.
- Motion to approve the Rev. Sarah Robbins to preach on April 16 and April 30.
- Motion to approve the baptism of Kurt Thompson, and Nathan Thompson, son of Kurt Thompson and Dana Canelli, on Sunday May 14, at the 11 a.m. service. (Nathan birthdate 4/28/20)

- Motion to approve the special offering for Three Rivers Waterkeeper on Earth Care Sunday, April 23.

#### **FINANCIALS:**

Ruling Elder Frank Davoli highlighted areas of the Treasurer's Report and took questions about financials.

- Income continues to be lower than budget for pledge and non-pledge amounts
- The Salary of the Director of C & Y Ministry was inadvertently placed in the Expense Allowance line.
- It was noted that utilities were significantly more expensive this past month. Will investigate past bills and usage to compare.
- Donations to the Women's Weekend are made routinely from a trust. With no current plans for a WW, may consider other Women's interests/issues to highlight. If interest in Women's Weekend exists, will need to find a new organizer.
- Investment Consultation-a group will meet to review the investment trust through New Covenant Trust. (Peter W-M, Peter K, Beth H, Frank D, Vincent K)

#### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE:**

On behalf of Leslie Kaplan, Ruling Elder Peter Kaplan reported that once the final stained-glass windows are refurbished, there will still be significant funds from the pledges and from the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. Once the stained glass is completed, the Session will need to determine what to do with the surplus.

**COMMITTEE MINUTES:** Meeting minutes were referenced.

**DEACON MINUTES/CARE LIST:** Meeting minutes were referenced and Care List updated.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

The Justice Team is still expecting the vote for the Bethel AME overture at the May 18 Presbytery Meeting, even though an MOU has been signed by the Pittsburgh Penguins and Bethel AME. There has been concern expressed by the Anti-Racism Task Force, the Black Presbyterian Caucus and the Amos 5:24 team that the overture bypassed the marginalization of other historically Black Presbyterian congregations in our Presbytery. It is anticipated that a fund will be set up to invite contributions from the Presbytery to support Bethel AME. When that time comes, Pastor Kolb will refer the matter of Sixth support to the Justice Team.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Rev. Kolb had a request from a 2<sup>nd</sup> year seminary student at PTS, that we consider her for an internship at Sixth next Fall and Spring. Following a discussion, it was decided that this was not an ideal time for Rev. Kolb to take on the added responsibility.

**COFFEE HOUR:** April 2—Church and Community

#### **CALENDAR NOTES:**

April 9—Easter; Communion servers volunteered

April 26—next **Session** meeting, in-person. Will include examination of Joan Markert to be ordained as Elder, and Gail Luley to be ordained as Deacon. Final meeting for class of 2023

May 21—**ordination and installation** of Elders and Deacons, class of 2026

May 24—**Session** meeting

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Clerk of Session

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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 May newsletter is April 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...

"Spring," Mary Oliver

Faith is the instructor.  
We need no other.

Guess what I am, he says in his  
incomparably lovely

Young-man voice. Because I love the  
world I think of grass,

I think of leaves and the bold sun, I  
think of the rushes

In the black marshes just coming back  
from under the pure white

And now finally melting stubs of  
snow.

Whatever we know or don't know

Leads us to say:  
Teacher, what do you mean?  
But faith is still there, and silent.

Then he who owns the incomparable  
voice suddenly flows upward

And out of the room and I follow,  
obedient and happy.

Of course I am thinking the Lord was  
once young and will never in fact  
be old.

And who else could this be, who goes  
off down the green path,  
Carrying his sandals, and singing?