

July/ August 2023



Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

Do not forget the joy of the Lord is your strength:

But remember this . . .

We are called not to be fearful,
we are called to love:

We are called not to parade our holiness,
we are called to be faithful:

We are not called to be all-knowing,
we are called to believe:

We are not called to claim,
we are called to give:

We are not called to be victorious,
we are called to be obedient:

We are called to serve and to walk humbly with our God.

from An Iona Prayer Book, by Peter W. Millar

When things change in my life, I often turn to this prayer book to guide my thoughts and decisions. It is centering and helps to remind me of the foundation of love underneath all that I am and experience.

The prayer talks about what we are called to do next. After prayer and discussion with my family, I feel called to walk with you as your Interim Pastor and am humbled by the Session's request to do so. Having served in this role several times, it is a privilege to continue to hold space for you all as you go about doing the hard work of saying goodbye to Vincent as your pastor.

Together we will get ready to embrace the good things God has in store for this community of faith.

Over the last thirteen years of living and serving churches in Pittsburgh Presbytery, Sixth Presbyterian Church has always been my beacon of hope as to what the Church can and should be. You all continue to illuminate what it means to serve and walk humbly with God.

In the coming weeks, the Session and I will share more about the next steps in the transition process, and keep you well informed along the way.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch.

In Christ,

Rev. Sarah Robbins

“The Good That Is Ours to Do”:

A Preview of the 2024 Stewardship Campaign and a Request for Your Help and Ideas

Before Pastor Vincent went on medical leave, he proposed, and the Session approved, a theme for our upcoming Stewardship Campaign – *“The Good That is Ours to Do”*.

Explaining this theme, Pastor Vincent acknowledges that we aren’t able to realize many of our dreams for a better world. But he points out that we always have the opportunity to make a difference in our small corner of the world, using the gifts, talents, and skills we possess, and the faith that compels us to a life of service. We choose to do the good that is ours to do and see what God will do with that.

We know that many members of Sixth Church, inspired by their faith, have made a difference in their corners of the world. During this Fall’s Stewardship Campaign, we will highlight what some of these people have done to help those in need or address injustice in the corners to which they are devoted.

Although we already have a few people in mind, we want you to help us to identify individual church members, or groups within the church, who are engaged and passionate about improving their corners of the world. We will ask several of these people to describe their efforts, either by speaking during a Moment for Stewardship during the worship service, or by writing a short piece for the Stewardship brochure.

Here’s how you can help us:

- You can share your own experience of working to make your part of the world a better place. This experience could be the work you do for a living, or your efforts as a volunteer.
- You can share the work that you and fellow Church members do as part of a Church committee, the Deacons, or the Session.
- You can simply suggest a Church member or Church group that you would like us to highlight. We’ll do the necessary follow-up with that person or group.

If you are interested in sharing your own experience, or want to suggest someone else, **please contact Peter Kaplan at pghpeter9@gmail.com by Sunday, July 30th**. Your contribution can make the congregation aware of the good that we may not otherwise see and help create an inspiring and successful Stewardship Campaign!

The Stewardship Committee: Patty Halverson, Beth Hazlett, Peter Kaplan, and Barb Parees

News from the Stewardship Committee Regarding Stock Donations

Hi, Members and Friends,

If you donate money to Sixth by way of stock donations we have made changes.

We are no longer processing stock donations through Vanguard, we are now accepting stock donations through New Covenant Trust.

Please reach out to one of the following people for the new instructions:

Erik Fogt (sixthchurchtreasurer@gmail.com); Beth Hazlett (efhazlett@icloud.com), or Peter Kaplan (pghpeter9@gmail.com)

Thank you,

The Stewardship Committee

Notes from the Music Director

Happy summer to all!

This is the time of year that our music program relaxes its regular output of choral anthems since the choir is enjoy a well-deserved break from their weekly rehearsal and service commitments, but that doesn't mean there aren't opportunities to make music and to support the program.

Beginning July 2, our SUMMER HYMN CHOIR is available to join regardless of musical experience. We welcome all interested parties who enjoy singing, are curious about singing, and who enjoy the communal element of music making. Whether it is your first time singing in a choir or you're a seasoned veteran, you are invited to join us. Come as you are Sunday morning 9:40 am ready to offer your voice as we sing our service music, three service hymns, and an offertory hymn. We look forward to singing with you!

Musical talent is only one way of offering yourself to the music program here at Sixth Presbyterian.

There are many opportunities for us to enhance the music ministry of our church this year such as the approach of the 20th anniversary of the dedication of our Casavant Frères pipe organ (Opus 3833, 2003) on October 5, 2023. This will be a celebration of the church and its commitment to ensuring a rich and vibrant musicality in worship each week, reflecting our community's resolve to lift every voice and sing!

More details will be made available soon regarding this event. Please reach out to djburn@sixthchurch.org to learn how you can contribute to and support this celebration as well as the music program.

Sincerely,

Dr. Douglas-Jayd Burn

Director of Music

Upcoming Book Study with the Justice Team

The Justice Team will be hosting a book study on Matthew Desmond's *Poverty by America* starting August 8. These meetings will be in-person only.

Please note: there will not be a July meeting as previously advertised.

First meeting: August 8, 7-8:30 pm, the Chapel at Sixth, covering the prologue and chapters 1-3.

Second meeting: August 22, 7-8:30 pm, at the home of Mary Crossley and Tom Juring, covering chapters 4-6.

Third meeting: September 12, 7-8:30 pm, at the home of Leslie and Peter Kaplan, covering chapters 7-9 and the epilogue.

If you have any questions, please contact Peter Gilmore (pgilmore.gilmore@gmail.com).

Children and Youth Updates

Summer Gatherings: Sundays on the Lawn will be held from 5 to 7 pm on, July 23 and August 20. Everyone is invited to gather for games and activities. Please bring blankets and/or lawn chairs and your own picnic dinner. We will provide snacks and beverages. In case of rain, we will gather in the chapel. Please sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0A4BA9AD2CA2FF2-sundays>

Christian Education Committee: The Christian Education Committee will be meeting Sunday, July 23 following worship. The committee, which meets quarterly, is looking for people to join us! We don't just need those who are volunteering to teach Sunday school. We would love parents or anyone interested in helping us to plan and vision and do all the things! Please contact Jenny Newman or committee chair Joe Ashendon to be added to the committee list! At this meeting, we will be looking at the curriculum and beginning planning for Sunday school and other activities for fall.

Pictures from Vacation Bible School

In June, children from Sixth – alongside Jenny Newman, Linda May, and Cyndi Dickson – participated in Vacation Bible School at East Liberty Presbyterian Church.



We Are Hiring!

Sixth Presbyterian Church is seeking to add to our nursery and childcare staff. Those interested in the position are asked to email Jenny Newman, Director of Christian Education (Jennyrunew@gmail.com). Applicants need to be age 16 or older and will be asked to provide a reference that can speak to the candidate's ability to fulfill the responsibilities described in the job description provided [on our website](#).

July and August Birthdays

July 2	Brenda Flores	August 7	Verna Robinson
July 6	Virginia McQuown	August 8	Chris McDonald
July 7	Malena Howe	August 10.....	Nora Johnson
July 9	Kurt Thompson	August 12.....	Denise DeJong
July 12.....	Joseph Ashenden		Beverly Livingston
July 14.....	Carole Anderson	August 14.....	Paul Watt- Morse
July 15.....	Cyndi Dickson	August 15.....	Kathi Robinson-Dassell
July 18.....	Nathan Cooper	August 17.....	Dee Hunter
July 20.....	Pamela Bower		Josh Lowe
July 24.....	Olivia McCann	August 19.....	Lesa Rosamond
July 29.....	Thoren Vaux	August 21.....	Olivia Van Dyke
July 31.....	Cheryl Kubelick	August 23.....	Malcolm Juring
August 1	Checkers Delabar	August 24.....	Dante McDonald
	Julie Mull	August 25.....	Dex Guyette
	Gregson Vaux	August 29.....	Chris Sennott
August 3	John Sennott	August 29.....	Myra Kazanjian
August 5	Norma Farquhar	August 30.....	Robin Bower

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 or 412-343-7438 if you or someone you know is interested.



Notes from the June Session Meeting

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

CLERK'S REPORT:

- Worship Attendance: 5/28, 68 (in-person), 41 (YouTube); 6/4, 80 (picnic, in-person only); 6/11, 50 (in-person), 37 (YouTube); 6/18, 58 (in-person), 55 (YouTube); 6/25, 40 (in-person), 40 (YouTube)
- Communion Servers volunteered for Sunday.

SESSION CORRESPONDENCE:

- Thank you note from MHY Family Services for donation from Church and Community Committee
- Thank you from PCUSA Ministry and Support for donation for One Great Hour of Sharing

OMNIBUS MOTION:

- Motion to approve the minutes of the Session Stated Meeting, May 24, 2023
- Motion to approve the letter, written to the Presbytery from the Session, to thank Presbytery for adopting the Sixth Presbyterian Church overture that contributed to the creation of exploring the historical experience of Black Presbyterian congregations in Pittsburgh. Motion was approved unanimously, electronically. The letter was sent by Rev. Robbins and was very well received by the Presbytery.
- Motion to celebrate Pride Month on June 18, and invite Kate Davoli to preach that week. Rev. Robbins to co-lead worship. Motion was approved unanimously, electronically.
- Motion to approve a one-week vacation for Rev. Sarah Robbins, as allowed in her contract. She will be gone July 3-10th. Pulpit supply, Rev. Rebecca DePoe, has been arranged for July 9th. Rev. Susan Rothenberg will handle pastoral care, should an emergency happen.

FINANCE:

Ruling Elder Peter Watt-Morse gave an update to May financials.

- Pledges continue to be on track
- Treasurer Erik Fogt has set up a separate line item for Rev. Robbins salary/expenses
- Received a bequest from the estate of Joan Gaul
- The general ledger is included in case there are any question about specific expenses

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

The Committee Reports were referenced with opportunity to share or ask questions.

- Ruling Elder Peter Kaplan made a request on behalf of the Stewardship Committee. The Campaign will highlight how people have helped/made a difference in the world, big or small. He has asked for Session help in identifying some of these people in these ways:
 - Share own experience
 - Share work that a committee has done

- Share about individuals we know who have made a difference.

Elder Kaplan will have an article in the newsletter and will do a Minute for Mission on July 23.

DEACONS CARE LIST:

The Deacons did not have a June meeting, but their care-list was referenced and information updated. Many thanks to the Deacons for their diligent care of the congregation.

PASTORAL UPDATE:

Rev. Robbins and Rev. Wallace shared that they had a ZOOM meeting with Rev. Vincent Kolb, in which he expressed that while there were no changes in his health status or treatment plan, he had come to the decision to retire and move to Charlotte NC to be with his wife, Cait, instead of continuing their long-distance relationship. To that end, he wrote a heart-felt letter to the staff and leadership, indicating his intent to retire as of January 31, 2024. He would move from short-term disability to long-term disability, which would continue the 60% salary and full benefits. Rev. Kolb requested that he continue to receive the 40% that would make up his full salary, and requested that a Congregational Meeting be called to officially dissolve his ministry with Sixth as of January 31, 2024.

Ruling Elder Barbara Parees, on behalf of the Personnel Committee, (Elder Parees, Carol Emerson and Andrew Swensen), after careful deliberation over the course of the past week, recommends that we approve Rev. Kolb's request as written and presented. The motion passed unanimously.

As soon as appropriate, a Congregational Meeting will be called to share with the church members/friends, the next steps in the process of calling a new pastor.

Rev. Robbins excused herself from the meeting so that the Session could have a frank discussion, led by Rev. Wallace, about the next steps, including making the decision to seek an Interim pastor vs a Temporary pastor. Pros and cons of each option were discussed and considered.

Ruling Elder Scott Bell moved that we make an offer to Rev. Sarah Robbins to accept the position of Interim Pastor for one year, beginning August 1, at her current pay rate. Following further discussion and consideration, the motion was passed unanimously.

The next steps were outlined:

- Rev. Kolb informed of reluctant agreement to approve his retirement and discussion as to how he prefers to inform congregation, hopefully before Sunday service
- Discussion with Rev. Robbins
- Congregational Meeting on calendar
- Sixth Sense article
- Session meetings called as necessary, with Rev. Wallace helping through the process.
- Staff and Session will be notified of Rev. Robbins' decision, and subsequent steps, depending upon that decision

Elder Kaplan noted that this may mean some changes to the Stewardship focus and campaign.

The meeting was concluded with prayer, well-wishes, and assurances by Rev. Wallace at 9:00 pm.

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 September newsletter is August 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...

“Adrift,” Mark Nepo

Everything is beautiful and I am so sad.
This is how the heart makes a duet of
wonder and grief. The light spraying
through the lace of the fern is as delicate
as the fibers of memory forming their web
around the knot in my throat. The breeze
makes the birds move from branch to branch
as this ache makes me look for those I've lost
in the next room, in the next song, in the laugh
of the next stranger. In the very center, under
it all, what we have that no one can take
away and all that we've lost face each other.
It is there that I'm adrift, feeling punctured
by a holiness that exists inside everything.
I am so sad and everything is beautiful.