



Westminster

Presbyterian Church

ZEPHYRS

SUMMER 2018



SURVEYED TO LIFE | Pastor Rob McClellan

I don't know about you, but sometimes it feels as though I am getting surveyed to death. I take a trip and by the time I return to work I have a survey in my inbox from the airline and hotel. I'm surveyed about my satisfaction with everything I buy online. Part of me wants to fill out a survey about how I feel about taking so many surveys! And yet, surveys, soliciting feedback can be very helpful.

Several months ago, as part of my performance review with the personnel committee, we did something a little different. We took a sampling of the congregation and asked these members to fill out a survey identifying both areas of strength and those for improvement in my ministry. *(cont...)*

SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVIN' IS EASY

Associate Pastor Bethany Nelson

Summer is almost upon us and will bring with it a change of pace from the rest of the year. I used to think that change of pace was one of relaxation and slower, longer days. The living is supposed to be easy during the summer, right? However, as I look ahead to my summer this year, I am mostly filled with anxiety. I have a DMin class to take at San Francisco Theological Seminary. My family has not 1, not 2, but 3 weddings to attend – 2 of which I will be officiating. We will have what we call the “camp shuffle” each week as we figure out what to do with our son while he is out of school. Then, at the end of summer comes middle school orientation for him. Yikes! I already need a break from my summer. *(cont...)*



SURVEYED TO LIFE | Continued...

I am grateful for the many of you who participated. This kind of feedback helps me understand the priorities of different people, their experience of me, and what they believe God wants of this church. I read and took to heart what you said, and it has impacted my ministry.

As a result of this process, I have been able to make some rather simple adjustments as well as consider deeper questions. I realized how tied up I often am after worship, which for many people is their only chance to interact with me, so as we planned 2018-2019 I made a concerted effort to keep that time more open. As I assume staff liaison role to Outreach & Society, and Bethany assumes that for Worship which I previously staffed, I have begun to consider what increased involvement in the community could look like for me as well as for the church.

There will be additional opportunities for you to offer feedback in formal processes for other staff as well. We are just completing a music survey, to gauge the congregation's sense of the direction of our music and choral program, which will help RuthE. and the pastoral staff in planning. Similarly, as I did this year, Bethany will likely have a similar review process in the coming year and this may extend to other program staff too.

In all of this, I am grateful to the Personnel committee which, under the direction and leadership of chair Betty Hasler, has not only overhauled the staff evaluation process, but worked to update our employee manual and other important workplace practices. This is not glamorous work, but it serves as a vital foundation for a healthy and functioning organization.

Years ago, when in a position of giving feedback, difficult feedback in this case, I was taken by how the recipient replied with such open-hearted gratitude, quoting Proverbs 27:17 – *“Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.”* Thank you for continuing to sharpen me and for creating a safe space for us all to sharpen one another in the spirit of Christian generosity, that together we might better be the body of Christ in the world.

Though I know it can feel as though we get surveyed to death sometimes, thank you for helping survey me to life!

God's Peace,
Rob

SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVIN' IS EASY | Continued...

When facing a schedule like this, I am reminded that Jesus, when he had his most busy moments, took time to get away from it all.

For example, in Mark's Gospel, just as people begin to hear about Jesus and *“the whole city was gathered around the door,”* we read that, *“In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.”* (Mark 1:35) Later, after feeding the five thousand, Jesus makes his disciples get on a boat while he dismisses the crowd. *“After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.”* (Mark 6:46) Jesus knows that in the midst of his very important ministry, he needs down-time. He needs time alone with God. He needs time to pray.

A few years ago, when meeting with a pastor colleague at the very beginning of summer, she told me that her goal for the summer was to play hooky as much as possible. When she saw the look of shock in my eyes, she explained that she was not going to shirk her responsibilities, but that she was also not going to do more than was needed. She planned to make it a point to not over-function during the summer (which was her usual pattern), but instead she would find times to rest, to rejuvenate, and to pray.

I find it interesting that she considered that very important part of her life “playing hooky.” As if taking the time to nurture her own body and soul somehow made her truant. I think it is quite the opposite. I think those times are a vital and necessary part of our lives. However, they are often easy to overlook or to skip entirely. But if Jesus made it a priority, so can we. Especially in the summer, a season that tends to lend itself to more spaciousness, what might it look like to slow down? What might it look like to include intentional time with God in your day? What might it look like for your living to be just a bit easier in the summertime?

In the midst of my busy summer calendar, I am going to include moments to get away – perhaps to a deserted place or to a mountaintop. I will pray, I will breathe, I will focus on the presence of the Spirit in my life. I hope you will find moments to do the same.

“Be still, and know that I am God!” Psalm 46:10a

Blessings,
Bethany



all of us.' I was stunned and appreciative. At the circle, the group sang happy birthday to me. It was among the BEST birthday celebrations I've ever had!"

Many people are now working on what will come next for our REST guests, including plans for a "Housing First" model that will help get people into permanent housing. It will be a long road ahead and the way is not yet clear. Joan reflected after the final REST gathering,

"I've been grateful to get to know our guests. I appreciate how challenging daily life is for people who are without homes and admire their courage, perseverance, and hope that tomorrow will be a better day. My biggest concern is how we stay connected and helpful to our guests as we move forward. I've learned in life that when one door closes, another opens. Let's keep vigilant in seeking those doors as we remember the only way to end homelessness is to provide homes."

REST ENDS

After 10 years providing food and shelter to those experiencing homelessness, **REST (ROTATING EMERGENCY SHELTER TEAM)** has come to an end. Westminster hosted REST every Sunday evening, with a variety of faith communities providing a warm dinner for our guests. Perhaps even more important than the food and shelter provided were the relationships that formed. Westminster member Joan Brown came to REST almost every Sunday night, and got to know many of the men and their stories. She shares about a special surprise during an April REST meal.

"It happened to be my birthday and the men surprised me by making a big deal of it. Albert, REST staffer for many years, who hasn't been with us since January, was the first to walk in the door as a birthday surprise. Next came a guest with a birthday card the men had passed around St. Vincent's for our guests to sign. The card was filled with comments—funny, dear, touching, silly. Albert escorted me over to a 3' tall hand carved Ecuadorian statue. Albert said, 'This is a hand carved statue from South America of a homeless man. See, he doesn't have any shoes on, he's got a backpack. This is your birthday present from

POETRY CORNER

PRECIOUS MOM | by June Auld

You live alone yet make us feel
there are no problems to reveal.
It must be God that gets you through
each waiting day to start anew.
You're filled with laughter, pride and joy
with inner strength and very coy.
When one is down Mom builds you up
and tactfully she fills your cup
with confidence and wisdom too.
How great to think we're part of you.
As we go on each living day
remembering to sing and pray,
your precious voice will always be
a symbol of God's love for me.

HELPING AN IRAQUI CHILD

Little Mustafa lost his hearing when a missile exploded near his home in Baghdad in 2007. He was two years old. With the help of many caring people, his father was able to bring him to the United States on Dec. 31, 2008 with plans for receiving a cochlear implant at UCSF in San Francisco. It was a very exciting moment when the implant was turned on and Mustafa responded to sounds for the first time in two years! The Westminster congregation raised money for his daily speech therapy and contributed to the family's rent during his recovery and intense time of learning to hear and to speak. Many times, he and family visited our church on Sundays and had play dates with church families. After several years, Mustafa and family moved to a Seattle suburb where other Iraqi refugees were living. His father was able to get a job at Microsoft and his mother works as a teacher. Mustafa was mainstreamed in kindergarten and now, at age twelve, is doing extremely well – a happy young man and doing very well in school. Mustafa and his family are very grateful for all the help of Westminster Church and send their love to you.



MEXICO/U.S. BORDER ENCOUNTERS

SIGN UP NOW

DATES: FEBRUARY 17–22, 2019

Why are Central American families and youth risking their lives to get to the United States? Why do some parents entrust their children to a “coyote” to make the dangerous trip across Mexico? What does it mean to request “asylum” and what are our responsibilities as U.S. citizens and as a government? We have heard them called rapists, criminals and animals. Is it true? Come and find out first hand.

An adult trip of 10-15 people will travel to Tucson, Arizona for a one week experience with **BORDERLINKS** – (www.borderlinks.org) to see the border and the wall, to walk the desert paths, witness immigration court, visit a detention center and speak with migrants and non-profit workers who help those in need. Teens are invited along with a parent.

Sign up and deposit deadline is September 1, 2018 followed by monthly preparation meetings in October, November and January. For details and information, please contact: **Barbara Rowe at 415-383-8006 or barbrowe@aol.com.**

“ What does it mean to request 'asylum' and what are our responsibilities as a U.S. citizen and as a government? ”



Mustafa at WPC in 2009.



Mustafa and brother Maahd, Sept. 2017. (Mustafa in San Francisco t-shirt.)

THREE GENERATIONS ON THE MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

For the past few years, a group of Westminster members have marched together in support of stronger gun violence prevention in our country. Members representing three different generations turned out at the recent youth-organized

MARCH FOR OUR LIVES:

Lauren Halsey is a high school sophomore;
Trigg McLeod is a mother of two teenagers;
Sandra Massen is a grandmother.
They got together to share their impressions.



"WPCers at the March for our Lives rally"

Trigg: *Why did you march?*

Sandra: *I'm a believer in everything they are trying to do. I was especially pleased because a large number of the people [marching in Novato] were senior citizens and they were all talking about how many years they'd been going to marches, protests and prayer vigils. It was very fitting to me because my husband and I were both active in the civil rights movement, and did a lot to get fair housing laws passed, and we were out with our kids in strollers at marches against the Vietnam War.*

Lauren: *These past couple of years I've seen a lot on the news about school shootings and nothing happening afterwards, so when Parkland happened I was very upset and angry and sad. At Redwood we've had about five shooting threats this year, and the fact that we need to have intruder drills and feel scared—it's not what I envisioned my high school experience to be.*

Trigg: *When I heard Emma Gonzalez speak, I thought, this is a different voice. So many young people had finally had enough. I wanted to support their national event because they are the voting future.*

Sandra: *I was impressed by the young speakers I heard on television who were so articulate. I was just blown away and it is one of the reasons I really wanted to get back out there.*

Lauren: *I think that shows how our generation is really overlooked. I think people are shocked to find we are well spoken, when it's not that shocking to us. There are so many people at my school who are great speakers. I think we should be taken seriously and that's why I went to the marches. I'm not old enough to vote yet—when I turn sixteen I plan on preregistering—so right now I don't*

have anything to do but share my voice. When I became a church Elder (in May), they said "we don't want you to be a youth elder, we want you to be an elder" and I think that shows the respect that my generation needs.

Sandra: *Your voice is important. The youth in my day weren't as engaged as they are now. There were certainly young people involved in the civil rights movement, but college students, not high school students.*

Trigg: *So what's happening at Redwood now?*

Lauren: *The school put up signs around campus telling people how to pre-register and to vote, and that's new and interesting to see.*

Trigg: *What stood out for you at the **March for Our Lives**?*

Sandra: *I was impressed with how many senior citizens were there. It was interesting to see people give a thumbs up as we walked through town. We didn't get any negative response, it was all positive.*

Lauren: *This was my first march. I saw a lot of my teachers there, that was really nice. A lot of adults, that was really cool to see. I think the support was awesome. I've never participated in a march before. It felt like I was actually doing something instead of just complaining. It didn't feel like I was being aggressive. It felt empowering.*

Trigg: *I think it's important to do something when you believe in the urgency of a situation like this, to keep bringing attention to the issue and keep growing the number of people who are demanding change. I do hope this is a generation that is ready to participate, but I know when I was eighteen, I was not thinking "I get to vote!"*

Sandra: *I really want to back that up because I know from our experiences in the past that it wasn't enough*

THREE GENERATIONS ON THE MARCH FOR OUR LIVES | Continued...

to just get out and march and protest or even write your congressperson. You have to go door to door and get people to vote and get them to register. I think that's the most positive thing to come out of these kinds of marches is getting people inspired to vote and to write to your congressperson.

Trigg: *One of the things that struck me has been a vocal demand for morally just leadership. When you have high school students calling out what some politicians are doing, that's powerful. I think that's encouraging.*

Lauren: *In my French class we were talking about the*

student walkout and someone said he wasn't walking out because he is very pro Second Amendment and he said he didn't want to get grouped in with folks who are for strict gun control, even though he wanted to support the cause of safe schools. It was a fair point. It's easy to get generalized.

Sandra: *I don't think teenagers were being ignored in the past, they just weren't stepping up as much, and now they are and it's really wonderful and inspirational.*

(Lauren Halsey recently spoke on gun violence prevention advocacy at the annual Women of Westminster spring dinner. You can find her remarks on our blog at: wpctiburon.org/our-blog.)

A MEDITATION FROM THE SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMISSION

THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS OF YOUR SOUL

Visualize your windshield wipers (ww) and notice how they clear the windshield so that you can see where you are going. WW used to be manually controlled and now we take for granted electronic ww that can be adjusted to suit our needs.

They remove rain or snow so you can focus on where you're going. They help you see the road, any road blocks or hazards. You are better able to see things on your path ahead.
They faithfully keep your vision clear.

When the blade is new, the rubber is clean without nicks or cracks. When they age, they crack and road grime builds up and the ww doesn't form a tight seal against the window. Streaks can form which can blur your vision. They then need to be replaced.

Some newer ww, with the use of optical sensors, actually detect moisture as it forms and automatically spring into action.

Now visualize your soul, your inner room, heart, the place where God lives within us - or any term that you use for that space.

Now ask yourself and take some time to think about: What are the ww of your soul? What helps clear the eyes of your soul and allows you a clear view of your path ahead?

What do the ww of your soul remove so that you can see better without the clutter?

Are there ww that we take for granted?

Are there ww of your soul that need replacing? Are there ww that used to work for you but are old and still leave your vision a bit blurred?

Ask God to show you the ww of your soul.



Our middle schoolers with their boss on the farm.

IT'S LIKE THE SEQUEL TO A GOOD MOVIE | Jeff Shankle, Youth Director

This year our middle and high schoolers, along with their adult leaders, are returning to Santa Cruz and San Diego respectively. We'll be working with many of the same organizations that we partnered with last year. We'll be taking in some of the same sights that we did last year.

But really, though, why should there even be a sequel? Why should we go back? A golden rule of screenwriting is that the original has to be good enough to demand a sequel. Last year, when people trying to find a way off the streets taught and managed our team in a farming experience, we got to know "homeless people" in an entirely different way. What happens when we return and aren't surprised by being taught and encouraged by someone who has experienced a much harder life than any of us?

And did you see the look on the faces of the children at the Boys and Girls Club when we showed up with over 30 extra-large local pizzas and challenged them to a game of dodgeball? 10 vs 120? They ate as much as they wanted and got to take some home. I also saw the look that said, *"That was a fun party but will never happen again."* But what if? The cast of characters in San Diego was out of our collective comfort zones. We had to adjust to others who have different perspectives on the Christian faith. Most were more conservative than we. But this year we know that cast of characters will be entirely different. What happens when you throw Presbyterian from Marin together with Lutherans from Seattle, a Korean Presbyterian church from Sunnyvale, and a charismatic Filipino church from LA? We will live together, worship together, play together, and serve the community together. But what will that look like?

It's all like the sequel to a really good movie. You know many of the main characters now, their personalities, their stories, but you're not sure what twists and turns are waiting around the corner. Last year we saw the Main Character move amongst us, that being the Spirit. How will the Spirit move this time around with a new story and new plot? Tune in and find out.

SACRED STORIES SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are excited to introduce a new Sunday School model to our Pre-K through 2nd grade children in August. Called **"SACRED STORIES,"** it follows a model of worship to introduce the children to Biblical stories. The children sing together, hear a new story each week, and then have time to individually reflect on the story through artwork and play.

Last April, twelve Westminster congregants spent a weekend getting trained as storytellers for the new curriculum. It was a fun weekend of learning and sharing, and they are excited to share their new storytelling skills with the children this fall. If you are interested in learning more about the curriculum, or would like to help as a "greeter," please see Bethany.

SACRED STORIES SUNDAY SCHOOL | Continued...



Story sets that we will use as we tell the Bible stories – beautifully hand-crafted out of wood and fabric.