Bringing Them ‘Home’
Scott Willis To Lead Refugee Task Force

Story and Photo by Michael Barber

While Piedmont Church prepares to offer continued assistance to refugee families, newly-appointed Refugee Task Force Chair Scott Willis recalls his move from our neighbor to the north, Canada.

At 13, Scott and his family immigrated from Edmonton to Dallas, Texas.

“I remember how strange everything in Dallas was and all the mixed-up feelings,” Scott said. “The third day we were in town a set of neighbors, with boys my age, knocked on the door. They brought cookies, but they also brought a friendly set of helping hands. They guided us through what was needed to make sense of moving to America.”

Scott recognizes that his move was easier for him than for the people he – and many volunteers with the task force – will assist in coming months.

“Our family just moved from Canada to the U.S.,” Scott said. “We spoke English. Some of our refugee families are undergoing much larger transitions. Our church can help with that transition by providing a steady, positive force for their journey.”

Scott takes the reins from task force founder David Schmidt. During David’s tenure, the church welcomed three families from Afghanistan and Pakistan, helping with tangibles such as initial supplies of food and furniture and transportation until the refugees could learn to use public transit.

“David has done an amazing job as the leader of the Refugee Test Force,” said Dr. William McNabb, Senior Minister. “We are so fortunate to have him be followed by Scott Willis. Scott has been a member of the task force for several years and will now be bringing his wonderful leadership skills to this new position.”

“I am inspired by the refugee families seeking a new life,” Scott said. “They arrive with little in way of resource but copious amounts of family love and willingness to work.”

“We are helping people with their American dream.”

“Some of our refugee families are undergoing much larger transitions. Our church can help by providing a steady, positive force for their journey.”

- Scott Willis
Chair, Refugee Task Force
Anyone who owns an old house knows how it goes: dry rot and other such issues are always lurking, and the only solution is diligence and a willingness to get things fixed when they occur—and before they get worse.

Case in point: one of the structural columns that support the seven large trusses in the sanctuary was found to be rotted this fall.

Working with a local engineer, we came up with a means of replacing the faulty column while not disturbing the essential support it still provides.

Fortunately, the column was over-engineered to such an extent that no structural damage was sustained apart from the column itself.

That’s the good news. The bad news, however, is that one of our stained glass windows now sits in a completely rotted frame that must be rebuilt, and the wood sheathing that supports the exterior stucco is so heavily damaged that the exterior wall must be opened in order to replace the sheathing.

Repairs should be complete by the end of January.

So, how did we come to this pass? It’s rain gutters, folks. The column was damaged due to years, perhaps decades, of water leaking through the scupper that sits above the affected wall.

In this case, although the church is careful to keep the gutters and scuppers clean every year, there was probably a mechanical problem with one of the downspouts, and that caused the leak.
Janus Is Here

Western culture owes much to the Greeks and Romans. Philosophy, Christian Theology, and our judicial system, for instance, are much indebted to Athens and Rome. Greek and Roman mythology permeates the English vocabulary. Our calendar is Roman. The first month of the year, January, is named for the Roman god, Janus, who is guardian of portals and patron of beginnings and endings. He is shown as having two faces, one in front, and the other at the back of his head. The symbolism is that the first month of the year is a time for reviewing the past and contemplating the future.

Many people are hesitant about looking back because of painful experiences in the past. Leroy “Satchel” Paige, the clever baseball player, in a Collier Magazine article titled Time Ain’t Gonna Mess with Me, gave us that much quoted quip: “Don’t look back, something might be gaining on you.” There are people whose life experiences are such that they feel something dangerous from the past is forever closing in on them. It is axiomatic that being preoccupied with the past may endanger one’s future welfare. There is some truth in the ‘Satchel Paige Philosophy’, but it is not the whole truth. It should be heard with one ear. Inattention to the past can cause us to repeat old mistakes that present themselves in new forms. George Santayana warned, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Perhaps it would be better to listen to the wise warning of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who, in the preface of The Gulag Archipelago said, “Dwell on the past and you will lose one eye. Forget the past and you will lose both eyes.”

When it comes to the future we must always admit that our approach is one of uncertainty. The book of Ecclesiastes puts it more succinctly. “God has made everything to suit its time; moreover God has given us a sense of time past and future, but we cannot see what God is doing from the beginning to end”. (Ecclesiastes 3:9-11) We are pilgrims, ignorant of how it all began and blind to how it will end. Our only beacon is faith in that transcendent being by whose hand we came into the world unaided by any effort of our own. And, we are dependent upon that same being for a safe exit.

As we squint into the foggy future with the forward-looking face of Janus, get ready for some surprises. Some of them will be good surprises - and some will be scary. Draw on the past for wisdom, trust God for what you cannot see and play the hand you are dealt as best you can.

Several years ago, physicist Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb, summed up the human predicament rather well when he opined, “Life improves slowly, goes wrong fast, and only catastrophe is clearly visible.”

Get ready for the future. It is coming whether we are ready for it or not. Remember Janus - look both ways, keep hold of God’s hand and then keep on trucking.

Upcoming Kidz Club Dates

Kidz Club will be meeting in the Youth Room from 3:30 - 5 pm on the following dates:

Friday February 8, Friday March 15, Friday April 26, Friday May 17

KIDZ CLUB is Piedmont Community Church’s group for 4th, 5th, and 6th grade children. It is dedicated to building friendships, helping the broader community by performing service projects, and exploring and developing personal faith. Contact Leslie Quantz at Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org
‘Just Breathe’ Classes In Chapel

BY SARA HIRSCH

Find the silence between the noise in this class designed to guide you through silent meditation.

Each class will start with gentle stretches for 15 minutes followed by breathing exercises. Prepared to meditate, either sitting in a chair or on the floor, the next 20 minutes will be silent.

Bring a sticky mat if you plan to be on the floor (there is carpet in the chapel) and a pillow if you plan to sit on a chair. Tuesdays at 5:30 pm.

Rideshare
Ministry Connects Riders, Drivers

We’re forming a pool of drivers who would be able to give rides to Piedmont Church to our members who don’t drive (occasionally or regularly, one way or both, your choice).

Please contact Linda McClain, lindamcclain@me.com or (510) 220-3111 to join this important ministry.

Looking For People Who Can Sew

BY ANN LIN

Curtains add a warm, homey touch for the 20 houses our students will build during the Mexico Mission trip. Minimal sewing skills needed – all straight seams! Fabric and instructions provided.

Curtains must be completed by Sunday, April 7. Fabric donations appreciated too.

Each set of curtains needs two 1 yard by 1 yard panels. Contact Ann Lin at (510) 914-3344 or annlinca@gmail.com

‘Come and See’ Gatherings Welcome Potential Members

Sunday, February 3, 11:30 am -1 pm
Tuesday, February 5, 7 - 8:30 pm
Saturday, February 9, 9 - 10:30 am

If you are new to Piedmont Community Church and would like to know more about how to connect to the community here, you are invited to attend a gathering we call “Come and See.”

We’ll meet at the church to get acquainted, share a bit of our stories of faith and life, and learn more about our mission and ministries. Refreshments will be provided. Care is available for children 10 and under.

RSVP to Dr. Don Ashburn at (510) 547-5700 ext. 105, letting him know which gathering you’ll attend, and if you’ll need childcare. If you can’t make one of these times, he can also set up an alternative time and date to meet with you individually. New members will be received at the 10:30 am service on Sunday, March 3.

2019 Stewardship Campaign

Our 2019 Stewardship Committee is asking all who have not yet pledged to do so. Pledging provides our church with means to budget for the coming year.

The 2019 campaign, Because of You, recognizes that the many ministries and missions of Piedmont Community Church are possible only with your financial support.

Our pledge is a reflection of God’s blessings to us. By returning a percentage of our income for His work, we express gratitude.

We ask that you prayerfully consider your gift and return your pledge card, or pledge online.

If you did not receive a card by mail, they are available in the narthex. You can also fill out a card online, or set up pledge payments, at PiedmontChurch.org/pledge
Above Left: Stewardship Committee Co-Chair Lani Taylor prepares sandwiches in the church kitchen to accompany her homemade chili served during the Celebration of Giving luncheon in Guild Hall Sunday, January 13. More than 50 people attended the event, recognizing all gifts of time, talent and treasure. Above Right: Committee member Dani Montague and husband Gary assume salad duty.

The Gift Of Fellowship

Imani Church Crab Feed
Our sister church invites you to their annual crab feed, held at Piedmont Church Saturday, January 26, 5 pm, Guild Hall.
Cost is $60 per person. For tickets, call the Imani church office at

Altar Flower Donations
The Altar Guild is looking for altar flower donations to honor a birthday, anniversary, special event or in memory of a loved one.
For an $85 donation, our volunteers will create two arrangements to enhance our worship service.
Take home after the 10:30 am service. Contact Alice Roth at (415) 407-9217

Climate Forum Online
Drawing from fresh research in climate science, comparative religion, and civic engagement, Dr. Sarah Robinson-Bertoni guides a conversation on actively responding to climate change, providing context in climate realities and in religious environmental ethics.
To access the video, visit PiedmontChurch.org - MEDIA / FEATURE VIDEOS
Many of our volunteer activities take minimal time and effort.

**USHER OR GREET** at the 10:30 am service (simple training sessions available). Check your calendar and sign up after church.

**PROVIDE A MEAL** through our Food Angels for a member going through a difficult time. Contact Linda Rice at ljrice@sbcglobal.net

**HELP IN THE KITCHEN** with our volunteer cooking crew, Loaves and Fishes. Contact Steve Wuebbens at sawuebbens@gmail.com

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**Piedmont Church is not formally associated with this group, but provides information as a service.**

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**Tiny Time Commitments**

Many of our volunteer activities take minimal time and effort.

**Grief Recovery for Widows, Widowerers**

If you have experienced the death of a spouse, sharing your experiences during this 10-week class is extremely helpful to your healing process. Find hope, support and successful ways to process this significant life event. Enrollments now being accepted. Pre-registration required. Workbook is $15.

**Valley Community Church**
- Saturdays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- January 12 - March 16
- 4455 Del Valle Pkwy, Pleasanton
- Contact: Linda Husted
  - (925) 833-9013
  - lhusted@sbcglobal.net

**First Presbyterian Church Of Berkeley**
- Sundays, 1-3:30 p.m.
- January 20 - March 31
- 2407 Dana Street, Berkeley
- Contact: Merrilee Mitchell
  - (510) 482-5296
  - merrileehm@sbcglobal.net

**First Presbyterian Church Of San Leandro**
- Fridays, 1 - 3:30 pm.
- February 1 - April 12
- 180 Estudillo Ave, San Leandro
- Contact: Merrilee Mitchell
  - (510) 482-5296
  - merrileehm@sbcglobal.net

**First Presbyterian Church Of Berkeley**
- Sundays, 1-3:30 p.m.
- January 20 - March 31
- 2407 Dana Street, Berkeley
- Contact: Merrilee Mitchell
  - (510) 482-5296
  - merrileehm@sbcglobal.net

**Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church**
- Tuesdays, 3 - 5 pm
- March 5 - May 7, 2019
- 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette
- Contact: Bev Fellows
  - (925) 949-7628
  - beverlyfellows@comcast.net

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Our Student Ministries have traveled to Africa seven times in the past to visit our Sister Church Kafita in Malawi.

We are planning to go again this summer and will be holding an informational meeting for students and their parents on Wednesday, January 30 at 6:30 pm in the Youth Room.

During this meeting, we will go into detail as to what, when, cost and other plans. The trip is scheduled for the first or second week in June and will be roughly a two-and-a-half week trip with travel.

In addition to spending time with Kafita, we will also be visiting and serving at rural hospitals, orphan feeding centers and a school for the blind.

If your student has any interest, please plan to attend our information meeting. Contact Rev. Scott Kail at Scott@PiedmontChurch.org

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**Camera Operators Needed**

Our Media Ministry has taken off, providing weekly inspiration to hundreds online each week. We are in need of camera operators for our LIVE broadcast of the 10:30 am service. All ages. No experience necessary.

Contact Michael@PiedmontChurch.org, or see him after worship.
The Stages of our Lives

Sermon Series by Dr. William McNabb

Developmental psychologist Erik Erickson wrote about the four stages of his life – childhood, adolescence, adulthood and senior adulthood. Each has its own unique tasks and challenges. In this series, we will examine the life of Old Testament King David to learn how he, and we, can negotiate these important life passages.

The sermons series is available online at PiedmontChurch.org under MEDIA / RECENT SERMON SER

Hope Springs Eternal

The village of Wakalika, Malawi celebrates the installation of a life-giving well that will serve 35 people. Safe drinking water means life, not death, for many in a place where one in five children die before their fifth birthday from water-borne or sanitation-related diseases.

This well was made possible by your donations made during the Alternative Gift Market of Piedmont Community Church.

MONTH OF SUNNYS

Each Sunday, we gather to celebrate our faith and our friendships during worship at 9 and 10:30 am.

February 3
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
THE STAGES OF OUR LIVES
Part 4 – SENIOR ADULTHOOD:
FOCUS ON BEING

February 10
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
NO MORE WELCOME MATS

February 17
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
OVERCOMING DESPAIR

February 24
Dr. William McNabb, preaching
NO CHARGES FILED

Our 10:30 am services are streamed LIVE to our Facebook page every Sunday at 10:30 am.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In February we will be teaching the following lessons in Sunday School:

February 3
God Is Our Creator (Psalm 139:1-8)
God is our creator so we live out our purpose.

February 10
God Helps Daniel Act Wisely
(Daniel 1) God is wise so we make wise choices.

February 17
God Delights In His People
(Zephaniah 3:16-17, Luke 15:8-10, Psalm 18:19, Psalm 149:3-5) God is joyful so we’re joyful.

February 24
Jesus Teaches Us To Live Differently
(Matthew 5-7) Jesus is different so we live differently.

Contact Leslie Quantz with questions at Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org or (510) 547-5700 ext.109
FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Saturday, February 2 - Volunteer to Serve Lunch with CityTeam (ages 12 and over), 11 am - 2 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

– Volunteer to Serve Dinner with CityTeam (ages 14 and over), 5 - 7 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

Sunday, February 3 - Communion Sunday

– New Member gathering, 11:30 am

Monday, February 4 – Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2 - 4 pm, Guild Parlor

– Board of Deacons, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Tuesday, February 5 - New Member gathering, 7 pm

Wednesday, February 6 - Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9:30 - 11:30 am, Guild Parlor

Friday, February 8 - KIDZ Club, 3:30 pm, Youth Room

Saturday, February 9 - New Member gathering, 9 am

Monday, February 11 - Board of Trustees, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Monday, February 18 - Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2 - 4pm, Guild Parlor

– MAT, 7 pm, Staff Workroom

Wednesday, February 20 – Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9:30 - 11:30 am, Guild Parlor

Monday, February 25 – Board of Christian Education, 6:45 pm, Guild Parlor

RECURRING EVENTS

Sundays
Children’s Sunday School, 10:30 am, CE Building
Journey (formerly known as High School Sunday School), 10:30 am, Youth Room
Rock, 5 pm, Youth Room

Mondays
Piedmont Gardens Bible Study, 10 am, Piedmont Gardens
Spiritual Formation Group, 4:30 pm, Guild Parlor

Tuesdays
Rock Pizza Lunch, Youth Room
Just Breathe, 5:30 pm, Chapel
Handbells, 6:30 pm, Clara Barton Room
Small Group Bible Study, 7 pm, home of Bob and Judy Wright (510) 325-3083 or Dottie Hutch (203) 500-9097

Wednesdays
LiveWire, 2:15 - 3:30 pm, Youth Room
Chancel Choir, 7:30 pm, Lindamood Choir Room

Thursdays
Women’s Bible Study, 10 am Guild Parlor
Walking Together, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Saturdays
Men’s Bible Study, 7:30 am, Founders’ Room