Why Go To Church?

For over 20 years, my goal each Saturday was to have my work done by 6 pm so I could do an unusual thing - gather with my wife Maureen in the living room and listen to the radio. Yes, the radio. Garrison Keillor’s A Prairie Home Companion was a weekly treat. I think I hoped if I listened long enough, some of his amazing storytelling ability would rub off on me. Though he is now retired from the show, he still sends a weekly newsletter. In a recent one he addressed an interesting topic. “Why I Go to Church”. Here is part of it.

“Our church sent around a questionnaire a month ago, asking, “Why do you come to church?” and I still haven’t filled it out. For one thing, I go because I read stories in the newspapers about declining church attendance and I hate to be part of a trend. For another, church is a sanctuary from thinking about myself, my work, my plans for the week, my problems with work, my view of DJT and my PSA and most recent MRI, my lack of exercise, other people’s view of me, myself, and I, and frankly I’m sick of myself and so would you be if you were me.

My mind drifts during the sermon - the acoustics amid Romanesque splendor are truly lousy - and my thoughts turn to my beautiful wife and daughter and various friends and relatives, and I pray for them. I pray for solace and sustenance in their times of trial and I ask God to surprise them with the gift of unreasonable joy.

Barfield on the Border

BY REV. SCOTT KAIL

Bailey Barfield, Piedmont Community Church’s Student Ministry Intern, traveled to the Mexican border near Tijuana recently. While there, she interacted with the huge group of migrants and those who are seeking to meet the overwhelming need to assist and care for them.

Upon her return, Director of Communications Michael Barber recorded her thoughts in a short video interview. The piece was shown and discussed at a recent Rock meeting where more than 200 students were in attendance.

The small group discussions that followed focused on our responses to current events at home as well as issues facing the people of Mexico. We will travel to Mexico to build homes in mid-April.

Please take a minute and view the interview for yourself and explore. The video, Bailey Barfield on the Border, can be found on the home page of our website at PiedmontChurch.org

Choirs In Harmony

Piedmont Community church will host the choir and congregants from Imani Community Church on Sunday, March 3 at 3 pm. Reception in the Clara Barton Room will follow. Don’t miss this opportunity to fellowship with our sister church.
I pray for people caring for parents suffering from dementia and people caring for children who are neurologically complicated. I pray for the whales, the migrating birds, the endangered elephants.

It’s an hour and a half with no iPhone, no news. Last week is erased, bring on Monday. The babies will grow up to be impatient with orthodoxy and eager to be other than whatever their parents are, but it was holy water they were splashed with, not Perrier, and who knows but what they might wander back into church one day and appreciate the self-effacement it provides.

Man does not live by frozen pizza alone. Sunday does not need to be like Saturday or Monday. Turn down the volume, dim the bright flashing lights of ambition, look into your heart, think about the others, one by one. As part of the service, you get to reach around, right, left, forward, back, and say a blessing on them all (“The Peace of God be with you”) and when else do you get to do that? Not in the produce section of the supermarket.

People need to be blessed. Shouting and sarcasm and insult have not worked, so move on. God loves you—go in peace.”

That’s Garrison’s answer to the question “Why do you come to Church”?

What would your answer be?

A Journey Through Lent

BY DR. DON ASHBURN

The season of Lent starts on Ash Wednesday and continues til Easter.

It’s an ancient commemoration of the 40 days and nights Jesus himself spent in the Wilderness, preparing to begin his mission which ended shockingly in resurrection. As followers of Jesus, we are encouraged to prepare ourselves as well - to receive the Good News, and to share it in how we live.

A traditional way to do this is to gather together during the season, to share in a meal and reflect on our faith. So, this year, you are invited to ‘A Journey Through Lent.’ Starting on Thursday, March 14 from 6 to 8 pm, and continuing each Thursday evening until April 11. We will join in a potluck meal, followed by a discussion. We’ll be guided by a short book by Adam Hamilton entitled, *Christianity and World Religions* to view our own faith afresh, through the lens of other religions. Participants should purchase the revised edition of the book ahead of time, available on Amazon in both kindle and paperback form.

‘A Journey Through Lent’ is intended for anyone over 15 years of age, and will be led by Dr. Don Ashburn.

Contact Don@PiedmontChurch.org
Engagement Marches Forward
Board Welcomes Next Steps

BY MAGGIE SPENCER

The Engagement Working Group presented its final report to the Board of Trustees at their February meeting. The report has three sections. The main section contains recommended action steps based upon what was learned through the engagement process.

The steps are grouped into the following four categories:

- Growth and Connecting
- Congregational Enrichment and Spiritual Growth
- Community Outreach and Missions
- Communication Improvements - Internal & External

A main focus of the report is the need and desire to invite and continue to meaningfully serve and inspire families with young children.

The Board wholeheartedly embraced the action steps and implementation has begun. Those tasked with the family-related steps are particularly enthusiastic and are off and running.

Next steps will be as follows:

The approved recommendations will now be reviewed by the various designated groups of the church that are indicated in the report.

The groups will report back to the board at the March Trustee meeting and provide feedback on ownership, prioritization and timing. They will also determine which project will need additional volunteers and groups to implement.

That information will be incorporated into a tracking document that will be part of each month’s Board updates. This document and follow-ups are designed to monitor progress and success. Progress will be reported to the congregation on a regular basis.

This was challenging and rewarding work. We were pleased to bring it to a close with the submission of our final report. Special thanks to Dr. Don Ashburn for serving as chair.

The report can be accessed at PiedmontChurch.org/EWG

Upcoming Kidz Club Dates

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

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
Ash Wednesday Dinner

We are accepting reservations for dinner, provided by Loaves and Fishes, held Wednesday, March 6 in Guild Hall, 6:15 pm. This event precedes the Ash Wednesday service, which begins at 7:30 pm.

Enjoy fellowship with friends on this day, marking the beginning of Easter preparation. Adults 18 and older, $15 before March 3. $20 thereafter. Children 10 to 17, $5.

Macaroni and cheese meal provided free to children under 10.

Sign up available following Sunday services, or contact Jean Leahy at (510) 547-5700 or Jean@PiedmontChurch.org

‘Just Breathe’ Classes In Chapel

■ BY SARA HIRSCH

No dogma or agenda and open to everyone in this sweet room in the heart of Piedmont. 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.

Ready To Serve

More than 30 people gathered in the chapel February 12 to receive information and to accept assignments from the Refugee Task Force, led by Scott Willis. The group is waiting for word on a family they will soon help settle in The Bay Area.

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

Kidz Club Lenten Food Drive

Kidz Club is having a Lenten Food Drive. Look for food donation barrels after the Treasure Sale. We will also be participating in a virtual food drive. Watch the April edition of The Messenger for more information. Contact Leslie Quantz Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org
Recently, I met with two Armenian-Syrian Christian missionaries. After immigrating to the USA as refugees from the largest (and nearly demolished) city in Syria, Aleppo, they now live and work in Fresno. They shared with me the following poem called Refugees, by Brian Bilston.

Refugees

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(Now, read from bottom to top)
SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

March 3
Jesus Calls Matthew to Be His Friend (Matthew 9:9-13) Jesus is our friend so we're good friends to others.

March 10
The Parable of the Lost Treasure and Pearl (Matthew 13:44-46) God is a treasure so we value him more than anything.

March 17
God Cares for Birds (Matthew 10:29-31) God cares about details so we care for others no matter who they are.

March 24
Jesus Heals a Deaf Man (Mark 7:31-36) Jesus is wonderful so we expect good things from him.

March 31
Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-16) Jesus knows us so we get to know him.

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

Project Peace
Service Day

Piedmont Church will be volunteering at Garfield Elementary School in Oakland Saturday, March 2, 9 am - 12 noon.

Volunteers through Project Peace will sort out inventory in libraries, leveling books, fixing bulletin boards and cleaning out the staff room.

Other projects may include general maintenance, classroom organization, gardening and cleaning. Located at 1640 22nd Avenue, Oakland. Additional information and sign-ups will be available in the courtyard after services. Contact Selma Chin at (510) 290-5732 orselmachin@yahoo.com

With Gratitude

We celebrate the success of our 2019 pledge campaign. Because of you, Piedmont Community Church continues to thrive in ministry and as a community of faith.

Pledges received after February 18 will appear in the April edition of ‘The Messenger.’ Ten who pledged wish to remain anonymous. We thank them as well.

Cynthia Adams & David Baraff
William & Linda Adams
Carl Anderson
Jane & Keith Anderson
Stephanie Anderson
Frank & Eileen Arthur III
Don Ashburn
Dorothy Ashton
Aaron & Amy Aubrecht
Guy & Alison Avagiano
Michael & Kelly Bailey
Mike Bandrowski & Renee Scott
Charles Bang & Selma Chin
Sharon Banker
Michael Barber
Bari Barkley
Jim & Lela Barnes
Eric & Kara Baysinger
Jonathan Becker & Virginia Watkins
Jay Bransfield & Liz Becker
Thompson Bellingrath & Erin Gore
John Benson & Cheryl Chiene Benson
Brooke Berg
Katrina Bergen
David Birnbaum & Nancy Marvel
Allen & Lori Bouch
Rod & Barbara Brown
Spencer & Sydney Brush
Will & Katherine Campbell
Alice Cary
Viki Cebers
Clive & Ann Chandler
Bob & Kay Cheatham
Albert & Swee Ling Chen
Jeff & Haideh Chew
Susan Chew
John & Maggie Chiang
Chee & Joan Chow
Carolyn Chun
Jim Clarkson & Douglas Scott
Susan Cochran
Rick & Sue Coffin
Robert & Diane Coleman
Tami Collins
Geoff Colton & Dana Gordon
Rob & Mary Jo Cook
Scott & Valerie Corvin
Michael & Melissa Costello
Janet Crago
Sheldon & Janet Crandall
Jillian Dahle & Billy Bennett
Matt & Franki Davies
Joyce Dobbel

Jeff & Courtney Dorman
Poppea Dorsam
Jody Earle
Arthur & Patti Edmonds
Robert & Kimberly Egan
Rachel Eidbo
Roger & Karen Eliassen
David & Susan Elliott
Bob & Tina Farman
Jim Fieser
Alison Fletcher
Chris & Katy Ford
Jay Foydman
Judy Foreman
Larry Franz & Muriel Fore
Jake & Lindy Furber
Ray & Deborah Gadbois
Mitch & Laurie Gage
Sarah Gahl & Aaron Vance
Pamela Gelson
Bill & Kathy Gisvold
Cynthia Gorman
Jeannie Graham
Paul & Patti Gray
Dore & Martha Griffinger
Wayne & Christy Guidici
James Gustke & Barbara Love
Marian Halden
John & Constance Halley
David & Hannah Hanrahan
Larry Hawkins
Jerry & Susan Herrick
David Hicks & Elizabeth daCosta
Joyce Hicks & Eric Behrens
Susan Hill
Jeffrey & Margaret Hiller
Sara Hirsch
Marilynn Hodgson
Marta Horevajova & Milan Stolicny
Bob & Connie Hosemann
Bill Hurd
Gary & Kathy Hurd
Dorothy Hutch
Doug & Mary Ireland
Polly Jackson
Lyle & Kristin Johnson
Tyler & Melanie Johnston
Tom & April Joseph
Mike & Jacques Juniper
Scott & Judy Kail
Juergen & Carolyn Kasprick
Michael Kavanagh & Carol James
Kathy & Brian Kelleher

MARCH 2019
Each Sunday, we gather to celebrate our faith and our friendships during worship at 9 and 10:30 am.

March 3
STORIES JESUS STILL TELLS
Part 1 – GOOD NEWS FOR THE LOST
Luke 15

March 10
STORIES JESUS STILL TELLS
Part 2 – THE PAIN OF PAYING TOO MUCH
Matthew 13:44-50

March 17
STORIES JESUS STILL TELLS
Part 3 – THE CULTURE OF COMPLAIN
Matthew 11:16-19

March 24
Don preaching

March 31
STORIES JESUS STILL TELLS
Part 4 – IT’S ALL IN THE DIRT
Matthew 13:1-9

PARISH REGISTER
Baptisms
Joseph Wright Burkle, son of John and Tassy Burkle, and grandson of Bill and Lani Taylor, was baptized on February 10.

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.
## MARCH CALENDAR

### Friday, March 1
Middle/High School Parents Fellowship, 6:30 pm

### Saturday, March 2
Project Peace Service Day, 9 am - 12 pm  
Mexico Adult & Student Leaders meeting, 2 pm, Youth Room  
Volunteer to Serve Dinner with CityTeam (ages 14 and over), 5 - 7 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

### Sunday, March 3
Communion Sunday  
Piedmont Church/Imani joint choir concert & reception, 3 pm

### Monday, March 4
Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2 - 4 pm, Guild Parlor  
Board of Deacons, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

### Wednesday, March 6
Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9:30 am - 11:30 am, Guild Parlor  
Ash Wednesday Dinner, 6:15 pm, Guild Hall  
Ash Wednesday worship service, 7:30 pm, Sanctuary

### Saturday, March 9
Treasure Sale donations accepted, 9 am - 2 pm

### Sunday, March 10
Treasure Sale donations accepted, 9 am – 2 pm

### Monday, March 11
Treasure Sale donations accepted, 9 am – 7 pm  
Board of Trustees, 7 pm, Staff Workroom

### Tuesday, March 12
Treasure Sale donations accepted, 9 am – 7 pm

### Wednesday, March 13
Treasure Sale donations accepted, 9 am - 7 pm

### Friday, March 15
KIDZ Club, 3:30 pm, Youth Room  
Adult Fellowship, Richmond Galileo Italian/American Club, 6 pm

### Saturday, March 16
Treasures Sale, 9 am - 3 pm

### Sunday, March 17
Treasures Sale, 9 am - 2 pm

### Monday, March 18
Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2 - 4 pm, Guild Parlor  
Board of Christian Education, 6:45 pm, Guild Parlor  
MAT, 7 pm, Staff Workroom

### Wednesday, March 20
Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9 am - 3 pm

### Saturday, March 23
Mexico Adult & Student Leaders meeting, 2 pm, Youth Room

## RECURRING EVENTS

### Sundays
Children’s Sunday School, 10:30 am, Christian Education Building  
Journey, 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

### 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, 7:30am, Founders’ Room