

MUDGETT'S MISSIVE NOVEMBER 2017 — SEASON OF THANKSGIVING

I extend my personal warm greetings to all of you especially during this season of thanksgiving, which includes not only our national holiday of Thanksgiving but also the season of Advent and the joyous and grand celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel is surely cause for joy and thanksgiving.

I will include in this missive my remarks and report I made at November's presbytery meeting (below). I hope you are encouraged by my report of all the good things I find going on — and have found. We have a great presbytery. We are a presbytery that is both proclaiming and living out the Good News of Jesus Christ.

There are a few FYIs and other newsworthy events following my remarks and report. One concerns the movie, *Tony*, a short documentary about the life of a homeless man here in San Diego. It is showing tonight at First Pres San Diego, 320 Date St. I apologize for the late notice. If you can make it by all means do. If you can't make it, read about it online.

ANNUAL REPORT OF EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER Presbytery meeting, November 14, 2017

A. Opening Remarks

STORY: I value our unity at the Body of Christ. Unity is something I learned early on as a member of a large family. I am one of 10 children: I have seven sisters and two brothers. The 10 of us did not operate as 10 living silos - separate and apart from each other. Quite to the contrary, as kids we lived and played together on a 100-acre farm in Michigan. We were a band of brothers and sisters, tightly woven together by blood and our Catholic faith. Each one of us was unique. We were different from each other. At times, we disliked each other — but we always loved each other, and we always stuck together.

As a Christian family — I'm talking about all of us here, the Presbytery of San Diego — we don't always agree — either with our spouse, or children, or friends, or each other. But we don't give up on them — or each other. We, too, are a “band of brothers and sisters,” united in a common bond of faith in Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We are a family. And this Family is meant to stay together.

And for a purpose. Spiritually — we endeavor together “to Glorify God and fully to enjoy God forever.” In part, we express that by living out the Great Commission.

As a Presbytery — we will live that out by moving from being a **regulatory** body to one that is — **relational** — and also **missional**. Our foundation, however, is Jesus Christ. It's Christ as Cornerstone upon which we build our identity as the Presbytery of San Diego. As we move along the continuum, from regulatory to relationship and to mission, we don't forsake what has gone before. We don't give up our polity and relationships as we move to being more missional. They all serve to inform and shape who we are in the Body of Christ.

So, I'd like to share an overview of what we've done this past year as a Presbytery. As I review our accomplishments, think about how our polity has facilitated them; how these accomplishments (by the grace of God) fostered relationships; and how they were missional. Our aim and passion as the Presbytery of San Diego is to glorify God in all we think, say and do — and to engage in ways that fall squarely within the Great Commission and the two Great Commandments. We are a relational body moving toward a more missional way of being. We must always keep that in focus.

B. Annual Report

So what have we accomplished in 2017?

1. The first thing that comes to my mind is — you've got an EP! I was chosen by you to be your installed EP. Now I get to take the heat — and sit in the “hot seat.” Seriously, it is a privilege to work with you. I get major projects also come to mind that we completed this year. The Presbyterian Urban Ministries (PUM) task force and the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship (SSAPF) task force each completed their respective assignments to assess the missional and fiscal viability of their mission and opine on whether the mission is appropriately structured e.g. should it remain a mission within the presbytery, or should it operate as a 501c3 non-profit?
 - a. **PUM task force:** Presbytery, you've spoken. The presbytery continues to support PUM as its mission. There is now a strong and supportive steering committee (SC). The SC says NO to 501c3 status.
 - b. **SSAPF task force:** Again, you've spoken. Our brothers and sisters from the South Sudan, many of whom are refugees, are a fellowship. *That fellowship is a mission of our Presbytery.* That mission is “us” — you and me. We have voted to support them financially up to \$15k/year. The specific amount annually will be vetted each budget cycle. So, we will be good stewards of the presbytery's money. The annual distribution, if any, is not automatic, but is authorized upon a showing of need. The SSAPF budget is sparse: just enough to keep the lights on — and \$11k allocated for a part time CRE, Pastor William Tut. I encourage you to continue supporting this mission of the presbytery with your personal volunteer hours and money.
2. **Cyclical SD:** Our church planting, missional enterprise — Cyclical SD — is the fruition of all the time and energy spent last year (2016 and some of 2017) by a task force of the Executive Committee, whose was tasked with discerning a vision and way forward for our Presbytery. One year ago today this Presbytery reviewed, approved, and funded Cyclical SD.
 - a. Daniel So is our first Director of Cyclical SD.
 - b. Christ — in YOU — is the spiritual force behind this new missional initiative. Continue to pray for those discerning whether they are called to plant; pray for those called to plant; pray for churches that help underwrite, pray and walk alongside these church-planters.

- c. The Executive Committee task force continues to be involved. Its job is not yet done. Next in order is the creation of a steering committee to come along Daniel and Cyclical SD.
 - d. This IS EXCITING time for us! But WHY should this be so foreign?!
3. **Transitions:** There have been many transitions in ministry this year. We welcomed some new pastors: Pastor Mike Killeen at 1st Pres Oceanside; pastor Bryan Stamper at Rancho Bernardo Pres; and pastor Eileen Moran, the new AP at Christ - La Costa. There are several interim pastors serving our churches: pastor Mike Wallman at Grace Pres in Vista; pastor Gary Ziccardi at Faith Pres; pastor Jeff McCrory at Westminster Pres - Escondido; pastor Ray Sparling at SE Community; pastor Gregory Horn at Northmin Pres; pastor Chris Lenocker, honorably retired and now serving as Parish Associate at PLCPC; pastor Deb Mitchell is leaving Westminster - SD and moving to Indiana after 12/24; pastor Neal Nybo left RBCPC and is interim head of staff at San Clemente Pres.

Other transitions include Pastor Tom Straeter, who left to serve an ECO denomination church in Camarillo, CA. Linda Therien is retiring as Stated Clerk and Bob Davis will serve half time to finish the last year of the Stated Clerk's three-year term.

Deaths: *Herb Christ*, former Stated Clerk; *Joyce Sparling*, Ray's wife. Those who have had loved ones die — our sincere condolences to you and extended family. We received news today that pastor Chris Kohlbry's mother just died.

4. POSITIVE THINGS I'VE SEEN AROUND THE PRESBYTERY:

- a. **Time spent with many of you** — My 1on1 time with you is always positive — you're a positive light in my life and I value my time with you, whether it's in person or on the phone. I'm impressed with your willingness to serve. You report good things going on in your church. *The highlight of my job is being with you — working alongside you in the mission of our Lord Jesus.*
- b. Another highlight — the **STREET CHOIR** who performed at First Pres SD. It brought me to tears. Unsheltered people — ministering to us — and led by Ron Bolles, worship director at LJPC. This was his vision, and he's put together an awesome ministry.
- c. I've had the privilege of preaching twice at the Saturday late afternoon **Jazz Service at 1st Pres SD**. I like what it stands for.
 - 1. It lifts up Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior. That should be our emphasis — every day and in every way.
 - 2. And secondly, it strongly communicates that **everyone** is welcome at the table. *The unsheltered folks worship right alongside those living in Mission Hills. "There is neither Jew nor Greek — rich nor poor."*
- d. **CTC: Continuing the Conversation.** CTC was spawned out of PLCPC and Pastor Karla Shaw's vision to engage in this justice issue. It is now led by Dr. Carla Stayboldt and other Christian community leaders. CTC is addressing the very real

issue of race and racism in its many forms — white privilege, white supremacy, institutional racism, etc. Recently, my wife and I attended CTC's 2nd conference at PLCPC, where approximately 100 people attended. Pastors — please attend the next one. Elders — you, too. ***It's part of our call to be agents of reconciliation.***

- e. Kudos to the volunteers at **PUM, and SSAPF**.
- f. Christ — La Costa: I applaud their interfaith dialogue with the Jewish and Muslim communities in your area.
- g. Christ United — I love the way they intentionally **open their church doors during choir rehearsals, so that their beautiful music is heard by all passersby**. They're located in the gentrifying area of South Park — full of young, upwardly mobile adults and young families.
- h. **Habitat4Humanity**: There was a grass roots movement among our churches — approximately 7 churches came together with Habitat4Humanity to engage in building projects, throughout our County. The momentum has been building throughout 2017, and it culminated in a countywide build in November. One church, the Village Community Presbyterian Church in Rancho Santa Fe, had about 60 people turn out on their campus, and they built several playhouses to give away to children.
- i. **Generosity**: BPF had the idea for the Presbytery to donate \$15,000 to 3 presbyteries in the synod of Puerto Rico, and recommenced same to the Executive Committee. That Committee acted on the recommendation with a unanimous YES vote. I will wire transfer the funds within the next few days. I will be in touch with the EPs in Puerto Rico tomorrow and tell them about your financial support and your prayers.
- j. I'd like to thank all of you commissioners to our Presbytery. You volunteer to serve Jesus Christ's church by serving this Presbytery. **THANK YOU**. And you pastors, thank you for being faithful to your call.

CLOSING

Two matters I want to acknowledge in closing:

- 1. First is Linda Therien's contribution of love and service to the PCUSA and especially this Presbytery. She quietly sits at her station every Presbytery meeting.
 - a. These meetings flow smoothly because Linda starts working on each meeting weeks in advance and irons out most wrinkles before we meet.
 - b. More importantly, many of you know the individualized care she has given you — whether it's good counsel on the Book of Order, or going to bat for you to receive benefits

from the Board of Pensions. **Linda — you’ve been there for us for the past many years. We appreciate you and will miss you.**

2. And second — AND MOST IMPORTANTLY — but for the gracious love and compassion and faithfulness of our God, not one of us would be here. We are here because our God loves us. LORD GOD, WE ARE THANKFUL. I encourage each of you — LEADERS — continue to go deeper in your walk with God. “ALL LEADERS ARE GOOD FOLLOWERS” — AS WE FOLLOW CHRIST, OTHERS WILL FOLLOW,” into deeper relationship with our Lord. I’ve heard that one of A.W. Tozer’s favorite verses from the Psalms is Ps. 42:1: “As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.” Let our desire for a richer and deeper relationship with God lead us into the very life-giving depths of that divine relationship. God desires it of us — because God created and loves us. Let me finish with a verse from Johann Scheffler, which Tozer quoted in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, that reflects God’s heart for relationship with each one of us:

Fountain of good, all blessing flows
From Thee; no want Thy fullness knows;
What but Thyself canst Thou desire?
Yet, self-sufficient as Thou art,
Thou doest desire my worthless heart.
This, only this, dost Thou require.”

* * * * *

WHAT’S HOT

The Story of One of Our Homeless Neighbors

Since 1983, the Ladle Fellowship ministry of First Presbyterian Church has been serving the homeless community in downtown San Diego. During those 34 years, we've seen thousands of people come through our doors, each with a unique story to tell. This film tells one of those stories.

When Tony ends up homeless after losing his job as a waiter in San Diego, he is faced with the daily struggles of life on the streets. His search for housing begins, but then turns into a quest for solutions to homelessness, not just for himself, but for thousands of people living on the streets across the county. The investigation takes him to the top levels of government locally, but also to regions across the country where progress is being made.

“Tony’s epic bravery and eloquence, while honest and vulnerable, is what will put a face to change. I will never view homelessness the same way again.”

Join us on Tuesday, November 28th at 6pm in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church to experience this important and timely film, and to consider with us - and with Tony - some real solutions to homelessness.

The movie is free, but please [Register Online](#)

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. **Urban Life Coffee Shop:** *Urban Life* is a mission vision out of La Jolla Pres. It is now led by CRE Sarah Carter. It has a couple working “farms,” a chartered church, and NOW It owns and operates a coffee house in the relatively new YMCA at 4300 El Cajon Blvd. I had the joy of meeting with Sarah over a cup of really good “joe” to talk business. I hope you get the opportunity when in that neighborhood to drop in, drink a cup, grab a bite, and say “Hello!” *UL* is great mission that is reaching deep into their neighborhoods to touch the lives of our youth. Here’s a picture to encourage your visits.



2. **Cyclical SD:** Earlier this month, pastor/director Daniel So convened the first *Cyclical SD* lunch gathering of discerners/planters. Seven gathered over a nice lunch and coffees to share stories of life, faith, and church planting. It was great to experience the vision and mission of our presbytery in its “incarnational” form. It’s a reality, and Daniel is leading us forward.



Left to right: Brent Barclay, starting a house church in N. County; CRE Sarah Carter, UrbanLife; Rev. Daniel So, Anchor City and Cyclical SD; Rev. Jeya So, Anchor City; Jeremiah Lester, Ebenezer Church; Noel Musicha, Ebenezer Church.

3. **POAMN:** The presbytery signed up for a one-year membership with Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN). If you’re interested in learning more about this ministry, may I suggest you visit the website, learn about the ministry, and avail yourself of the benefits. Or, call the presbytery office and we’ll connect you with a person within our presbytery involved with POAMN.
4. **West Coast Presbyterian Pastors’ Conference 2017:** The 2018 WCPPC is April 9-13. Register early for an “Early Bird Discount.” **Save \$40 if you register on or before 11/30/17.** That’s real soon! Visit the website for more information. Briefly: Two professors will headline the speaking: Adam Neder, Bruner-Welch Chair of Theology — Whitworth; and Haley Gorenson, Assistant Professor of Religion — Whitworth. Meet good friends, eat good food, hear good speakers, live a good life — for the Lord. Follow in His footsteps. Emmanuel.

5. **NEED — 80+ folding chairs** in good condition. Our South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship need about 80 folding chairs for their sanctuary. If you have some chairs you can spare, please call Jennifer at the presbytery office, 619.224.2490. Thanks a million.
6. **Dismissal Policy:** The presbytery's task force to rewrite the GDP, dismissal policy, posted their draft policy on the presbytery website for your review. It was posted prior to the November presbytery meeting. There will be a pre-presbytery meeting just preceding the February 2018 presbytery meeting where at the task force will receive comments and field questions. This will be in preparation for debate and vote on the floor of our May 2018 presbytery meeting. Please, if you haven't already, read the draft policy and bring your comments, concerns, and questions with you to the pre-presbytery meeting this February.
7. **Sexual Harassment Reporting Policy:** The COM has authorized a task force to review and revise/redraft the presbytery's current policy on the reporting/prevention of sexual harassment. We will keep you updated on the status.
8. **CRE Curriculum/process:** I felt there was a need to take another look at our curriculum and process for training, vetting, and commissioning certified ruling elders in view of the foreseeable need to staff our new worshipping communities (Cyclical SD) with theologically and biblically trained leadership. So I asked COM to authorize a task force for this purpose. They did, and we have one — comprised of Elder Frances Lin, chair; Rev. Michael Mudgett; Rev. Neal Presa, PhD; and CRE Sarah Carter.

One final word. I want to thank all of you for being faithful with regard to per capita payments, especially that portion that funds the operations and missions of the Presbytery of San Diego. Many thanks to all the churches that already have paid in full or pay ratably over time. May I encourage all others to reconsider paying per capita, and move as the Spirit leads.

Again, may you all continue to be thankful for all the blessings the good Lord bestows upon us — and in particular, the celebration of the incarnation of the Word of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Your fellow sojourner in the faith,

Michael Mudgett