



PRESBYTERY OF SAN DIEGO  
SPIRITUAL. MISSIONAL. RELATIONAL.

# REFLECTIONS

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**Happy Thanksgiving!** I am so grateful for all of you. Our common faith in our Lord Jesus Christ gives us a special bond. And for that (among so many other things) I am grateful.

I've recently viewed on YouTube reflections on gratitude by a contemplative Catholic monk, Brother David Steindl-Rast, PhD. It was excellent. It moved me to purchase a "gratitude journal" – journaling gratitude is my new spiritual practice.

November is a month for which we give thanks. We express gratitude for our Veterans and their sacrifices (11/11), our love for family and country and our many blessings (11/28), and looking ahead – to the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (12/25).

For me, November is a time of reflection and contemplation. So, I think about gratitude and what it means.

Here's a thought from Brother David that I find helpful. Gratitude's context is anytime I receive grace. That grace has two components. First, whatever that grace might be (e.g. a breath of life, a smile), it is freely and unconditionally given to me. And second, it has value to me. Gratitude is the feeling I experience when I receive something that is free and valuable. The grace received can be love, compassion, forgiveness, the breath of life, or a moment in time. For example, each breath (a grace) I take is a free and priceless gift from God.



In every expression of grace, an **opportunity** exists without regard to circumstances. I can be suffering in unjust confinement, experiencing a severe loss of a loved one, etc. yet that **moment in time** is nevertheless a grace. And in that moment, there is an opportunity. I can choose to redeem that moment for the greater good, for the Kingdom of God. I can love notwithstanding unjust circumstances. I can love in the midst of loss. I can forgive when I've been wronged. I am not defined by circumstances. I am formed by grace, which is a gift from God.

So let me ask you, what **opportunities** will you find around the grace filled moments at Thanksgiving when you gather with friend and family and maybe even strangers? And what will you do with those opportunities?

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you, from the depths of my heart. Let us continue to gather together and encourage one another to love and good works.

Blessings,

Michael Mudgett  
Executive Presbyter  
Presbytery of San Diego



#### **BOTH RETIRED AND ACTIVE:**

Headquarters (PCUSA) is asking all pastors to complete a substantial survey. So I'm including a piece they provided and a link to the survey for you to complete. I completed the survey. It's simple. It takes a fair amount of time. Here's what they sent me, so I pass it on to you. Michael Mudgett

"Dear Colleague:

Presbyterians frequently want to know more about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers of the Word and Sacrament who help lead our denomination. The Minister Survey 2019 is an ambitious effort to learn more about these important church leaders: all PC(USA) ministers (retired and not retired) are being asked to participate.

If you are a minister, please click below and respond to the survey.

[Click here to start the survey.](#)

If you are **not** a PC(USA) minister, please share the link below with anyone you know who is a PC(USA) minister.

[Minister Survey 2019 link to share](#)

This survey may take up to 45 minutes to complete. There is information within the survey about how to set

the survey up so that you can stop and come back to where you left off.

Responses to the survey are anonymous in that no Research Services staff can tell who has responded or how you have responded.

If you have already completed the Minister Survey 2019, please do **not** respond to the survey a second time.

Questions? Contact Research Services at [research@pcusa.org](mailto:research@pcusa.org) or (800) 728-7228, ext. 5077.

Summaries of the responses by all ministers will be shared. This information will help Presbyterians gain a better understanding of the life and work of ministers like you and help PC(USA) agencies better serve your needs.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Blessings as your fall ministries move forward.

In Christ,

Susan Barnett, PhD  
Coordinator, Research Services

Perry Chang, PhD  
Research Analyst"

## WHAT'S **NEWSWORTHY** IN THE PRESBYTERY

### GRAHAM MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH THRIFT COTTAGE

The Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church (GMPC) in Coronado, California has been operating since the 1950s, when the idea of reselling good-quality used household items and apparel became a popular trend. Operating out of a relocated former World War II WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) barracks, this thriving resale shop has benefitted the church and its community for over 60 years.

Named the Thrift Cottage (with a nod to its church Scottish ancestry), it is a bargain-hunter's paradise of quality apparel for everyone, accessories, household items, religious and other literature, toys, etc. – from designer purses to everyday treasures.



Inventory changes daily – even hourly – as community members bring their new and gently used donations. Proceeds go toward the GMPC ministries and missions, such as high school graduates and youth church camp scholarships, children's church education program (AWANA), missionary requests, and donations of goods to Presbyterian Urban Ministries shop and military and disabled veterans. This year alone, five high school seniors and seven returning college freshmen received education scholarships, six oversize suitcases of goods accompanied the missionary that the GMPC supports in the Light and Life Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Africa, and proceeds supported construction of a new "Coffee Connection" outdoor area for church attendees to enjoy coffee, doughnuts, and fellowship together between Sunday services.



The cottage is staffed by church and community volunteers. It is managed by the Thrift Cottage Committee of five volunteers who meet monthly to make operational and financial decisions. It's a great way to recycle, resell, and support the church missions. They welcome shoppers and donors Tuesdays – Fridays (10-4) and Saturdays (10-1) to contribute in this way to the church and to enjoy the fun experience in a unique, historic property.

## LOOKING AHEAD

### **The Middle East - A Reflection** *Rev. Dr. Jack Baca*

First Presbyterian  
Church, San Diego  
West Room  
320 Date St. 92101

Tuesday, November 19, 2019  
3 - 3:45pm. Immediately preceding  
the Presbytery Meeting.

**Join us as Dr. Baca tells  
stories, shares photos,  
and teaches about how  
Jesus is working through  
us to continue His  
mission in the very  
places where it all began.**

Visit [www.presbytery.org/special-events](http://www.presbytery.org/special-events) for more details.





January 31-February 1, 2020  
First Presbyterian Church of  
Santa Barbara is hosting their  
18th annual **Santa Barbara  
Mission Conference.**

It will feature Fr. Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries and Dr. Kara Powell of Fuller Youth Institute as keynote speakers with a theme of Radical Kinship. In addition to the keynote addresses there will be a variety of breakout sessions to choose from. See the lineup of sessions, learn more about the speakers, and register at

<https://www.sbmissionconference.org/>.

Early bird registration rates are currently in effect.



## REAR VIEW MIRROR

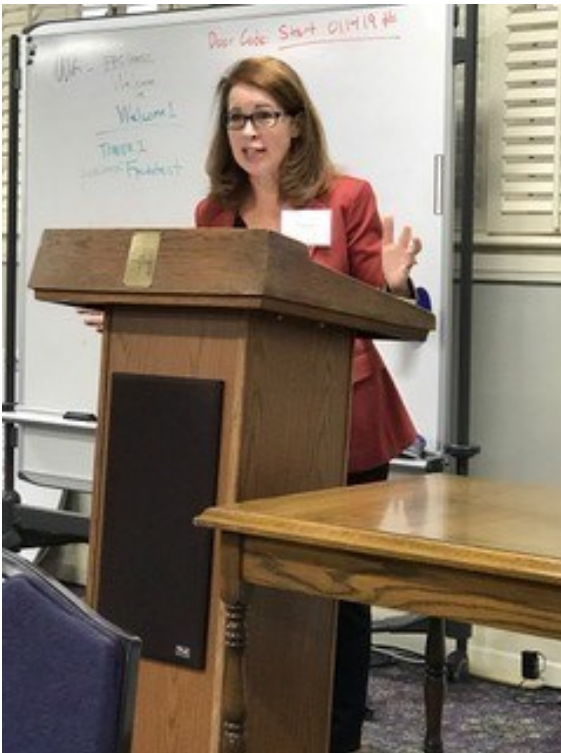
### The Fellowship Gathering

The Fellowship Community hosted a Pastors' Gathering on October 14-16 and a Theology Conference from October 16-18, 2020. It was well attended, vibrant, imparted great information, and fostered friendship and comradery among sisters and brothers of the Faith.

I urge every person who attended to invite at least two others from our presbytery (and other presbyteries) to attend next fall's conference. It's a priceless treasure right in our own backyard.

At the pastors' gathering, Professor Daryl Guder, PhD, challenged us by presenting on topics such as "Missional Challenges of the End of Christendom: Bane or Opportunity?" and "How has the end of Christendom shaped your ministry pilgrimage thus far?" He also interviewed a younger pastor, head of staff at Covenant Pres in Austin, TX, to get a younger perspective on these issues.





Rev. Dr. Tracey Davenport, interim pastor at Chula Vista Pres, gave two interesting presentations entitled “Spiritual Warfare for Pastors.” The presence of evil, evil forces, and Satan, are real. My conclusion: let’s continue to be vigilant in our prayers for one another to stand firm against the wiles of the devil – to put on the full-suit of spiritual armor, daily!



On Wednesday, October 16, our lunch was a segue into the theology conference. Rev. Jerry Andrews, PhD, started us off with a presentation about the grace of theological friends. There, he lifted up Augustine as an exemplar of a spiritual person encouraged, strengthened, and refined by the company of others in the faith. See Burgess, Andrews, Small, *A Pastoral Rule for Today: Reviving an Ancient Practice* (IVP 2019)



Professor Adam Nedeer, PhD, from Whitworth College, presented multiple times over the next two days on “Theology as a Way of Life: On Teaching and Learning the Christian Faith.” Ad Rev. Quinn Fox, PhD (pictured to the left), presented on “Teaching the Faith Using Popular Culture;” and Rev. Geordie Zeigler, PhD, presented on A Practical Trinitarian Theology of Participation.”



Every evening, Lois and Jerry Andrews hosted everyone at their home for drinks, snacks, and good conversation. On Monday, the entire group enjoyed a hosted dinner at a restaurant in Little Italy. The week was hosted by Jerry, Mike McClenahan (pictured), Paul Cunningham, and Jack Baca. Kudos, gentlemen for your efforts.

I hope to see you at next year's Fellowship Community. What a great week!

## OF INTEREST

ALERT! Here are some excellent discipleship resources provided by Whitworth University.

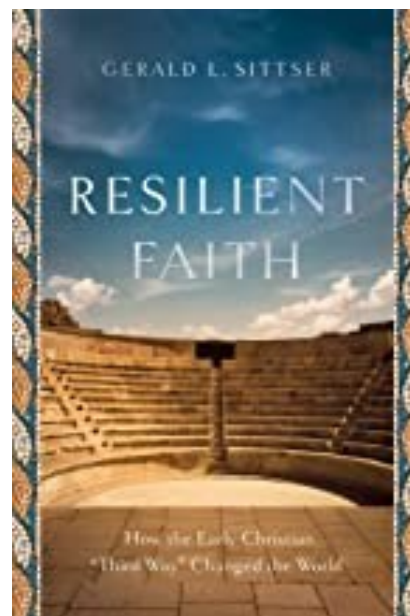
Our good friend Rev. Terry McGonigle, PhD, brought them to our attention while attending our recently held Fellowship Gathering. The materials focus on helping people to build a stronger foundation for their Christian faith (or, for those curious to learn about the faith of Christ followers!)

The program is called, ***A New Catechumenate***. Here's how Whitworth describes the reason for developing this material. "We believe that Christianity in America is imperiled, at least in part because so many Christians are Christians in name only. Believers need a stronger foundation on which to build their spiritual lives and practice of discipleship. In response to these challenges, the Office of Church Engagement has developed a new track in the Academy of Christian Discipleship called "A New Catechumenate." Modeled after the catechumenate of the early church, this new catechumenate serves as an on-ramp to the Christian faith. ..."

You can discover more about ***A New Catechumenate*** at [www.whitworth.edu](http://www.whitworth.edu), or more specifically, <https://www.whitworth.edu/catechumenate/> The cost is \$50 per person. I hope you will avail yourself/selves of this excellent material.



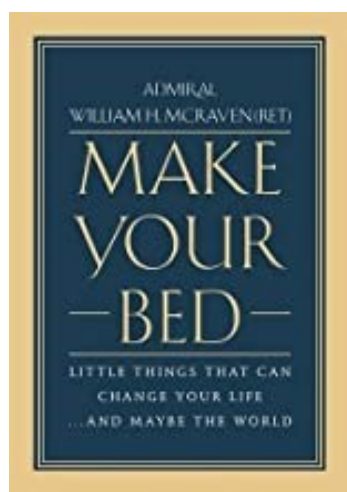
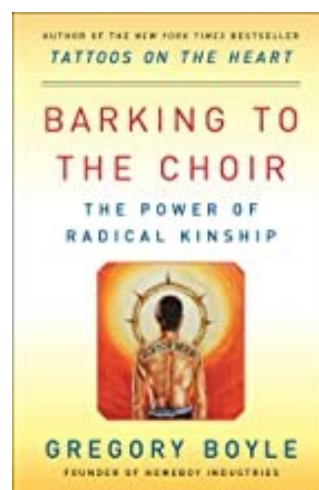
Also, Gerald Sittser, PhD, the Whitworth professor instrumental in developing *A New Catechumenate*, recently published his book, *Resilient Faith*. **Full disclosure:** I haven't read this book but plan to, and I know that Jerry has a reputation for excellent scholarship. Discount Link for *Resilient Faith* (1-19 copies receive a 40% discount, 20+ copies receive a 50% discount): <https://direct2church.com/products/resilient-faith-how-the-early-christian-third-way-changed-the-world-9781587434082> I have no qualms of promoting materials that help inculcate the faith and aid in solid Christian spiritual formation. Spiritual leaders are readers!



Speaking of books...

#### MUDGETT'S BOOK RECOMMENDS:

Just finished reading a couple books I can wholeheartedly recommend. First, Fr. Gregory Boyle's *Barking to the Choir* (Simon & Schuster, 2018), a great read about his outreach to LA gang members and the power of unconditional love, compassion, and kinship. His first book, *Tatoos On The Heart*, is also a great read addressing similar themes. This padre knows how to do ministry!



If you want to take a break from reading theology, I recommend two strong books on leadership by Admiral McRaven's (USN ret'd):

- (1) *Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life ... and Maybe the World* (Grand Central Pub, 2017) and
- (2) *Sea Stories; My Life in Special Operations* (Grand Central Pub, 2019). They identify leadership and character traits that undergird successful operations. Enjoy.

