

PCBA Notes

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Housing for the Homeless in Berkeley to Become a Reality

Berkeley Food and Housing Project Secures Go-ahead

A "Dream" of Nearly Two Decades

Permanent housing for the homeless, a replacement for a men's shelter, a permanent home for the meal program of Berkeley Food and Housing Project, and offices for its support services has received a "go ahead" from the City of Berkeley after 14 years of planning, study, and fund-raising under the Project's Executive Director, Terrie Light.

Notable about BFHP's mission is support services after people move into housing. These include training in basic life skills, transportation to appointments, resources for food, education, etc. The Pacific Coast Baptist Association has promoted support of BFHP. Its history is traced to volunteers in Berkeley's University Lutheran Chapel in 1970, drawing on support from churches of the south campus area. In the summer of that year, prior to BFHP's organization, these churches participated with the First Baptist Church in a nightly feeding program in its basement which included a free coffee house and runaway center. In the 1980's, the American Baptist Board of National Ministries provided a substantial grant to BFHP.

"JUSTICE JAM" - UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS

May 15 - 6:30-8:00 PM

MENTAL ILLNESS, a reality which affects most families in one way or another, will be the focus of the May 15 Justice Jam at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. The Jam will address the myths, truths, and challenges of our medical systems; the challenge of navigating care; and how one can advocate for loved ones.

Presenters will include Jo Robinson, Former Director of Mental Health Services, San Francisco; Kate Jones, Director of Adult and Older Adult Care, Alameda County Behavioral Health Services Agency; and Sanmit Singh, Child/Adolescent Psychiatry, Kaiser Permanente.

The quarterly Justice Jams, organized by Lakeshore Church, aim at creating a community "hub" as a place where organizations and individuals in the community can come together to address issues of justice and learn how they can respond to them.

The Soul of America

*A Thank You Letter to
Presidential Historian Jon Meacham
By the Editor, Dale Edmondson*

Dear Mr. Meacham,

Thank you for reminding us that our nation has a soul. Writing from your understanding as an historian, you're helping us probe what President Lincoln meant by "the better angels of our nature." You've helped me see that our nation is a living organism, carrying with it the experiences and challenges of the past, moving now and again through periods of health and optimism as well as times of impairment.

You point to the role of the President in shaping our self-understanding, how what he/she says and does contributes to our collective assumptions of the way we are to act and think about one another and others and about our aspirations and our future. These can be times of openness and generosity and optimism or of fear, cynicism, and animosity. You point to numerous examples in our history when it has been vital.

If your main point were only that this influence from "above" has a determinative effect on our lives, it could cause me to feel discounted as an individual. Few of our are powerful, world-shaping people with the power of great wealth and influence. But I find a secondary theme in what you write that empowers me—i.e., that much of what a president ultimately "pronounces" reflects what a people holds and celebrates and wrestles with. Indeed, that history isn't made from above, but from below.

"We the (ordinary, common) people" then are not insignificant. Little at a time, almost unnoticed, we in our schools and churches and clubs engage in shaping values that will eventually define the core of our national life. This formation takes place gradually, cumulatively, until almost at once we note there is a changed attitude making possible a national call for civil rights, a growing concern for the "general welfare" of our people, a growing concern for the health of our planet, even a rapid change in attitudes toward people of the LGBT community

I'm inclined to accept the notion, that in this, we're "making history." That we're nurturing those better angels. At the same time, I must acknowledge the deleterious effect on our soul by pockets of nationalism, racial animus, and fear of the other. This leads me to ask whether those of us committed to the life and work of the church—even in its time of "diminishing influence"—take heart from the power that comes from the church's regular and faithful celebration of the sacredness of persons, the value of inclusion, and the championing of justice?

Brief Notes

Crosswalk Community Church of Napa (First Baptist Church of Napa) is being welcomed as a new congregation in the Evergreen Baptist Association. The pastor of the Napa congregation is Pete Shaw.

A Jimmy Carter Sunday School Class and Civil Rights Tour with Rep. Barbra Lee has been announced by American Baptist Seminary of the West in Atlanta, June 7-13. Described as “a life-changing opportunity.” Contact Lori D. Spears at lspears@absw.edu or 510.841.1905 x239.

Seminary Commencement at ABSW will be held Saturday, May 18, 2019 at 2:00 pm. The commencement speaker will be Michael McBride, Pastor of The Way Christian Center in Berkeley and Director of Urban Strategies and Live Free Campaign of Faith in Action.

A new water treatment plant has been installed at Redwood Glen Camp after more than four challenging years of transported water and dedicated fund-raising.

American Baptist Biennial Mission Summit will be held, June 21-23, in Virginia Beach. The Summit will introduce a new “Biennial Academy” in which peers in various areas of life will share and learn about topics impacting their lives and that of their congregations. Among the speakers will be Howard Stevenson, nationally recognized clinical psychologist and researcher; Elijah Brown, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. The gathering includes a three-day youth conference for middle and high school ages and special program for younger children.

Rooftop solar panels were dedicated following worship on May 5 at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church. Members of the community were present and spoke of the impact of solar individuals and the health of the planet.

Baptists’ Global Peace Camp dates will be July 15-20 in Columbia.

<https://www.globalbaptistpeace2019.org/>

People

Two respected American Baptist leaders have died: **Paul Nagano**, Asian American theologian, died on April 13 at the age of 98 in Alhambra. Incarcerated in Japanese Relocation Camps during WWII, he, went on the several significant pastorates including that of Interim Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oakland. He is survived by his wife, Florence, of 75 years, his children and grandchildren . . . **J. Bryant Wright** died February 16 in Davis at the age of 95. When serving with the Bay Cities Baptist Union in Christian Education and Camping, he oversaw the purchase and development of Redwood Glen Camp. He also served churches in Menlo Park and San Carlos where he was pastor for 27 years. His wife, Jane, predeceased him. He leaves two sons and their families.

Jacqueline A. Thompson became the Senior Pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church on April 1. Growing up in Oakland, she UC, Berkeley, Howard University Divinity School and Fuller Theological Seminary. Previously the Associate Pastor of Allen Temple, she is the first woman in the church's history to be called as Senior Pastor.

David Robinson, Executive Director of the Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy of Santa Clara County, will retire on August 1. In his announcement letter, he writes, "It has been my life's call to serve as the CIC Director and Chaplain. I have been able to use my God-given gifts and skills with those who are struggling with addictions and mental health problems as well as with suffering from rejection and traumas.."

Nancy Hall, Associate Professor of Ministry & Congregational Music and Director of Contextual Education at American Baptist Seminary, concludes her thirty years on the faculty at the end of the academic year when she will receive emeritus status. Judson Press recently published her *New Manual of Worship*. Nancy is also Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berkeley. A church musician, she is highly respected for her knowledge of hymnody, having served as editor of *The Hymn*, the journal of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada..

Katie Choy-Wong, Senior Pastor for 15 years of the New Life Christian Fellowship in Castro Valley, will be honored on June 8 upon her retirement. Her distinguished ministry has included work with an ecumenical food program for low-income and homeless, Asian Ministries of the Board of National Ministries, Area Minister with American Baptist Churches of the West, Admissions Director at American Baptist Seminary of the West. She has recently completed leadership as President of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast.

Jim Hopkins, Senior Pastor of Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church was honored on March 31 on the 30th anniversary of his pastorate there. He was called to that position from the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles, where he had been an Associate Minister.