

PCBA Notes

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Allison Tanner Leads Endeavors in Public Witness

In her new position as Pastor of Public Witness, Allison Tanner is fostering the outreach of Christians and people in other faith communities to address issues of justice. Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church has shaped her new position so that her ministry is shared, in part with the congregation, and part beyond.

Prominent among her endeavors has been organizing the August 28 online event, "Abolition and Liberation," co-sponsored by PCBA, featuring a conversation with Angela Davis and Jamal Juma' of Palestine, about the connections between the concerns of Black Lives Matter, efforts to re-structure public safety, abolish for-profit prisons, and support Palestinian freedom. A recording of this conversation is available on Lakeshore's Face book page.

Allison has also been working for the release of people held in ICE detention. Through her efforts, Lakeshore opened its congregation to provide release to a young man who endured four years of detention. She has led the faith community in honoring and memorializing those who have died in California prisons and detention centers owing to COVID infection and calling for release for those who are at risk of death.

Another major area of ministry comes in challenging Christian Zionists who are supporting Israel's annexation, occupation and exploitation of Palestine and its people. This work is in response to Palestinian Christian pleas to the international community to stand with them in their struggle for freedom, justice and equality, as per their "Kairos Palestine" letter (*kairospalestine.ps*).

Dr. Tanner is available to speak to congregations about ways to become involved in these justice issues. People may learn more about her ministry by visiting her blog: givingvoicetothestruggle.com.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY! PCBA NOTES

Editorial Collection
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“Living with No End in Sight”

By the Editor, Dale K. Edmondson

When will it end? Our planet has been visited with an affliction that affects all of us. We cover our faces with masks, isolate ourselves from those we love, abstain from communal celebrations, walk about protectively, worship electronically, send our children to virtual classrooms, adjust to unsought solitude, bid farewell to some who must leave before their time. We absent ourselves from much that makes us human. History has known many scourges through which people have persevered, believing the Persian aphorism, "This too will pass." What's unique about our circumstance is that there's no end in sight! Indeed, many epidemiologists say the invading virus may join the pantheon of permanent world diseases. The psalmist cries on our behalf, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget [us] forever?" To live with no end in sight—what will it mean? Three things:

Live Grounded - Paul Tillich describes God as "the ground of being." That connects with me! When the familiar has gone, when I can't find a point of reference, when I am disconnected from life—when this describes me, I feel the need to be grounded. I want to be in touch with what is reliable and stable. This "ground" has been spoken of in different ways: an anchor that holds (the hymn writer), a North Star (the poet), being rooted (the writer to the Ephesians), seeking a rock to build on (Jesus in his great sermon). How can we find this orienting reality? As important as is good theology and the knowledge of religious history and actions undertaken for a just society, no more human and or radical action exists than prayer. It is not a practice reserved just for the contemplatives. Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the great Baptist advocates for justice and one who had profound influence on Martin Luther King, Jr., speaks pointedly here. In his poem "The Little Gate to God," Rauschenbusch has left us this counsel: "In the castle of my soul is a little garden gate, / Whereat, when I enter, I am in the presence of God."

Live "In-between" - That's where we may be just now—"in-between." Between what has been and what is to come. It's a period of disorientation and uncertainty. When Fascism was gaining controlling influence in Germany, a publication was born which took as its title "Between the Times." It became the main theological voice against Nazi ideology. One of the journal's founders said at its start, "It is the destiny of our generation to stand between the times." Isn't this our situation? We must never let ourselves to be captive to what has been or fearful of what the future may bring. We must live "in-between." What will

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BRIEF NOTES

Oakland Vigil - Many Oakland residents gathered for a vigil at Mandana Park Plaza across from Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church in a vigil called by Lakeshore's Pastor, Jim Hopkins following the fatal shooting there of a 55-year old man. Jim spoke there of the city's Ceasefire program in which the church participates.

Ministers Meeting Weekly - Each Thursday morning, American Baptist ministers from Northern California and some from out of state "gather" online. They report it is helpful during a period of unusual challenge to update and support one another and share experiences about how they and their congregations are responding to the special needs arising during this time.

Grace Baptist Church Offers Shelter in Challenging Times

Grace Baptist Church of San Jose is responding to the critical need of people without homes by providing nightly shelter for 44 guests and a daytime drop-in center. Showers and a bag lunch are also provided. The need has become more critical since the start of the pandemic, especially as public restrooms and water fountains have been closed as well as libraries and community centers. David Robinson is Interim Pastor and Phil Mastrocola the director of the shelter.

"ABSW" is now "BST" - The American Baptist Seminary of the West has a new name, "Berkeley School of Theology." There is no change in the school's program.

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that mean for us? When St. Francis was asked a question like this, he's reported to have said, "I would tend my garden." Might he have meant he would just "keep on" doing what is right and good?

Live Day-by-Day - *It's not new, the intention to "live one day at a time." Two millennia ago, Horace counseled, "Carpe diem," seize the day! People given to planning ahead and charting a life roadmap may challenge this philosophy. But aren't there times when we can do no other? When the future is not clear and there's no end in sight? The writers of the musical, Godspell, were so grasped by a prayer of Saint Richard of Chichester that they made it the theme of their show.*

*"Day by day,
Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly,
Day by day."*

Could we do better than to make it our theme too?

People

Nancy Hall, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berkeley observed the 40th anniversary of her ordination in June. Ordained at the Bancroft Avenue Baptist Church, she was first called to the ministry of music at First Baptist in Berkeley and, in later years, as the church's Senior Pastor. Nancy has also served as Associate Professor of Ministry & Congregational Music and Director of Contextual Education at ABSW (now, Berkeley School of Theology). Music and worship have played an important role in her ministry, not only in her congregation and seminary teaching, but also in publishing *The New Manual of Worship* and, with the Hymn Society of North America, as editor of the Society's journal. Reflecting on her years of service, she says, "These forty years of ordained ministry have brought many challenges. There has been amazing joy and also deep sadness. I have grown and changed. I am grateful to God for so many people, so many opportunities, and so much support."

Willis Shotwell, whose death on April 24 was reported in the summer issue of *PCBA NOTES*, was remembered in a special observance in Sunday worship on August 23 at Shell Ridge Community Church celebrating what would have been his 100th birthday.

PCBA NOTES - 10TH ANNIVERSARY Editorial Collection

For ten years, PCBA NOTES has kept American Baptist congregations in Northern California informed about people, events, and opportunities in local churches and in denominational ministries.

Editorials have been a regular part of the publication, addressing topics such as • being spiritual but not religious • divisions made clear by the pandemic • the martyrs of Hopevale • real and counterfeit hope • missing scripture in worship • books for Philippine seminarians • being blessed by seafarers • upholding Islamic brothers and sisters • lessons from Normandy • letters to Prophet Amos, Beethoven, Millennials, and the head of the EPA.

A tenth anniversary collection of the editorials is being compiled and will be available both online and in print. To access it online, go to *PCBA.org*, clicking "Editorial Collection," and for a printed copy, email your request, including your postal address, to editor@pcba.org.

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