All Things New

This being the first new edition of the revised *Messenger* and my first column of the year, I thought it wise to reflect on the concept of *newness*. Every new year brings hope that the year will unveil some wonderful surprises; a cure for cancer or AIDS, healing for the ozone layer, an end to starvation and hunger, a renewable energy source that doesn’t pollute, an anti-fat pill that actually works!

But there is another type of newness. It involves not something original - that never has been before - but something *restored*. Something that is old and worn out that is repaired and refurbished and made new in that way. I hope that the new year brings us many good things that we have somehow lost over the years that will be restored to us as a people.

Things like a renewal of civility and decency, a new tolerance of diversity, a renewed commitment to spirituality, a revived sense of compassion for the poor.

One of the great promises of scripture is the promise of renewal and restoration. In Revelation 21:5, God says “Behold I make all things new.” Whenever I preach on that passage, I recall a wonderful quote from Tom Howard’s book, *Christ the Tiger*. In it, he talks about Jesus’ promise to restore us in the future. I leave it with you to ponder as you enter this new year.

“I announce to you what is guessed at in all the phenomena of your world. You see the kernel of wheat shrivel and break open and die, but you expect a crop. I tell you of the

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Building Relationships

Marzolf celebrated for 20-year Mexico mission

■ BY MICHAEL BARBER

By many standards, Piedmont Community Church member and volunteer Wayne Marzolf, 65, could be considered a renaissance man. His interests vary from general contracting to wine making. However, his greatest passion may be one that cannot be measured by ruler or pour; Wayne makes a difference in young lives.

It’s likely he relates to young people in a unique way due to his own faith journey as a teen. Having been raised in a split family with a Polish mother - who was a devout Catholic - and a father who favored the theology of the United Methodist Church, Wayne found himself conflicted.

“I do this because I love it. I don’t do it for recognition. I’m a worker bee.”

-Wayne Marzolf

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Wayne Marzolf estimates the Mexico housebuilding mission has provided nearly 5,000 Piedmont high school students with a service opportunity. He first joined the mission in 1998 and will make trip number 20 this April.

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“As I was being confirmed in the Catholic Church, the nuns suggested Catholics were better than everyone else because we could confess our sins,” Wayne said. “My dad was a good guy, so that didn’t sit well with me. I stopped going to church.”

In 1987, Wayne moved to Piedmont, California from western New York. Though he can’t remember how he found his way to Piedmont Church, Wayne vividly recalls meeting with former youth leader Rob Jacobus years later in 1994.

“Rob asked me to assist in building the youth program,” Wayne said. “I was kinda shy back then, but agreed. We played a lot of basketball and volleyball. I liked working with the kids. That was the draw.”

The following year, the youth group grew from a few to about a dozen. It was then that Wayne met a young man who would have a significant impact on his own life.

“He wore an Army coat that was pulled up around him,” Wayne said. “He was a big guy. He seemed dark and was only known as ‘football player.’ I got to know him. We became pretty close. His dad was an alcoholic and had been kicked out of the house, so he had no male figure in his life.” After years of fostering a relationship with the high school student, which included traveling to Mexico for a new ministry that would eventually become known as the Mexico Mission Trip, the boy graduated and spoke a special service at the church.

“He talked about how much I meant to him, how important our relationship was,” Wayne said. “I sat in the back of the church with tears rolling down my face, crying. It hit me. I had no idea.”

Wayne keeps a photo of the young man, and other members of the group, stashed in a desk drawer. Personal notes cover the back of the image. One significant message stands out from the rest - ‘You’ve helped make me who I am.’

The student graduated Stanford and Columbia Universities and is currently an E.R. doctor in southern California. From this experience, Wayne has helped grow the youth program at Piedmont Community Church, specifically the annual Mexico housebuilding mission. He will travel this April with Rev. Scott Kail, Pastor of Student Ministries, 255 youth and 65 adults to build 18 houses for poor people 15 miles east of Tijuana.

Although he’s known as ‘The Fixer,’ Wayne insists that the students not only build the homes themselves, but do so with respect for the people they serve.

“It’s all about the service they give,” Wayne said. “I sometimes hear them say, ‘It’s good enough.’ I tell them to do their best. They’re not going to say that just because they’re building a house for a poor person in Mexico. I want them to do the best they can do, not slap it together and call it good enough.”

Wayne estimates he has worked with nearly 5,000 students from Piedmont over the past 20 years. Piedmont Church represents the largest group of house builders for San Diego-based Amor Ministries. Amor chooses the build sites with the help of clergy and provides concrete mix, wood and shingles – paid for by the participants.

“When we arrive, we see a pile of building materials and an empty field,” Wayne said.

Where some may see a barren landscape, Wayne finds opportunity to teach and serve.

“There was a young Mexican man working with us, working on his house,” Wayne recalls. “He really wanted to get work as a contractor. He welded a steel pipe to a hammer head and pounded nails like crazy. We gifted him one of everything we had including a saw, level, chalk line and hammer.”

The young man, eager to return the favor, invited Wayne into his home for lunch. But, when Wayne arrived to sample some homemade chicken mole, the young man presented Wayne with a plate of sauce only.

“He came out with a sheepish look on his face and said, ‘no pollo’, Wayne said. “They had run out of chicken.”

The following year, Wayne saw the young man again. He had built an
Gift of Renewal

One of the joys of my ministry at Piedmont Community Church is serving Christmas dinner once a year at the Berkeley Men’s Shelter.

Under church member Barbara Crawford’s faithful leadership, we’ve been doing this for over 20 years. And, in the process, it’s become part of our church’s Christmas ritual.

Parents and grandparents and kids of all ages gather together at the shelter. We serve about 40 guys a lovingly-prepared, delicious meal “with all the trimmings.” We sing carols, share cookies and pass out bags containing essential items - like socks and toiletries.

“I do this because I love it, Wayne said. “I don’t do it for recognition, I’m a worker bee.”

As he approaches his 20-year anniversary with the Mexico mission, Wayne is hopeful the experience provides a lasting impact on the high school students.

“This trip makes the kids think beyond Piedmont,” he said. “We take the kids out of their comfort area. No phones, no iPads. They interact, work hard and live together.

“Maybe that little girl they play with grows up and goes to college,” he said. “All because they helped her a safe and dry place to live. Maybe they’ve made a difference in someone’s life.”

Imani Crab Feed

Imani Community Church, our sister church in Oakland, is raising funds for their A.D.A (Americans with Disabilities Act) project.

Guil Hall is the site for a delicious garlic crab feed. Evening includes a performance by Imani Ya Watume, garlic crab feed. Evening includes a performance by Imani Ya Watume, an African traditional dance group. The annual event is a benefit for the church and their A.D.A (Americans with Disabilities Act) project.

AGM Raises $42k by Dr. Don Ashburn

As we have done for the past 14 years at Piedmont Community Church, last month we had our Alternative Gift Market (AGM).

Due to your generosity, it was a great success raising $42,000 for such organizations as: CityTeam Oakland, First Place for Youth, International Justice Mission and World Vision.

Special thanks go to the Mission Action Team, who sponsor the event, and all the volunteers who make it happen each year, especially Selma Chin, Rick Clark, Jeff McClain, Charlie Wood and Mary Louise Morrison.

Every year, I sit down for a while at each table to visit with the guys and pray for those who want that. But, one year, I noticed a guy standing alone in the corner. I kid you not, he had a long white beard and a Santa hat on his head. So, I went over to talk to him. He called himself “The Captain.” And he said to me, “Pastor, it means so much to me that you all showed up here tonight. Thanks for sharing Christmas with us.”

Then, a little bit later, a Mom told me what her two-year-old daughter thought was going on that night. The little girl said, “it’s a birthday party.” And, so it was. On that night, in that shelter, in a small, but significant way, Jesus was born again – for The Captain, for a 2-year-old girl and for everyone else.

He was born in a place where people without a home are fed and clothed and cared for and loved. And it was the best birthday party I ever attended.

NEW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Springtime of which all springtimes speak. I tell you of the world for which this world groans and toward which it strains. I tell you that beyond the awful borders imposed by time and space and contingency, there lies what you seek. I announce to you life instead of mere existence, freedom instead of frustration, justice instead of compensation. For I announce to you redemption.

“Behold I make all things new: Behold I do what cannot be done. I restore the years that the locusts and worms have eaten. I restore the years which you have drooped away upon your wheel-chair. I restore the symphonies and operas which your deaf ears have never heard, and the snowy masses of your blind eyes have never seen, and the freedom lost to you through plunder, and the identity lost to you because of calumny and the failure of justice; and I restore the good which your own foolish mistake have cheated you of. And I bring you to the Love of which all other loves speak, the Love which is joy and beauty, and which you have sought in a thousand streets and for which you have wept and clawed your pillow.”

May the Lord make all things new in your life in this world and the next.

Heavenly Peace

Five-year-old Liam Greene sleeps as Silent Night is sung by the congregation of Piedmont Community Church during a Christmas Eve candlelight service. Liam’s father, Chris, (left) visited the church with his son as part of their holiday tradition.

New Look, New Features

New ‘Messenger’ newsletter makes its debut

The fabric of church life is carefully woven by people of faith, creating a warm atmosphere of goodness, guidance and community. It’s within this little piece of heaven that stories are made. It’s my privilege to share these stories with you and the wider community.

There’s no denying I love my front row seat to all the impactful ministries at Piedmont Community Church. Some are big and loud, like the Alternative Gift Market, raising $42,000 for people in need. Others are small and quiet, like the Leavies and Fishes team serving holiday meals fit for royalty.

Regardless, it’s all news.

In this issue, you will find the standard fare like Sunday worship information, a parish register and list of upcoming events. You will also find columns, features and photo packages designed to enlighten and inspire.

Hopefully, there’s something of value for everyone.

As we move from a bi-weekly publication printed in-house to a monthly printed in full color (with some images printed B&W intentionally), know that this is your newsletter.

The new Messenger relies as much on your input as it ever did, perhaps more so as we have expanded to 8 pages.

You’ll also be happy to know that our new format, printing and delivery method is less expensive than the old, thanks to our friends at AlphaGraphics in Walnut Creek.

Now that’s good news!

Sunday School

We invitie you to continue traveling through the Bible in one year.

January 7 – Judges: God Sends Deborah to Help Barak, “God gives us wisdom”

January 14 – Judges: God Wins Gideon’s Battle, “God sees the best in us”


January 28 – Samuel: God Shows Samuel Who the King Is, “God helps us see people through his eyes”

Contact Leslie Quantz with questions at leslie@piedmontchurch.org or (510) 547-5700 x109
Kidz Club Dedicated to Friendship, Service and Faith

■ BY LESLIE QUANTZ

Kidz Club is Piedmont Community Church’s group for 4th, 5th and 6th-grade children. It is dedicated to building friendships, helping the wider community by performing service projects and exploring and developing personal faith.

We will be meeting on the following Friday’s in 2018: January 12, February 9, March 16, April 13 and May 18

Student Mission to Africa

■ BY REV. SCOTT KAIL

We are all aware of the life-changing effect our Student Ministries Mexico Missions trips have on those that participate. We will be offering the next step in service missions this summer as we travel to Africa.

The three-week trip in June will focus on serving at orphan feeding centers, a school for the blind, rural hospitals and visiting our sister church, Kafita, in Malawi. More information to come. An informational meeting will be held at the end of January. Contact Rev. Scott Kail at scott@piedmontchurch.org

Bless These Hands

Barbara Crawford, volunteers, feed homeless with heart and soul

Piedmont Community Church member Barbara Crawford has been making meals in her home, then serving guests of the Berkeley Men’s Shelter once each month for 17 years. “Many years back, I suffered depression. God was reaching out to me. Jesus told us to feed the people. It gives me a good feeling to be able to help someone who cannot give back.”

ABOVE: Shelter guest Eddie enjoys his time with volunteers as they serve a Christmas meal Saturday, December 23. “It means that these people care about us. They care about me.”

TOP RIGHT: Dr. Don Ashburn delivers a prayer before the meal.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Volunteers serve a menu that includes beef, soup, salad and dessert.

Photos by Michael Barber
**CALENDAR**

**Saturday, January 6** - Volunteer to Serve Lunch with CityTeam (12 & up), 11 am - 2 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

**Saturday, January 6** - Volunteer to Serve Dinner with CityTeam (14 & up), 5-7 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

**Monday, January 8** - Needles and Hooks - Shared Interest Group, 2 pm, Guild Parlor

**Monday, January 15** - Church Office Closed for Martin Luther King’s Birthday

Needles and Hooks - Shared Interest Group, 7 pm, Clara Barton Room

**Saturday, January 27** - Imani Crab Feed Fundraiser, 12 noon – 9 pm, Guild Hall

Berkeley Men’s Shelter, 7-9 pm, call (510) 547-5700 to volunteer

**Sunday, January 21, 28** - Mexico Rock, 7-9 pm, Youth Room

**RECURRING EVENTS**

**Mondays**
Spiritual Formation Group, 4:30 pm, Guild Parlor

**Tuesdays**
Small Group Bible Study, 7 pm, home of Bob & Judy Wright
Rock Pizza Lunch, 12:45 pm, Youth Room

**Wednesdays**
LiveWire, 2:30- 3:30 pm, Youth Room

**Thursdays**
Women’s Bible Study, 10 am, Guild Parlor

**Saturdays**
Men’s Bible Study, 7:30 am, Founder’s Room

**PARISH REGISTER**

Sharon (Ferrell) Jurgensen, sister of Janine McAuliffe, passed from this life on December 10

Arthur Hicks, father of Joyce Hicks, passed from this life on December 11