

THE **'AMEN'** LADY

From Civil Rights
and Social Justice
Issues to Seminary,
LOIS REED has
championed them all.

STORY ON PAGE 2





The 'Amen' Lady

*Story and Photos
by Michael Barber*

Neatly dressed and invariably holding hands with her husband, David, Lois Reed arrives early for Sunday church.

She makes her way from the sun-drenched courtyard into the sanctuary toward her familiar seat in the pew. She is spiritually fed an ample serving of the Holy Spirit, punctuating each meaningful moment with spontaneous expression.

"Amen!"

While many people at Piedmont Church prefer to remain silent throughout services, Lois is not one of those people. In fact, her outward show of appreciation has given Lois the nickname, 'The Amen Lady.'

"The assumption is made that 'amen' comes from a black church," Lois said. "It does not. It comes from Hebrew meaning 'even so.'"

Lois has spent most of her 86 years

lifting her voice in praise of all good things, and in protest of injustice when necessary. Born in Roanoke, Virginia and raised as a Lutheran, Lois learned early in life that being from a poor, African American family often requires fighting back - and speaking up.

At five years of age, she and her family boarded a train in the middle of the night to escape increased racial tensions in the south. Landing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, many of the challenges remained.

"Growing up in Pittsburgh was difficult," Lois said.

But it was in Pittsburgh that Lois says she came closer to God. So close, in fact, she saw heaven's light. While married to her first husband, Lois suffered a complication in her eighth month of pregnancy. As she lay dying from hemorrhage, Lois says she had an out-of-body experience.

"I heard the anesthesiologist calling my name," Lois said. "I was in a blissful pool of water. It was warm. I was floating in it. I saw the white light. The

closer I got to it, the warmer I felt. I thought, 'if you die, your mom and dad - who are poor - will have to take care of your children. I can't stay.' I was shoved in a way I will never forget. I was cold and I answered the anesthesiologist. He said, 'She's back!' After that, I wasn't afraid of dying. I thought... 'We have souls!'"

Lois didn't mention this experience to anyone, including her family.

Years later, Lois' husband left Pittsburgh for California in search of better opportunities. He urged her to do the same. In spite of a shaky marriage, Lois and her three children boarded a Trailways bus to join him, making the several-day's journey to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district.

Lois found her purpose there, attending San Francisco State in pursuit of higher education. However, her 20-year marriage soon fell apart, forcing her to move and to switch schools, attending the University of California San Francisco (UCSF).

ABOVE: Lois Reed says she is often moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. **RIGHT:** Lois and husband of 18 years, David, joined the church October, 2016.

Lois would be further tested as she found herself actively supporting the desegregation of San Francisco's public schools.

"My children were in those schools," Lois said. "I encountered such awful feelings from teachers. I became very vocal about it. I was angry. I began speaking out."

Her efforts were noticed by her colleagues at UCSF, netting her the 1972 Chancellor's Award for Community Service on graduation day.

"I was so stunned by it," Lois said. "I was speaking to justice. That's what I've continually done with my life."

Unfortunately, Lois was unable to receive the award in person. Her ex-husband threatened to kill her if she attended graduation ceremonies. Senator Dianne Feinstein, then San Francisco County Supervisor, accepted on her behalf.

Lois became a respiratory therapist in the '80s, working for Kaiser and serving Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley, California. During her tenure, she called out unfair hiring practices. The Center was sued by the U.S. government and lost, making front page news in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



She also rejected the Centers' rules for treating AIDS patients in a manner she believed was inhumane, leaving gloves and face masks behind.

"I knew AIDS wasn't an airborne disease," Lois said. "I told the staff that if it were airborne, we'd all be dead. I gave great comfort and accepted gay men. I would talk with them and hold their hands. That's God sending me to strange places where needed."

In her 50's, Lois was called to ministry, leaving the medical field to become the first African American woman to be ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. While studying for her Master's Degree, she was assigned to minister to the women of the West County Detention Center.

"God sent me there, too," Lois said. "They had never seen an African American woman with 'the black' on before. I knew how it felt to be raised poor and black and female."

"It's important that the Church sends out the message that God loves us and Jesus is sent to be there for us and we can trust that," Lois said. "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is gift. It's what it's all about.' It's not only for us, but people in prison and people who are mentally ill. God is there for all of us."

As a clergy person, Lois served Bethlehem Lutheran in Oakland for two years, St. John's Lutheran on 55th Avenue for four years and St. James in San Leandro before filling pulpits all over The Bay Area as an "on call" minister for five years.

Lois remarried 18 years ago after meeting David over coffee. She considers her relationship with him a "gift" and reflects on a life full of blessings and accomplishments in what might be described as a personal sanctuary. The couple faithfully honors "God's day" each Sunday at Piedmont Community Church.

"I'm grateful for this church and for the people that come here," Lois said. "People are welcoming to us. They say, 'We're glad you're here. We're glad that you say 'amen.'"

GOOD NEWS!



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'White Maasai'

Kail, Marzolf

Return From Africa

■ BY MICHAEL BARBER

When one thinks of a mission trip to Africa, the idea of chicken wire, stucco and solar panels may not occur. For Rev. Scott Kail and church member Wayne Marzolf, these items led to changed lives on both sides.

In late July, the duo traveled to Kenya to visit the Maasai tribes at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro.

"We went there to build a cultural arts center, but there were land issues preventing the project," Scott said. Instead, they worked with representatives of Amor Ministries and My Chosen Vessel to make improvements to the tribe's living conditions.

"We didn't want to westernize the village, but we wanted to fix a few things," Scott said.

Scott and Wayne installed metal stoves with exhaust in four of the huts. The tribe experiences high rates of glaucoma, blindness and bronchial issues due to smoke coming from cooking fires. They also taught the tribe how to install solar panels and LED bulbs in more than 40 huts to provide light. Lack of light causes scorpion bites as women sort through wood piles to make fires at night.

For their efforts, Scott and Wayne were bestowed an honor by the tribe's chief who called them 'White Massai.'

"The most difficult thing for me was the good-bye after working and learning so much about these wonderful, beautiful people," Wayne said. "We were embedded with them for more than 4 days, working alongside, teaching and learning, not just about them, but who we are and how we can interact with this ancient culture."

Scott is currently reviewing options for including a Maasai visit during the next student mission trip to Africa in 2019.



(From left) Wayne Marzolf, Jon Wilson of Amor Ministries and Rev. Scott Kail joined a dozen others to provide improved living conditions for members of the Maasai tribe in southwestern Kenya.



Scott instructs members of the tribe on solar panel installation.



Tribal members proudly display their new source of light.

October Adult Education Series Studies Church Creed

Beginning Sunday, October 7, Dr. Don Ashburn will lead a 4-week adult education series on "Putting our Creed in Context." As part of our ongoing "engagement" process, one topic has come up repeatedly when people are asked what draws them to Piedmont Community Church – our Creed.

Written in 1910, our Creed expresses a common understanding what drew people to do something almost unheard of at that time: to establish a "non-denominational" church. Even so, in using

the word, they turned to a very old term, deriving from the Latin word *credo*, meaning "I believe."

This places our own Creed within a long line of Christian statements of faith – ranging from ones we may all know, like the Apostle's Creed; to ones we may not, like the Westminster Confession. In this series of classes, we will look at the meaning of Christian creeds, and place Piedmont Church's own Creed within that tradition, as well as within its own historical context.

No preparation needed. Light refreshments will be served, and childcare is available.

Classes will meet in the Kettlewell Room from 9 - 9:45 am on the following Sundays: October 7, 14, 21 and 28.

For more information, contact Don Ashburn at: don@piedmontchurch.org, or 510-547-5700, ext. 105.

Enough Already



DR. WILLIAM
MCNABB
Senior Minister

When it comes to stuff most of us already have too much! I know I do.

We do not really know why we bought things we did not need, but we did. We have more clothes and shoes than we can wear. Many garages have no room to park even one of the

family cars because of all the discarded toys and electronics stored there. When some new model comes out, we just cannot be satisfied with the old model even though it still works fine.

When quarterly sales records fall below what they were for the same quarter last year the stock market flutters and falls. The economists start wringing their collective hands and the Federal Reserve

is urged to cut the interest rate. What is wrong with us? We are worshipping at the wrong altar.

Many years ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in *An Ode to W.H. Channing* that "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." He had it right then, and it is still right.

My friend Rev. Tom Butts told the story of Dr. Rachel Remen, who in her book, *My Grandfather's Blessings* tells of becoming friends with the little son of one of her friends. The boy had two little cars he loved to play with. Dr. Remen would play with him when she visited.

Seeing how much the child loved these two Hot Wheels cars, she decided to collect more of them for him. A major oil company was giving one of these cars with each fill-up. She persuaded her entire staff to buy this brand of gasoline for a month. They collected one of each of the Hot Wheels made. She

carried them to the child in a big box. They filled every windowsill in the living room. And then, Dr. Remen noticed that the child stopped playing with the cars. Puzzled, she asked why he did not like the cars anymore. The child looked away and in a quivery voice said, "I don't know how to love this many cars, Rachel".

Many of us have more things than we can love, use, or appreciate. And all the time we have been thinking we were unhappy because we did not have enough. That is not it at all. Being unhappy when we have too much is a symptom of a deeper and more profound emptiness. Having too much makes us feel that something is missing, something which having too much will not cure.

"Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Can you hear what I am saying? I hope so. I desperately need to hear it myself. It desperately needs to be heard.

Conversations and Coffee

■ BY JODY EARLE

Church members Lois and David Reed joined us for Coffee and Conversation August 15 and shared how they greeted each other each morning – "I'm so happy to see you this morning." What a wonderful way to start the day!

That's the most wonderful part of our group that meets the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 9:30 - 11:30 am in the Guild Parlor, you open your hearts, exercise your brain and learn something new.

All seniors are invited.

Adult Mexico Trip October 26-29

Save The Date! Our third-annual adult Mexico trip is approaching. We will be building a house. More details to come.

Contact Rev. Scott Kail for more info at Scott@PiedmontChurch.org

Politics And The Pulpit



DR. DON
ASHBURN
Associate Minister

A few weeks ago, I preached about King David. And, there were aspects of that sermon that were clearly “political.” No one told me flat out that I shouldn’t “mix politics with religion.” But, as a preacher, you hear that phrase from time to time – almost always from someone who disagrees with a stance you took on whatever social issue is “hot” at the moment.

Of course, if they agree with you then, suddenly, it’s not “political.” It’s just “gospel truth,” or “common sense.” In other words, what makes preaching “political” is in the eye of the beholder.

That leads me to a distinction that should be made – though it often isn’t – between “politics” and “partisanship.” Partisanship is taking a side in terms of a particular candidate or party, and trying to convince others to support your preference. For lots of reasons, preachers should avoid partisanship in sermons, or in their official capacity as representatives of a church (though not as private citizens).

But politics? That’s another matter.

The classic definition of “politics” is the process whereby a community makes collective decisions that apply to its members. Who gets to make decisions,

on behalf of whom, varies from one place to another. But, in general, politics is how “we” choose what to do together, how we allocate resources to get it done, how we treat one another in the process, and how what we do “makes sense” to those involved.

As such, politics is everywhere – in every social group, in everyday life – and, all over the place in the Bible! It’s in how King David is able to get what he wants, and how he’s held accountable later on for his actions. It’s in how Jesus talks about the “kingdom of God”; what it looks like, what it requires, and how it binds people together into one body. And, perhaps clearest of all, politics is in the phrase “Jesus is Lord” – which calls into question anyone’s claim to “lordship,” or authority, over anyone else.

So, yes: Preachers should avoid being partisan from the pulpit. But, being “political?” I’ll leave the last word on that to another preacher, Thabiti Anyabwile, of the Anacostia River Church in Washington, D.C., who writes:

The gospels are explosive in their political import and impact. Preaching “something political” is, therefore, necessary if we are to live under Christ’s lordship in every area of life. Not doing so means Fox, CNN, MSNBC, and other secular news outlets get to disciple us instead. I fear that’s been the case for far too long, and to a disastrous effect for the church and the country.

I agree. Feel free to let me know what you think.

Next adult fellowship September 14

We will gather at 5 pm at the Montague Gallery in San Francisco; 445A Sutter Street (parking in Sutter/Stockton Garage, 444 Stockton St.).

Church members Dani and Gary Montague own and operate a glass art gallery, featuring an expansive roster of respected and sought-after names in the contemporary fine art glass world including: Lino Tagliapietra, Dante Marioni, Hiroshi Yamano and Chihuly Workshop.

We will visit the gallery, with wine and cheese provided. Then, we will walk a short distance up Sutter St. to the Marines’ Memorial Club, where Bob Wright has arranged for us to have a no-host dinner in the dining room (price to be determined).

Sign up to attend after worship in the church courtyard after worship or contact Jean Leahy in the church office at (510) 547-5700, or Jean@PiedmontChurch.org

‘Just Breathe’ Classes In Chapel

■ BY SARA HIRSCH

No dogma or agenda and open to everyone in this sweet room in the heart of Piedmont.

Find the silence between the noise in this class designed to guide you through silent meditation. Each class will start with gentle stretches for 15 minutes followed by breathing exercises. Prepared to meditate, either sitting in a chair or on the floor, the next 20 minutes will be silent.

Bring a sticky mat if you plan to be on the floor (there is carpet in the chapel) and a pillow if you plan to sit on a chair. Tuesdays at 5:30 pm.

Community Picnic Is September 9

■ LESLIE QUANTZ

Our annual church picnic will be held Sunday September 9 after the 10:30 worship service.

Come to church dressed casually and walk with us across the street to Piedmont Park for tacos, salad, dessert, beverages and great music from Mitch Polzak and the Royal Deuces.

There is a suggested donation of \$10 per person to cover costs. (Free for children under 5). Open to all friends and family.



Instagram

@PiedmontCommunityChurch

Piedmont Community Church **MediaMinistry**

Thanks to those who have volunteered to help build our new Media Ministry Team. We can use a few more hands to help with audio recording, video recording and (soon) video live streaming worship services.

No experience necessary, but you should enjoy playing with gadgets. Contact Michael Barber at Michael@PiedmontChurch.org, or see him in the back of the sanctuary after worship.

Tiny Time Commitments

Many of our volunteer activities take minimal time and effort.

USHER OR GREET at the 10:30 am service (simple training sessions available). Check your calendar and sign up after church.

PROVIDE A MEAL through our Food Angels for a member going through a difficult time. Contact Linda Rice at ljrice@sbcglobal.net



HELP IN THE KITCHEN with our volunteer cooking crew, Loaves and Fishes. Contact Steve Wuebbens at sawuebbens@gmail.com



Worship, Music Audio Online

Our full worship services, including music, sermons and congregational singing, are now available as audio recordings at PiedmontChurch.org

Christmas Concert Save The Date(s)

Piedmont Community Church will serve as host to the most anticipated Christmas Concert event of the season - Saturday, December 8 and Sunday, December 9.

Both performances will begin at 7 pm.

Dr. Stephen Main and a small crew of dedicate planners are working to confirm more details, including this year's theme.

Watch future editions of *The Messenger* and our weekly email blasts for more information as it becomes available.

MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Each Sunday, we gather to celebrate our faith and our friendships during worship at 9 and 10:30 am.

September 2

Rev. Dottie Hutch, preaching

September 9

New Sermon Series Begins

Dr. William McNabb, preaching
Going Against The Grain - Real Life Teachings From The Sermon On The Mount

Part 1 – *Resident Aliens*
 Matthew 5:13-16

September 15

Dr. McNabb Series Continues
 Part 2 – *Swear to God*
 Matthew 5:33-37

September 23

Dr. McNabb Series Continues
 Part 3 – *More than Looking Good*
 Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

September 30

Dr. McNabb Series Continues
 Part 4 – *Treasure or Trash*
 Matthew 6:19-24

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our September *Digging into Discipleship* lessons:

September 2 - Labor Day weekend, in Sanctuary.

September 9 - Abram Gives Lot the Best Land (Genesis 13), "God is giving ... so we're giving."

September 16 - God Is I Am (Exodus 3:1-4:17), "God doesn't change ... so we trust Him when we're unsure."

September 23 - God Shows Power and Sends Ten Plagues (Exodus 7:14-12:30), "God is all-powerful ... so we respect Him."

September 30 - God Makes Bitter Water Good (Exodus 15:22-27), "God shows grace ... so we show grace".

Contact Leslie Quantz with questions at Leslie@PiedmontChurch.org or (510) 547.5700 ext.109)

PARISH REGISTER

Greta Arnell Harriel, mother of Kyla Oh and grandmother of Jihae, Jackson, and Jayden Oh, died on June 27. Her service was at Piedmont Church on July 14.

Dick Fletcher, husband of Alison Fletcher and father of Michele and Darren Fletcher, died on July 4. His service was at Piedmont Church on August 19 at 3 pm.

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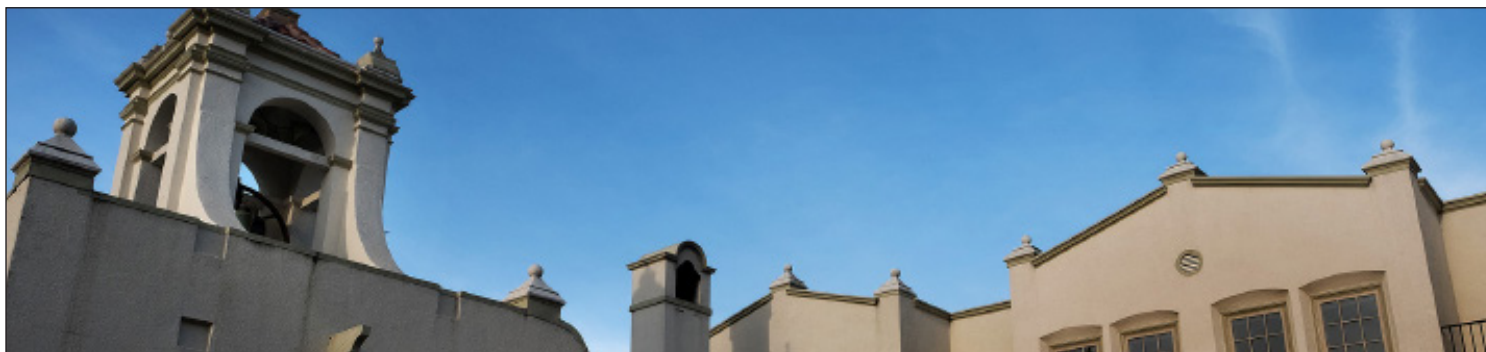
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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Saturday, September 1 – Volunteer to Serve Lunch with CityTeam (ages 12 and over), 11 am – 2 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland (ages 14 and over), 5 pm – 7 pm, 722 Washington St., Oakland

Tuesday, September 4 – Board of Deacons, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Wednesday, September 5 – Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, Guild Parlor

Sunday, September 9 – Communion Sunday and All Church Picnic, 11:30am, Piedmont Park

Monday, September 10 – Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 2-4 pm, Guild Parlor

Board of Trustees, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Friday, September 14 – KIDZ Club, 3:30 pm, Youth Room

Adult Fellowship at the Montague Gallery in San Francisco

Monday, September 17 – Board of Christian Education, 6:45 pm, Guild Parlor

Needles and Hooks Shared Interest Group, 7 pm, Murdock Room

MAT, 7 pm, Staff Workroom

Wednesday, September 19 – Coffee and Conversation for Seniors, 9:30am – 11:30am, Guild Parlor

Saturday, September 22 – Berkeley Men's Shelter, 6:30-8 pm, call (510) 547-5700 to volunteer

RECURRING EVENTS

Sundays

Children's Sunday School, 10:30am, Christian Education Building
Journey (formerly High School Sunday School), 10:30 am, Youth Room
Confirmation, 11:30 am, Youth Room, begins September 16
Rock, 5 pm, Youth Room

Mondays

Piedmont Gardens Bible Study, 10 am, begins September 10
Spiritual Formation Group, 4:30 pm, Guild Parlor

Tuesdays

Rock Pizza Lunch, Youth Room
Just Breathe, 5:30 pm, Chapel
Handbells, begins September 11, 6:30 pm, Clara Barton Room
Small Group Bible Study, 7 pm, home of Bob and Judy Wright
- Call Judy Wright (510) 325-3083 or Dottie Hutch (203) 500-9097

Wednesdays

LiveWire, 2:15 – 3:30 pm, Youth Room
Chancel Choir, 7:30 pm, Lindamood Choir Room, begins September 12

Thursdays

Women's Bible Study, 10 am Guild Parlor
Walking Together, 7 pm, Guild Parlor

Saturdays

Men's Bible Study, 7:30 am, Founders' Room