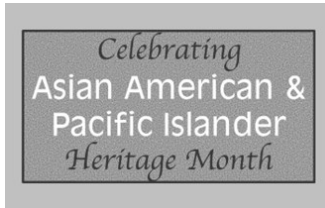




May 29, 2022

From the PSEC Racial Justice Initiative



During May, the Racial Justice Initiative of PSEC invites congregations to celebrate and recognize the unique gifts of Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) people and cultures, and to hold them in prayer.

Erina Kim-Eubanks is Co-Pastor and Director of Advocacy at Bethel Communities. Pastor Kim-Eubanks is Korean American and states: *"In the last decade, as I've grown in maturity and explored my sense of personal voice and identity, I've come to realize that to live into my Korean American identity is an act of resistance in this country, which was founded on white supremacy. And part of this resistance is to assert our dignity by making intentional space to remember our history, celebrate our cultures, and honor our ancestors and homelands".*

We invite you to explore and celebrate the complex diversity of histories, cultures, languages, peoples and traditions that fall under the AAPI umbrella.



May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,
- ROMANS 15:5 NIV

Strengthen the Church Offering

The last two years have told a remarkable story about the resilience of our churches and their leaders.

This has been hard. Leaders are tired.

Leaders are anxious. Leaders are beleaguered. Leaders are traumatized.

But every day, and in countless ways, leaders in the church demonstrate the power of faith in the risen Christ as they embody the spirit of Paul himself who wrote that we will 'rejoice in all circumstances' and 'we do not grieve as those who have no hope.'

Two years into this pandemic, we struggle to name a more devastating season through which we have all lived. And yet still we see signs of life and resilience and ingenuity and growth and enduring hope.

There are stories of how college students left for college and for the first time since anyone can remember they were still able to worship every week with their home church.

One church noticed their members were struggling with a variety of mental health issues. They brought a counselor on to their staff who set up an office in the church to provide therapeutic care to them. The pastor noticed that neighbors who had never been to the church were also suffering - and the counselor began to meet regularly with them as well. Now, there is a full time mental health specialist on staff who serves not just the church, but the neighborhood.

Many of our settings are reporting that their giving rose in 2021, a sign that even in the midst of deep sorrow our better angels emerge with a desire to support those who suffer and those who care for the suffering.

Churches that feared losing all their members when we all quarantined learned how to connect virtually for pastoral visitation, prayer, worship, and fellowship. They not only didn't lose their members, many grew by finding an audience who were only ever going to be found in the virtual spaces they occupy and find safe.

Our churches remain strong in the Lord.

All that we do to Strengthen Our Churches extends the kingdom of God. Preaching the gospel is our collective calling. Even a raging global pandemic cannot suppress either our desire or ability to preach that gospel, nor the Spirit's ability to change lives when we do.

Won't you please help sustain the mission of the risen Christ, and Strengthen the Church with your offering of love, prayer, and generosity?

- Rev. John Dorhauer, General Minister & President of the
United Church of Christ