

## **Devotion for Week of November 13, 2022**

### **Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

We had our first fully in-person Presbytery meeting on November 12 at Korean Central Presbyterian Church, and it was wonderful seeing folks again that “weren’t inside a tiny little box.” Russ Weekly filled in for Moderator Juan Herrera, who was out recovering from knee surgery, and he said this was the first time he’d attended a Presbytery meeting in almost 3 years with shoes on!

I’d forgotten how enriching it was to sing and pray and recite liturgy with about 200 people from across this Presbytery. I am reminded of that when I look out in the congregation on Sundays and see empty seats. Worship is intended to be communal. When we hear each other’s voices, we build up the community. It’s time for you folks who are still at home to come on back, and this Sunday is a good excuse – we’re having Thanksgiving luncheon together right after the service.

In spite of the COVID pandemic, our Presbytery continued to support 31 new church developments. Sixteen of those are new Korean congregations. We were reminded that 45% of new Presbyterian churches in the United States are immigrant congregations. The mainline churches in our denomination may be losing members or just holding their own, but these new immigrant communities are growing like wildfire. Why? Because they connect in person and reach out to others in their communities who want to worship in their own native languages. Our New church Development Commission in Atlanta does an incredible job of supporting these groups, using part of the per capita we give for each member of our congregation. So we have been spreading the word in other languages without even knowing it!

As we celebrate Christ the King Sunday on November 20 and eat a Thanksgiving meal, I am reminded that November 27 is the first Sunday in Advent with the Hangin’ of the Greens. So take a big breath – Christmas is coming faster than you can imagine! We will wait for the birth of this baby in the manger with joyful hymns and celebrations.

*Jeanne*