

*November 2017 Notes from the Presbytery of Nevada*  
*Presbytery Pastor, Rev. Hilda Pecoraro*



Memorial by the “Las Vegas” Sign for victims of October 1 Mass Shooting at Route 91 Harvest Festival

*The following is an excerpt from a sermon by the **Rev. Adolph Kunen** titled, “No End in Sight”. The sermon in response to the 1 October Mass Shooting in Las Vegas was delivered on October 15, 2017 at Valley Presbyterian Church, Mesquite. Thanks to Adolph for offering these words to us all.*

...Have you ever given a thought to how utterly impossible it really is to defeat love? Stop it in its tracks. End it? Yes, you can overlook it, snub it, turn your back on it, make fun of it; or get ugly and crucify it – as did Steven Paddock the other Sunday night when he crossed out the lives of at least 58 people at the Route 91 Harvest Festival. But he could not defeat the love that moved Owen Searey to grab his mother’s hand and pull her to safety under a cat walk; he could not defeat the love that led a 29 year old Marine veteran Taylor Watson to find a truck with keys in it and pick up four or five victims, put them in the back and drive them to Desert Springs Hospital Medical Center; and He could not stop the love that moved one man to throw his body as protection across the bodies of two strangers who, in that moment, suddenly became friends. “Greater love has no man than this,” Jesus said, “that he lay down his life for his friends.”

And what shall we say about the killer, Steven Paddock? Perhaps the answer to that question lies in words spoken by our president to a shocked & grieving nation the day following the tragedy:

“Though we feel such anger at the senseless murder of our fellow citizens,” he said, “it is our love that defines us today – and always will forever.” I believe our commander-in-Chief has gotten the message: love never ends, never dies, never fails.

Clark County Sheriff Lombardo, the Las Vegas city council, the media – many of us, have sought in vain to determine the motive, the reason, for why Paddock did what he did. If by chance we did determine to our satisfaction the motive, the reason, would that move us to forgive him?

When he hung on “the old rugged cross”, Jesus made no effort to determine the motive, the reason, why his taunting, jeering torturers hung him up there to suffer and bleed away his loving life. He simply whispered, “father forgive them for they know not what they do”. You cannot defeat such love. It keeps coming back, no matter what you do to it. Love keeps coming back to forgive those who claim to be its friends yet betray it, and those who are obviously its enemies. Love never fails, it always wins out in the end.

Ringed through every page of the New Testament, at the heart of the four Gospels, Paul’s letters to the Churches, the writings of John, it is always the same theme – Love, the cross – and always central! It’s central because it opens the door and lets you look into the very heart of God and see there the love that never ends, never dies; the love which never fails: The love that is at the heart of God laid perfectly bare and plain on a cross.



Greg Zany of Aurora Illinois, a retired carpenter, said the cross helped him cope with his father-in-law’s murder, and that he wanted to provide that closure for the Las Vegas community after the mass shooting at the Route 91 Harvest Festival. He drove to Las Vegas and installed 58 crosses in a newly created Garden of Remembrance. On each cross is a huge red heart unquestionably symbolizing the Heart of God; and below each heart the picture and name of one who lives on in the love of that Great Heart: Specifically, Brennan Stewart, Stacey Etcheber, Cameron Robinson, Heather Alvarado, Erick Wolfe and the 53 others.

That cross you know, casts its lengthening shadow across all our days and all the concerns of our days – the love that never ends, never dies, never fails. And yes, we’re free to do with it what we will. We may forget it, ignore it, shoulder it aside impatiently as sentimental and impractical – yet it keeps coming back like an old song, like the return of spring, like the loving Lord Himself;

it keeps coming back to you, this amazing, undiscourageable, triumphant and eternal love that is God.

Without fail it will, this love of God, this love that never ends, that never dies. So, live with it... Without fail determine to live with the love that never fails.

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### Congratulations

We rejoice with the **Rev. Nonong Ordonez** and the members of the **First Filipino-American Presbyterian Church** as they celebrated the First Anniversary of being chartered as a congregation in the Presbytery of Nevada. A joyful crowd gathered on Sunday October 22, 2017 to celebrate this anniversary with music, praise, prayers and a challenging sermon. Following the service, there was an abundant feast with a Hawaiian theme and a delicious buffet! Everyone enjoyed the day. May God bless FFAPC for many years to come.

### Upcoming Special Events

#### **\*Making Time Holy: An Invitation to Prayer**

On **Wednesday, November 8** at 7 pm, **Rabbi Sandy Akselrad** of Congregation Ner Tamid will present a lecture on prayer and worship in the Jewish tradition at **Green Valley Presbyterian Church** in Henderson. Rabbi Akselrad will demonstrate how Judaism seeks to fulfill the biblical summons to pray throughout the day. Within ancient Judaism, multiple traditions wove themselves into an established pattern of praying three times a day. This practice became normative for the early Christians and was further developed as a response to Psalm 119:164, "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous ordinances." Join us as we explore the earliest influences on the ancient Christian tradition of the Divine Hours. All are welcome!

#### **\*In Concert: "Noah's Flood" By Benjamin Britten**

Benjamin Britten's one-act, Noye's Fludde tells the story of Noah and the Flood through staged operatic characters, singing, cleverly scored orchestration, and the debut of the Opera Las Vegas Children's Choir as the animals. It's one of a kind - and simply divine! Choose from three superb performances— and help support flood relief to American families.

Three FREE Performances

Nov 17 - 7:00 pm **Grace Presbyterian Church** 1515 W. Charleston Ave, 89102

Nov 18 - 7:30 pm **Green Valley Presbyterian Church** 1798 Wigwam Pkwy, 89074

Nov 19 - 3:00 pm **Mountain View Presbyterian Church** 8601 Del Webb Blvd, 89134

### Transitions

**\*Rev. Jim and Debbie Blades** have moved to Fresno, CA as they seek God's will for the next chapter of their lives and ministries. They are excited about this new adventure in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. We thank God for Jim's friendship and leadership during his brief stay in the Presbytery of Nevada. Please contact me if you would like contact information for Jim and Debbie.

**\*Rev. Adolph Kunen to retire from Valley Presbyterian NCD/Mesquite**

The following news brief appeared in the November issue of Valley Presbyterian Church Newsletter:

*On October 22, 2017 Pastor Kunen announced to the congregation that he would be retiring his position as pastor of Valley Presbyterian Church as of December 31, 2017. Though sad to see him leave the church as pastor, the Steering Committee has accepted his letter of retirement. We wish him well as he moves on to a new phase in his life and hope that he will continue on to many more adventures!! The Steering Committee is in the process of planning a celebration to honor and thank Pastor Kunen, so look for updates in the near future.*

Our prayers are with Adolph and Pat in the coming months as they complete their ministry in Mesquite and seek God's will for their next chapter!

**\*Beloved Elder Patricia McNutt** – It is with sadness I share the news that Elder Pat McNutt, long-time member and elder at Grace Presbyterian Church, went to be with her Savior on October 20, 2017. Pat and her husband Bob McNutt, former Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Nevada, were active members of our Presbytery for many years. Pat was also active in Presbyterian Women and many community and civic organizations. Her Memorial Service will be on **Saturday, November 4, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary of Grace Presbyterian Church.** May God bless Pat's memory to us and may He be near to all who grieve her death.

**Announcements**

**\*Southern Nevada Follow-up Clergy Luncheon** on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 12:00 at Mountain View Presbyterian Church. We will continue to support one another in the aftermath of the 1 October Shooting and consider where we go from here in our response. This is a "brown bag" lunch. Beverages, dessert and chips will be provided. Please plan to attend this important gathering.

**\*Pastor Hilda on Vacation** – Denis and I – along with our two pups - will be loading up our motorhome and heading south to San Diego for vacation from November 6-13, 2017. If you have any special needs during this week, please call or text me at 702-610-7123.

**\*An awesome resource available** to all of us is the Presbytery of Nevada website. Every time I go to the website I am impressed with the wealth of information that is available. **The Rev. Christy Ramsey**, our webmaster does an outstanding job with the site. I encourage all church leaders to visit the site often and encourage your members to visit too! Go to: <http://www.nevadapresbytery.org>. Submissions to the website are welcome. Send to webmaster Rev. Christy Ramsey at [christyramsey@nevadapresbytery.org](mailto:christyramsey@nevadapresbytery.org).

**\*Save the Date:** the Annual Presbyterian Clergy Christmas Brunch will be on Saturday, **December 2 at 9:30 a.m.** at Green Valley Presbyterian Church. Look for your invitation in the mail in the coming weeks.

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### Thanksgiving Prayer

"I Thank Thee" is a beautiful Thanksgiving prayer. This Christian poem was originally written by Jane Crewdson (1860) as a prayer of thankfulness to God for all things in life, both the good and the bad, the bitter and the sweet.

I Thank Thee  
O Thou whose bounty fills my cup,  
With every blessing meet!  
I give Thee thanks for every drop—  
The bitter and the sweet.

I praise Thee for the desert road,  
And for the riverside;  
For all Thy goodness hath bestowed,  
And all Thy grace denied.

I thank Thee for both smile and frown,  
And for the gain and loss;  
I praise Thee for the future crown  
And for the present cross.

I thank Thee for both wings of love  
Which stirred my worldly nest;  
And for the stormy clouds which drove  
Me, trembling, to Thy breast.

I bless Thee for the glad increase,  
And for the waning joy;  
And for this strange, this settled peace  
Which nothing can destroy.

(Found on [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com) website)

### Thanksgiving Blessings

#### *Psalm 100*

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.*

*Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.*

*Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.  
For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

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*For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends.  
For everything Thy goodness sends.*

*-Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*Come, Lord Jesus our guest to be,  
And bless these gifts bestowed by Thee.  
And bless our loved ones everywhere,  
And keep them in Your loving care.  
-Moravian Blessing*