

Report to Presbytery
Rev. Shannan Vance-Ocampo, General Presbyter
February 2024

*"I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,
I was homeless and you gave me a room,
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,
I was sick and you stopped to visit,
I was in prison and you came to me." - Matthew 25*

It is hard to believe that it is already a New Year! And we are already a month into it! Time is moving fast, as always, which is a reminder that our time to do God's work of peace and justice-making in this world is limited, urgent and important.

I started out the year by attending the Matthew 25 Summit the second week of January in Atlanta, Georgia with over 500 Presbyterians. It was an inspiring time of worship, teaching, and fellowship. There are many wonderful new resources for us as a Matthew 25 Presbytery, and I encourage you to take a look at them on the main Matthew 25 landing page. We have a few congregations in PSNE who have individually signed onto Matthew 25, I hope that more will in this new year as we grow in this spiritual and faithful movement of our church.

A few highlights from the conference were the teachings of the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis of our neighboring NYC Presbytery and co-director of the [New Poor People's Campaign](#) and the [Kairos Center](#). Dr. Theoharis focused us on learning in the area of poverty and ministry. Watch her keynote [here](#).

The Rev. Dr. William Yoo, Professor of Church History and Supervised Ministry at Columbia Theological Seminary taught from his research on race and Presbyterian history. Dr. Yoo is always an inspiring teacher and his keynote can be found [here](#).

And finally, but not least, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran [pastoral](#) colleague from Bethlehem, in the Palestinian West Bank offered a first hand account of the war in Gaza and the settler violence in the occupied territories. I encourage you to listen to his words, they are not easy to hear, because they are the words and truth of a people living under occupation and war. [Please share his testimony widely](#).

God is doing new things all the time in our lives and the life of this world. Despite the many challenges we face and the places where we see our world disconnected from the Way of Jesus in serious and significant ways, we are not alone. We have each other, we

have our faith, and we have our connectional church which is prophetically working a way forward. I am grateful as always to be a part of that journey with you, especially as we begin a new year, and as we begin the season of Lent next week. May this holy and reflective season be a time of growing and deepening in your faith journey personally and collectively.

Blessings and Peace,

A handwritten signature in a cursive script, reading "Shannan". The letters are fluidly connected, with a prominent loop at the start of the "S" and a trailing flourish at the end.