

Veronica's Ordination

“For decades, I’ve seen the Westview ‘Chimes’ newsletter pinned to the bulletin board of First Presbyterian Church, Altadena”-Veronica Ota

For decades, I’ve seen the Westview “Chimes” newsletter pinned to the bulletin board of First Presbyterian Church, Altadena (FPCA) – the church I grew up attending, where I still work (part-time hybrid) in community outreach, and where I’m under care as a candidate for ministry [recalls Veronica Ota in a Presbytery newsletter]. “I’ll be honest, I never read the “Chimes” on the bulletin board, but when my husband and I moved up to Prunedale/Castroville last September, I figured Westview would be a good place to visit since I had some sort of connection.

Westview and FPCA are small, multicultural churches that share a common history as Japanese American churches. While it was exciting and nostalgically heartwarming to see old photos of the Westview congregation that reminded me very much of my home church, what really impressed me about Westview was not their past, but their future. They were in the process of constructing a tiny home community called “HOPE Village” on their campus to serve their neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Westview is small in number, but the decision to partner with Community Action Board (CAB), and the counties of Monterey and Santa Cruz to construct a tiny home community that can help provide housing for up to 34 people at a time is big, giant, herculean, I would even say miraculous! HOPE Village provides more than shelter. It offers healing to its residents who come traumatized by the harsh life of living on the street. They are wrapped in the care of counselors, and advocates who help them get back on their feet again. A similar model exists in Santa Barbara and has an 85% success rate!

I, Pastor Dan, truly believe Veronica has been inspired by God’s creative Spirit, to start Good Growth Garden. I asked Veronica what are you most hopeful/excited about the Good Growth Garden ministry? She thoughtfully responded:

In my journey as a peace educator and advocate, I’ve come to learn, as many do, that all creation is interconnected. In order for us to experience even a glimpse of God’s peaceful kingdom of truly beloved community, we not only need to address the holistic wellbeing of human neighbors, but also of all entities that we share existence with – plants, animals, insects, fungi, water, air, soil. The Good Growth Garden gives me hope that we can create a community that can experience the beauty of mutuality, relationship, and deep connection with the earth as a faithful expression of spirituality.

I am energized and inspired because I already see this happening. People are being drawn to the space – they want to volunteer, donate, take a peek at what’s growing, get their hands dirty. We’ve already had folks from HOPE Village, Westview members, friends of Westview, the youth group of Sunnyvale, Watsonville locals, and other Presbytery friends volunteer and we haven’t even established our regular schedule yet. Moreover, I’ve seen bees, butterflies, birds, ladybugs, and aphids enjoying the foliage. I talk to the dog that barks at me from next door, hoping to become friends. The first batch of compost has resurrected nutrients into garden beds.

The Good Growth Garden is already growing food, community, and love, and I cannot wait to see what it will become in the coming months as my position as Minister of Peacemaking and

Justice for our Presbytery expands to allow me to serve as the organizing pastor of the Good Growth Garden as an emerging new worshipping community. Contact Veronica@sanjosepby.org to get involved!



Veronica is already the Peace and Justice Advocate for the Presbytery of San Jose part-time, but now she's **going to be ordained** (yes ordained!) to a Presbytery position where she will also be ¼ time Good Growth Garden pastor. (Photo: Veronica wholeheartedly approved for ordination by San Jose Presbytery Committee on Ministry in July via Zoom – it was a time for celebration!!)

We are delighted that she will be in an official capacity connected with our church, caring for the Hope Village residents, Westview family, and our neighbors through the ministry of a garden. Her hope is that it will build community, be a place for spiritual discussions, a place for service to others, and hopefully be a place where we celebrate Lord's Supper celebrations feasting around the food we have grown together!

You can donate to her garden ministry or to her salary, which is mostly being paid by the Presbytery, while we pay a small portion of it. (Write "Veronica Good Growth Garden" in the memo, & specify if would like your gift to go "towards the garden" or "towards her salary.")

She will be ordained on September 20 at her home church, Altadena Presbyterian Church. I, Pastor Dan, get to be in attendance (with bells on) and a part of the community that blesses her in her ordination.

Please be in prayer for her and for the Holy Spirit to anoint her in her in a special way at ordination and continue to guide her ministry. Please also come and hear her preach for she will be preaching at times here at Westview amidst her busy schedule. She is a very gifted preacher!

I appreciate you, the Westview family. YOU, and not the building, ARE the church! God continues to amaze us with God's creativity and desire to bring healing and love to so many through the Westview family.

May you know God's constant embrace,
Pastor Dan