

Littlewood UE Chapel-- Fremont, CA

On Saturday, July 11th, we held public service in San Jose. Unfortunately, our usual meeting place at the Quaker House was closed due to shelter-in-place orders. However, we made the opportunity of a nearby public park, with a Mexican-American war memorial, for an open-air service. Worship was followed with a very small patriotic parade.

Our Evening Prayer service borrowed readings from the 1962 Canadian Book (for Dominion Day, p 281), namely, 1 Pe 2.11 “not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness” and St Matthew 22.16 “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”. Added to the three collects was 1928 BCP’s prayer ‘For our Country’ (p.36), thanking Jehovah for enabling this ‘good land for our heritage.’



Speaking upon the very site where USMC Capt Marston received surrender of Francisco Sanchez’s Mexican militia in 1847, we recalled former blessings and liberties won by old fathers. Upon this particular victory, northern California was secured from further rancho attacks, freeing United States forces to conclude their war against Pio Pico in Los Angeles. We begged God for continued mercies, knowing we ought to honor this favored parentage, “so our days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”.

At the end of our open-air service, we grabbed our bear flags, 27-star US flag, and enjoyed a miniature Pioneer Day march from the Marston memorial to the site of the first Protestant service, delivered 270-yrs after Drake’s landing.

The sermon was entitled “So Short our Days”. Adna Hecox, a methodist preacher, tendered it in Jan.1847 after his emigrant train survived typhoid fever and Sanchez’s marauders at Mission Santa Clara.



On the way to the Mission, we gustfully sang Gassaway’s ‘Banner of the Bear’ followed by Wesley’s older ‘Kingdom Come’. Gassaway recites possible celestial glories of Anglo-Israel;

“We see our symbol ride at half-mast, as its veterans pass beyond the great divide; Though gone, they still are pioneers, and surely over there, above their golden camp, appears the banner of the bear.”

While Wesley dwells upon Jesus’s Kingly consummation:

‘Whate’er the plagues that intervene, the judgements, and vindictive days, Savior, we know the final scene; The heart renewed in righteousness, Descending on thine azure throne Thee in the clouds we soon shall see, To reign before thy saints alone, and then through all eternity.”

Our march was last minute, but, given recent vandalisms, we felt it profitable to act with UECNA’s 2017 GC resolution. It’s likely Mexican-American war victories-- as part of aforesaid heritage-- may be at risk. So, we expressed solidarity with our past without ‘taking a knee’, or sending mixed-signals, to either civil rights or social justice dogmas. Pioneer parades were once common in our Golden State, but over the last generation they’ve faded away.

Our Wesleyan class meetings continue, and we hope say to more next GT issue.-- Br Charles