

Cheryl Raine has said “yes” to many calls to church leadership

New Moderator Wants to Assure All Voices are Heard

The new moderator of Los Ranchos Presbytery was born a Presbyterian and answered many calls to church leadership as she grew up and was active in her church.

Cheryl Raine’s mother and father, Ray and Ruth Brown, were members of Lakewood First Presbyterian Church, now Grace First. Referred to as her “birth church,” Cheryl was baptized there, became a member, was married, her children were baptized, and she was ordained an elder, a deacon, and finally a Minister of Word and Sacrament at Lakewood First.

Cheryl Raine said “yes” to many calls to church leadership; but for a long time, she said “no” to God’s call to the ordained ministry. However, she said “God would not let me go.”

She entered San Francisco Theological Seminary/Southern California while continuing to work full-time in various positions for Sempra Energy. In June of 2002, the former chemical engineer left the private sector and was ordained. Cheryl accepted her first call to First Presbyterian Church of Garden Grove and says, “I am absolutely in the right place.”

Rev. Raine says that God’s call to First Presbyterian was to help the 170 member, predominately older, congregation “reconnect with the community.” They knew they wanted to touch young families so the church has welcomed a pre-school program and has hosted a Mother of Preschoolers chapter. The congregation sees these programs as ways to reach out to potentially unchurched families and to bring young families to their church.

As moderator, Rev. Raine’s duties include moderating Presbytery meetings, participating in ordinations and installations of pastors, and representing the Presbytery at church celebratory events, such as anniversaries.

She says she feels called to provide a greater sense of spiritual leadership at a time when there is some perceived tension in the national church. Her goal is to provide leadership in a way that assures all voices will be heard in Presbytery. “I want to be intentional about our ministry as a Presbytery - that we do what we do because we love Christ and live out that love by loving each other.”

She cites a favorite verse from Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians that God’s Holy Spirit strengthens them “...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. . .”
(Ephesians 3:17-18)

“I believe in Los Ranchos Presbytery we have demonstrated a willingness to listen to one another even when we differ, and it’s possible that our life together can be a demonstration of ‘being rooted and grounded in love’ for the national church.”

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Rev. Raine’s activities extend beyond the pastor’s study and moderating the Presbytery. She loves to read, plays the violin, and occasionally provides accompaniment at her church. She plays volleyball and softball on the church teams. Cheryl played competitive softball as a shortstop growing up, but has now retired to first base. Why? “I can catch anything, but my throwing arm is no longer as strong as it once was.”

Rev. Raine and her husband Paul have been married for 28 years and live in Cerritos. He is vice president of a small fiber optics business. They have twin sons, now 22 years old. Aaron is in college and Jason works for Verizon. The family enjoys softball, golfing and water sports together.

