

MIDWEEK MESSAGE

May 15, 2013

Words to Consider: *"The question to which Pentecost comes as a bold answer is this: Will the movement be ruled by fear? Will they be contained and confined? Rendered timid and silent? Pentecost says no."*

Bill Wylie Kellermann, *Seasons of Faith and Conscience: Kairos, Confession, Liturgy*

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **MEN'S BREAKFAST, 8:00 AM, Wednesday, May 15**, at Hobe's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All the men from our Church family are welcome.
- ❖ **NO CHOIR REHEARSAL** the next two weeks. We will resume on **Thursday, May 23**.
- ❖ **SUNDAY, May 19, 10 AM** Worship, *"Movin' on Up"* and Sunday School for children and youth. **11:30 AM, Adult Spiritual Formation: "Sin Boldly,"** the second session of a three week study of Cathleen Falsani's book of the same title. In this book Falsani explores the meaning and experience of grace through story and song, quotations and photos. "Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. And grace is getting what you absolutely don't deserve."
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, May 21** at the home of Thelma Parodi, 543 South El Monte Avenue, Los Altos, at **10:30 AM**. Let Pastor Rick know if you need a ride.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

- ❖ **CHURCH COUNCIL** meeting, **Thursday, May 23, 1:30 PM** in the Parlor.
- ❖ **SPIRE** deadline, **Friday, May 24**.
- ❖ **CHURCH OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED FOR MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY ON MONDAY, MAY 27**.
- ❖ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** on **Thursday, May 30th at 10 AM**. All women of our church community are invited. Note a new location! Please join us at **Country Gourmet Restaurant, corner of Fremont and Mary Avenue in Sunnyvale**. Call the church if you need a ride.



Baptist Peace Fellowship
of North America

The **SPECIAL OFFERING FOR MAY** is our annual offering for the **Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America**. We are one of the original congregational partners of BPFNA, generously supporting their important work over the years. The mission of the Baptist Peace Fellowship

of North America is to gather, equip and mobilize Baptists to build a culture of peace rooted in justice. For further information, see the website at bpfna.org. Please give generously. To date we have given **\$141** toward our goal of **\$500**.

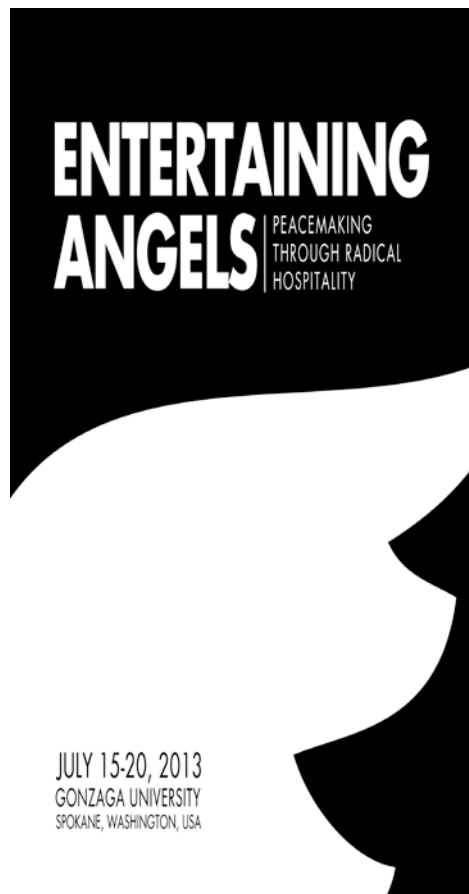


Adult Spiritual Formation May 12 – 19 – 26: “Sin Boldly”

Cathleen Falsani: Join us on **June 2** as we welcome author and religion journalist Cathleen Falsani. She will be with us in worship and following worship during the Adult Spiritual Formation hour. She is an award-winning religion journalist and the new Faith & Values columnist for the [Orange County Register](#) in Southern California.

She is author of the critically acclaimed [The God Factor: Inside the Spiritual Lives of Public People](#), [Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace](#), [The Dude Abides: The Gospel According to the Coen Brothers](#), [BELIEBER: Fame, Faith and the Heart of Justin Bieber](#), and the forthcoming [Disquiet Time: A Devotional for Ordinary Skeptics](#) (edited with co-author [Jennifer Grant](#) and published by [Jericho Books](#), fall 2014.)

INNVISION SHELTER NETWORK recently experienced a devastating fire at one of our family shelters, displacing 50 homeless women and children. Thankfully none of the residents or staff were hurt, but over 50% of the facility suffered significant damage. **We are asking for your financial support to help the fire victims** and aid in our recovery. Your gift will aid the families affected by the fire and the staff working to support them while the shelter is renovated. While our insurance will cover most of the construction costs, donations are need to cover emergency supplies, clinical services, specialized staff, bus passes, food, and other unfunded expenses. More information in the church office or entryway. Donations may be made to the church marked for InnVision fire relief.



Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America

Summer Conference 2013

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" Hebrews 13:2

July 15-20, 2013 | Gonzaga University | Spokane, WA USA

The word hospitality often brings to mind images of domestic tidiness but the gospel calls us to be radical in our welcome: to welcome the least of these as we would Christ; to seek the outcasts, the marginalized, the disempowered, the overlooked, the other; and to create community together. This year at summer conference you can look forward to exciting speakers and dynamic workshops that explore topics of hospitality, inclusion and justice. We look forward to sharing spirit-filled worship with hundreds of peacemakers as we look for ways to grow, support, and encourage each other. Participants of all ages will have opportunities for learning and for playing in community. We hope you will join us!

IN THE WORLD

Health care services dwindling in Syria: About 30,000 doctors have left Syria because of the civil war, according to Tom Bollyky of the Council on Foreign Relations. "Attacking medical personnel is a way of terrorizing a population and depriving them of the humanitarian support they need," he says. Inter Press Service (5/14)

Text-messaging program for pregnant women launches in S. Africa: The Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action is launching a text-messaging program in South Africa that sends informational texts on pregnancy, birthing and child care to expectant mothers. The program has met with success in Bangladesh, with India next. Voice of America (5/10)

Nothing But Nets fundraising challenge issued to NBA star: An 11-year-old boy is issuing a Nothing But Nets fundraising challenge to NBA star Stephen Curry [Golden State Warriors!], writes Christopher Helfrich, director of Nothing But Nets. Cooper David Aaker Smith's challenge was inspired by Curry's work on behalf of the malaria-reduction program. The Huffington Post (5/10)

Annan: African natural resource companies must pay their share: "Illicit financial outflows" by African natural resource companies need to be stopped, said former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, chairman of the Africa Progress Panel. "It is unconscionable that some companies ... maximize their profits, while millions of Africans go without adequate nutrition, health and education," he wrote in a report. The Guardian (London) (5/9)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Pamela Sullivan (May 15), Carole Low (May 16), Lois Ville (May 17), Melanie Ramirez (May 21)
- ✚ Mary Martin for the presence of Ruth Owen in worship, for mothers and for Ron
- ✚ Joanne Jones for the delight of having all 5 of her daughters plus other family in worship and for 25 years of playing with the Palo Alto Philharmonic (on her retirement)
- ✚ Thelma Parodi for Joanne's beautiful music ("I heard the angels sing this morning")
- ✚ Virginia Herbert for the most beautiful and natural thing in the world, the mothering instinct, for mothers and for her daughter, Maureen's presence in worship

Concerns:

- ✚ For Paul and Sachiko Berry as they travel to Paris for 6 weeks
- ✚ Melanie Ramirez for Chip Clark who was not feeling well
- ✚ For former pastor, Mike McGuire on the death of his father, Sam, in Colorado
- ✚ Pastor Rick for his friend, Michael, in treatment for melanoma; for his nephew, Max, who is going through a rough patch
- ✚ For Pastor Tripp and the family and friends of his aunt, Ann Watlington, as they mourn
- ✚ For Oleta Proctor with ongoing health concerns
- ✚ For Patrice and Richard Heath as she continues to receive chemotherapy for cancer
- ✚ For Don and Mary Granholm
- ✚ For the work of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
- ✚ For Dan and Sarah Chetti and their mission work in Lebanon
- ✚ For Dan Buttry and his mission work as a global peace advocate
- ✚ For Ruriko Uda's congregation, Izumi Parktown Church, in Sendai, Japan
- ✚ For Ramesh Kumar and the ministry of Balasore Technical School in India
- ✚ For our sister church in Corinto, Nicaragua
- ✚ For those affected by indiscriminate acts of violence and for the adoption of measures to heal our communities of all the many ways it makes us less safe and less free
- ✚ For the well-being of our church: wisdom and guidance for our leaders and its future
- ✚ For the economies of which we are a part (global, national, state, local)
- ✚ For the care of the earth
- ✚ For the peoples of the world striving for freedom and dignity
- ✚ For peace in a war-torn world, food for the hungry, homes for the homeless, justice for the abused and oppressed, and hope for the future

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2013

Pentecost Sunday

"The Winds of God"

Lectionary Readings for the Week: Psalm 104:24-35; John 14:8-17, (25-27); **ACTS 2:1-21**; Romans 8:14-17. (The focus scripture is in bold.)

"Our text is often read and preached in connection with the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. In that story we remember God confused and diversified human languages so that the whole earth no longer "had one language and the same words." Presumably this is God's punishment for the human pretension and pride that built the tower. Notice, however, that Pentecost does not really reverse Babel. It is not the case, that at the end of Pentecost all the earth - or even all believers - have one language and the same words. The miracle of Pentecost is that even though there are still many languages and diverse words people are able to understand each other. It is a misreading of the story to think that God's promise for the church is a kind of ecclesiastical Esperanto--a universal language we all can speak and understand. The apostles speak a variety of languages so that a variety of people can hear. God's promise for the church is that in our diversity, through our diversity, the Spirit still leads us forward in understanding. If Eden was a "happy fall" because it made possible our redemption, maybe Babel was a happy fall because it enriched our diversity--the languages in which we can preach the Gospel and praise God."

... We also notice, though, that when the first believers speak in diverse languages but say the same thing, they do not deliver speeches praising diversity. Diversity is a blessed feature of the Christian life but it is not the center of that life. What they speak about is "God's deeds of power." (Acts 2:11) There is a tendency among American Christians to bring diverse people together to praise our diversity. The model we get in Acts is that we bring diverse people together to praise God.

When Peter preaches about the miracle that people have observed (trying to defend his friends against the accusation that they have been drinking too much) what he talks about is not the splendor of the congregation but the majesty of God. It is God's Spirit that makes this day possible. The day is not the church's day; it is "the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day."(Acts 2:20) The purpose of the day is not to congratulate each other but to repent and believe: "Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21). (David L. Bartlett, *Commentary on Acts 2:1-21, May 11, 2008*, working preacher.org).

Prayer: *Living God, you have created all that is. Send forth your Spirit to renew and restore us, that we may proclaim your good news in ways and words that all will understand and believe. Amen.*

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

Thanks again to Joanne Jones for her lovely music last Sunday. It was also a delight to have so many from her family, including all 5 of her beautiful daughters with us in worship. In spite of her decision to retire from the Palo Alto Philharmonic after 25 years, Joanne still plays with grace and beauty. And, of course, she also oversees our hospitality, in addition to all the other ways she serves our congregation. We are blessed to have her.

This Sunday is Pentecost. Everyone is encouraged to wear red (or orange or yellow – something to help symbolize the tongues of flame that lit on the disciples' heads when the Holy Spirit came to them.) The children and youth created some stunning décor for the sanctuary. This will be an intergenerational service in which we celebrate the "birthday of the church." So come prepared to join in the festivities.

We began an excellent series in Adult Spiritual Formation, with our consideration of Cathleen Falsani's book, *Sin Boldly: A Field Guide for Grace*. We will continue the conversation this week and next. Then on June 2, we will be privileged to have Cathleen with us for worship and Adult Spiritual Formation. Invite someone to come along for this exploration of grace and to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit as well. Looking forward to seeing you Sunday at 10.

May God's new thing flourish within us and among us.

Pastor Rick

