

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
November 13, 2013

Words to Consider: *"The world is not like a picture painted by an artist centuries ago, which now hangs untouchable in a museum. It is more like a work of art in constant process of creation, still in studio."*

Ernesto Cardenal

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **CHURCH COUNCIL** meets **Thursday, November 14 at 5:00 PM** in the Parlor.
- ❖ **CHURCH CHOIR** **Thursday, November 14 at 7:30 PM** in the Parlor. All are welcome to join in song (and fun).
- ❖ **SPIRE DEADLINE, Friday, November 15.**
- ❖ **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 10:00 a.m. Worship: *New Day Coming* & Sunday School for Children and Youth. 11:30 a.m. Adult Spiritual Formation: *Animate* video with Mark Scandarette, "Jesus: the Revolution of Love," led by Doug Davidson**
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, November 19, 10:30 AM** at the Terraces of Los Altos at Janet Maxwell's apartment. The address is 373 Pine Lane, #2106, Los Altos. Let Pastor Rick know if you need transportation.
- ❖ **BAPTISTS LUNCHING TOGETHER, Wednesday, November 20, Noon – "How Regions Can Help Churches Be at their Best"** with Executive Ministers Marcia Patton, Evergreen Association, Steve Bills, ABC of Central Pacific Coast (Northern California and Oregon), and Tim Brown, Growing Healthy Churches. Grand Lake Gardens in Oakland. Lunch is \$8.00. For reservations contact Joan Thatcher, (510) 350-7008. If you would like a ride let Pastor Rick know.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

- ❖ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** will be **Thursday, November 21 (not 28) at 10 AM** at Hobe's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All women of our church community are invited. Please join us.

- ❖ **GRATITUDE POTLUCK, Friday November 22 at 6:00 PM** for folk of all ages in the Fellowship Hall. Join us for an intergenerational potluck dinner and celebration of all for which we have to be grateful. Bring a dish to share. You may also bring turkeys and canned food for Ecumenical Hunger Program that evening. Invite a friend, family member, colleague, neighbor or stranger to join us in this time of celebration!
- ❖ **“FOUND FAITHFUL, IN LITTLE, WITH MUCH, WITH ALL” – STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY, November 24, 10:00 AM.** We will bring our 2013 pledges as well as our food offerings for EHP as part of a service of thanksgiving.
- ❖ **INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE, Tuesday, November 26, 7:30 PM** in our sanctuary. This year's theme is **"Pathways to a Grateful Heart: Inspiring Each Other to Expressions of Gratitude."**
- ❖ **HANGING OF THE GREENS, Saturday, November 30, 10:00 AM.** We will decorate the church for the Advent to Epiphany season. There will be activities for all ages. Coffee, juice, fruit, doughnuts for extra enticement. Help make our Advent to Epiphany Worship Brainstorming a technicolor reality.



SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING FOR NOVEMBER is for **Ecumenical Hunger Program**. Our church has been involved with this very worthwhile program for many years by contributing food, clothing and other household items. Church members volunteer their time, and we give monetary support through this annual offering. To date we have received **\$290** toward our goal

of **\$600**. In addition to the special offering, we are again collecting turkeys, hams, roast or whole chickens as well as other items as part of November's gratitude focus.



IN THE WORLD

\$10,000 in OGHS Emergency Relief Funds Provided for Victims of the Philippine Typhoon. Additional Relief Aid Urgently Needed.

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 11/11/13)— Super typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippine islands last weekend with devastating force. The Philippine Red Cross estimates that at least 1,200 people were killed by the storm. That number could grow as officials make their

way to remote areas made nearly inaccessible by Haiyan. International Ministries missionaries in the Philippines, Debbie Mulneix and Jonathan and Thelma Nambu, have been contacted by IM and are safe.

In response to this disaster, \$10,000 in emergency relief funds is being sent from One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) to help victims of this massive typhoon.

"IM partners, the Convention of Philippines Baptist Churches (CPBC) and Philippine Baptist Church Development Ministries, in coordination with the Asia Pacific Baptist Aid of Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, received requests for relief in the hardest hit areas in the provinces of Capiz, Iloilo and North Negros, where the majority of CPBC churches are situated," reported Dr. Ben Chan, IM area director for East Asia, India, Hong Kong and China. "CPBC would like to assist in the immediate needs of families by providing food, drinking water, blankets and mats. The relief operation is difficult because of roads destroyed and flooded. Many areas could not be reached yet. Also electricity and communication line are damaged. CPBC is coordinating with government officials to be able to reach the affected areas."

Donations designated to "OGHS Philippines Relief" can be made to FBCPA and will be forwarded to the World Relief Committee of the Board of General Ministries of American Baptist Churches USA. The Committee facilitates American Baptist emergency relief, disaster rehabilitation, refugee work and the development of assistance by establishing policy guidelines and overseeing distribution of the annual One Great Hour of Sharing offering received by churches. Giving through OGHS ensures minimum overhead and maximum assistance. It is an excellent to help where help is so desperately needed.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Kathy Gillam for a wonderful new job at Stanford, beginning in December, in which she will work with successful people in life transitions toward helping the world
- ✚ Pastor Rick for his sister, Joan, who is out of the hospital and doing better (though she broke her foot last week)
- ✚ Melanie Ramirez brings greetings from her father, Steve Reddy; in anticipation of a new program of congregational care
- ✚ For Michael Holmes who has new job with Lockheed Martin in Denver beginning early next year
- ✚ Thelma Parodi who praises God every time she walks into our sanctuary

Concerns – New:

- ✚ Eleanor Satterlee for neighbors on South Court who are facing difficult times
- ✚ Melanie Ramirez remembering veterans on this Veterans' Day weekend
- ✚ For Naomi Schulz who is not feeling well
- ✚ Dan Cudworth for Oleta as she faces surgery November 22
- ✚ Thelma Parodi for her daughter, Lee, who will have back surgery December 8

- ✚ Lois Ville for Don Granholm, Bob and Lucille Towner, Patrice and Richard Heath and all the people we miss and remember
- ✚ For all those affected by typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and southeast Asia
- ✚ For the work with those in need of food, clothing, shelter and opportunity provided by Ecumenical Hunger Program
- ✚ For LeDayne McLeese Polaski (of BPFNA) whose father died recently
- ✚ Carolyn Shepard for Yin Xu-Moore whose father died recently
- ✚ Naomi Schulz for her brother, Mark, who is recovering from a traumatic brain injury
- ✚ Pastor Rick for his sister, Joan, who was recently hospitalized with breathing difficulties
- ✚ Lynn Hunwick for the people of Balasore and Orissa, India, in the aftermath of a severe cyclone and flooding
- ✚ Janet Maxwell for Lee Weaver who is in hospice care at the Terraces
- ✚ Pastor Rick and Dan Cudworth for Patrick Hosfield, assistant conductor of The Choral Project, recovering from a stroke
- ✚ For the work with the homeless American Baptist missionaries serving all over the world through the Board of International Ministries, especially Dan and Sarah Chetti and their mission work in Lebanon and Dan and Sharon Buttry who work as a global peace advocates

Ongoing:

- ✚ For Bob Towner at Manor Care in Sunnyvale and for Lucille
- ✚ For Patrice and Richard Heath as they continue to live with the affects of her cancer
- ✚ Laura Garcia for Janice and other family members with health concerns
- ✚ For Oleta Proctor with ongoing health concerns
- ✚ For Don and Mary Granholm, Ruth Clark, Earl and Virginia Knechtel, Carl Schilling
- ✚ For the residents of the Terraces at Los Altos as they go through a time of transition
- ✚ 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 refugees and all victims of war and disaster everywhere
- ✚ 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
- ✚ For those affected by indiscriminate acts of violence and for the adoption of measures to heal our communities of all the many ways these make us less safe and less free

FROM PASTOR TRIPP

ADVENT IS UNDER WAY!

What? How can it be? It's not even Thanksgiving yet and we're talking about Advent? You betcha. The kids and I are working on the pageant. It's going to be a cinematic short entitled "The Adventures of The Grinch, Nope, Dan Who Misplaced and Generally Neglected Our Holy Savior and Messiah, Christ Jesus (Amen): Episode I". We're having a good time. Be ready to participate. Filming will be ongoing!

Second, if you are online at all, we're also going to try a little photographic meditation. Take a photo and post it on the church Facebook page and any other favorite social media platform with the hashtag #rethinkchurch or #redpoinsettias and we'll be sure to feature them in the Midweek Message and the church bulletin. You'll see here that each day of December has a theme! It has the potential to be fun and beautiful.



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2013

"New Day Coming"

Lectionary reading for the Week: **ISAIAH 12, 65:17-25**; Luke 21:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

I imagine that the real danger of the seasons about to dawn again is not that we lose Jesus in the wrapping paper and egg nog, but that we wrap him up in the green and red tissue, shine up his manger bed with anti-bacterial Clorox, reduce his birth to "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" or "The Gift of the Magi" or "A Christmas Carol," and avoid what Isaiah 65 says to us about the meaning of this extraordinary act of God.

Let me be clear. I do not think that the prophet who uttered these magisterial words had Jesus in mind as he wrote, however much the church has appropriated the words as their own. No, this Isaianic seer was envisioning an unimaginable future while imagining it all too vividly and insisting that it was on the way. We have no way of knowing to whom he was speaking; anyone dwelling in Jerusalem and Judah during the cloudy years between the return from Babylonian exile in 539 B.C.E. and perhaps 450 B.C.E. when the Persians ruled the Middle-Eastern roost, could be the audience. But the words fly far beyond any specific historical context. They ring in the air and drown the ringing bells of the Salvation Army kettles and the electronic chimes of carillon carols.

*Watch! I am creating (or "about to create") new skies and new earth;
earlier things will not be remembered
or even rise up in the heart (Is 65:1).*

This new cosmos is both like and unlike the one we know. We recognize the people and the animals, the cycles of birth and death, the future joy amid the current bouts of oppression and sorrow. How easy it is to romanticize all this at the Christmas season! The babe of Bethlehem in his sanitized manger bed (or candle-lit cave, depending on the version you choose) comes into the world, heralded by angels, attended by shepherds, illuminated by a magic star, and worshipped by wise men with rich gifts, wrapped sumptuously no doubt in gold tinsel and blue satin ribbon, tied up in perfect bows. But romance is far from Isaiah's mind in chapter 65. The cosmos needs a transformation, from top to bottom, from people to animals, from hills to valleys, and God is in that business. No frilly present, no children's choir, no sleigh-filled ditty, no busy sidewalks, should deflect us from the vision of a genuinely new sky and earth, because, God knows, we desperately need one. And God promises that that is precisely what

we are going to get, despite all the Christmas folderol. If Jesus' birth means anything, it means that, namely a transformed cosmos, not another rock around the Christmas tree. (John C. Holbert, "Reflections on Isaiah 65:17-25," November 10, 2013, patheos.com).

Prayer: God of faithful surprises, throughout the ages you have made known your love and power in unexpected ways and places. May we daily perceive the joy and wonder of your abiding presence and offer our lives in gratitude for our redemption. Amen.



A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

Last week's Adult Spiritual Formation provided a meaningful conversation about judgment and forgiveness as we continue to explore Nadia Bolz-Weber's moving memoir, *Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner and Saint*, led by Pastor Tripp. We will take a week off from this study while Pastor Tripp is in Berkeley and conclude it on November 30. If you have not had a chance to read the book (it is not a difficult read,) there is a copy or two available at the church.

Thanks to Soo Kim and Doug Lee who opened their beautiful home to the congregation on Sunday afternoon. A goodly number of our community came to enjoy delicious food, great company and gracious hospitality. It is a delight to have Soo, Doug and Hegene as part of us.

This Sunday we will focus on Deutero-Isaiah's (or is it 3 or 4?) beautiful vision of the Holy Mountain. We will consider this as another way to think about the reign of God. "God's New Thing" is our theme for this year, drawn from Isaiah 43. The vision in Isaiah 65 is very much a complimentary one. What is God's new thing? Where do we see it? How do we live into it? Adult Spiritual Formation will be led by Doug Davidson. We will watch another of the *Animate* videos. This Sunday will feature Mark Scandrette on "Jesus: the Revolution of Love."

Invite someone to share both worship and educational experiences with you and the rest of the congregation. You'll be glad you did.

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

Pastor Rick

