

MIDWEEK MESSAGE

June 5, 2013

Words to Consider: "Hell, I don't know what the church is. Jesus said something about the fact that He was going to build the church. He did say that nothing would prevail over it . . . even the gates of Hell, but He didn't ask me to build it. And He certainly didn't ask me to define it. I believe the church is at work in the world only because of my faith in this Jesus person. Trouble is, I don't know what Jesus is up to or where His church is. That's good because if I found the church then I'd give it a name and start running it."

Will Campbell, Baptist preacher and writer, who died June 3, 2013 in Nashville, TN

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **CHOIR REHEARSAL** this **Thursday, June 6, 7:30 PM** in the Parlor.

- ❖ **THE CHORAL PROJECT** presents its final performances of the season. **EARTHSONGS:** A concert of music from around the world, featuring selections that celebrate our global community and the joy of singing. Highlights include Christopher Tin's epic sounding *Baba Yetu* from the video game "Civilization," along with Brad Holmes' setting of the American hymn *Weeping Mary*. The expressive and dramatic *Horizons*, by Dutch South African composer Peter Louis van Dijk takes you into the heart of the bush, as do the stirring soulful sounds of the Swahili hymn *O Sifuni Mungu* (All Creatures of Our God And King). **Saturday, June 8, 8:00 PM, Mission Santa Clara and Sunday, June 9, 5:00 PM, First Congregational Church, Santa Cruz.** For more information: <http://sjcp.org>. Dan Cudworth, Ruth Winter and Pastor Rick sing with this group.

- ❖ **SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 10:00 AM, Worship: *Widows and Orphans* & Sunday School** for Children and Youth; **11:30 AM, Adult Spiritual Formation: *Sin Boldly: a Field Guide to Grace*,** a wrap up conversation, led by Pastor Tripp.

- ❖ **"OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE"** Presented by **Bay Choral Guild**, Sanford Dole, Artistic Director. BCG tours American music, from Colonial days to the present, spotlighting the best music from our cultural history! In the first half we'll sing a cappella works from the 18th to the 21st centuries by composers working in the "classical" tradition. After intermission, we'll let our hair down and perform hits from a wide variety of American popular genres, accompanied by Tim Getz, BCG's wonderful accompanist, on virtuoso piano. **Sunday, June 9, 4:30 pm. First Baptist Church of Palo Alto.** For more information: <http://baychoralguild.org/concert/>. Jan Gunderson sings with this group.

- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, June 11** 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

- ❖ **SENIOR CHAT, Friday, June 14, 10:00 AM: "The Miracle of Water"** will be considered from philosophical, scientific, and health perspectives. Water is essential to life and being in water is one of the best ways to keep fit or to strengthen our bodies. Some of us found appreciation for water at a young age and some of us later in life, but it is a real loss if we don't appreciate water at some point in our lives. We look forward to hearing from **Lucia Panini**, a key staff person from the Betty Wright Swim Center here in Palo Alto. This program is held in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive. For more information, Dona Smith-Powers, Coordinator (650) 494-3093.
- ❖ **Friday, June 14, 6:00 PM – FATHER'S DAY POT LUCK COOK-OUT!** This will be our first of the season. The church will furnish hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, beverages and condiments. You bring the rest to share. We will be grilling on the patio and afterward we will engage in a spirited but gentle game or two of volleyball. You can play or cheer from the sidelines or both. Bring some along to share in the good food and good fun.
- ❖ **BAPTISTS LUNCHING TOGETHER, Thursday, June 27, Noon** – a panel of those who attended, including Pastor Rick, will bring a report on the first biennial Mission Summit. 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.

The first ABC "**Mission Summit**" will coincide with our **2013 ABC-USA Biennial** on **June 21-23**, in **Kansas City/Overland Park, Kansas**. The Summit's goal is to open space for creative and meaningful conversation to advance the mission and ministry of ABC among the various American Baptist constituents. A preview of "Mission Summit 2013" can be viewed at www.americanbaptists2013.org.



To date we have received **\$479** toward our goal of **\$500** for our **SPECIAL OFFERING FOR MAY** for the **Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America**.

The **SPECIAL OFFERING FOR JUNE** is for **One Great Hour of Sharing**. This annual offering goes through the American Baptist World Relief Office to assist those affected by disasters in the USA and throughout the world. This year's theme is "**Sharing Brings Joy to God.**" Together with 8 other denominations, our gifts nurture stronger futures... through health care, education, job training, and



tools for livelihoods. Together, our gifts bring safety, shelter, and food to refugees after circumstances have made their hometowns uninhabitable. Together, our gifts build homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water and sewage facilities in (places) devastated by earthquakes, floods, and poverty." A gift of \$5000 has already gone from American Baptists for tornado relief in Oklahoma. Please give generously to help those in need. We have received **\$265** toward our goal of **\$1000**.

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!

**ENTERTAINING
ANGELS** PEACEMAKING
THROUGH RADICAL
HOSPITALITY

JULY 15-20, 2013
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, USA

IN THE WORLD

HUNGER KNOWS NO VACATION: While many look forward to rest and relaxation in the summer, the workers and clients of the **South Palo Alto Food Closet** know that hunger doesn't take a vacation. We're grateful for donations of food and cash that help keep the shelves stocked. Oatmeal packets, condiments like ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise, and chicken noodle soup are needed right now. Fresh summer vegetables are also welcome. In summer, some of our regular workers need a break. We also need occasional substitute workers for a two hour shift. The Closet is located at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow, Palo Alto. (650) 494-1760.

"ENDING U.S.-SPONSORED TORTURE FOREVER," Film & Discussion, Friday, June 7, 7:30pm, Unitarian Universalist Church Fireside Room, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto

Produced by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), this 20-minute documentary reports on the facts about torture by the U.S. government after 9/11/01, describes perspectives on torture from a variety of faiths, provides comments from a torture survivor, and addresses how some depictions of torture in popular media are misleading at best. The discussion following the film will be led by Dick Duda, member of the Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice steering committee and the Unitarian Universalist Church. The event is part of NRCAT's "Fact Not Fiction" campaign, and is sponsored by the UUCPA and Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice. Free and open to the public.

FROM HABITAT FOR HUMANITY/GREATER SAN FRANCISCO: We have a chance at being named the **2013 Volunteer Choice** organization in **The Volunteer Center's Volunteer Week Awards**, and **there is only one day left to vote!**

We compete in many contests for titles and donations, but this one is different; **this one is about you**. We rely on the time and dedication of volunteers throughout the year, on our construction sites, in our office, in the ReStore and working in communities in order to achieve our hope of building homes and opportunities. We're rallying hard for this award because it's an award that reflects all of that work, and that we couldn't do what we do without you. It only takes seconds to vote. Please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Top5VolunteerChoiceAward>, and vote today, June 5th, to let everyone know that Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco is the top choice for volunteering in the Bay Area.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Dona Smith-Powers (June 5), Kathy Gillam (June 8)
- ✚ Melanie Ramirez for Daniel who will be graduating from 8th grade this week; for Clara who is going with her school band to Germany and Austria this month; for Oscar who took the SATs last week and said they were "easy"
- ✚ Dan Cudworth for the presence of his parents, Vesta and Murray, in worship
- ✚ Tripp Hudgins for the joy of having Cathleen Falsani in worship today
- ✚ Cathleen Falsani for her first face-to-face meeting with Trish Austin; for three great concerts with Mumford and Sons
- ✚ Pastor Rick for Pastor Tripp who finished his class work last week

- ✚ Carolyn Shepard for Dorothy Aker who is feeling better
- ✚ Virginia Herbert with thanks for Cathleen Falsani and her book, both are blessings
- ✚ Andy Kille for the opportunity to worship with us; for global, interfaith transmission of grace

Concerns:

- ✚ Melanie Ramirez for a safe summer for all children and youth
- ✚ Kathy Gillam for Bob and Lucille Tower
- ✚ Eleanor Satterlee for Patrice Heath who has been told that her cancer is terminal; traveling mercies for Sook, Doug and Jin as they go to Korea for 5 weeks
- ✚ For Paul Tuan, recovering at home from surgery
- ✚ Laura Garcia for Janice who was hospitalized earlier this week; for other family members who are ill; for herself as she faces shoulder surgery the end of the month
- ✚ Pastor Rick for his nephew, Max, as he struggles with aspects of his life; for his sister, Joan, with a broken foot
- ✚ For all those affected by the tornadoes in Oklahoma
- ✚ Carolyn Shepard for Steven as he adjusts to a new living situation and new job
- ✚ For Ruth Owen who is gradually losing the fine points of her vision
- ✚ Mary Martin for grace to learn to live with limits
- ✚ Alan Plessinger for his friend, Mike Callahan, who has returned from Hong Kong for medical treatment
- ✚ Lois Ville for her granddaughter, Storm Dewall, who is still not feeling well
- ✚ Marylea McLean for Eileen Conover who fell and injured her heel
- ✚ For Joanne Jones who is suffering from severe back pain
- ✚ Lucille Towner for Bob who is hospitalized at El Camino Hospital
- ✚ 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 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 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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Because Joanne Jones is laid up with back pain and because it would be generally good to share this opportunity among everyone in our church community, we are looking people to **volunteer to do the refreshments after church** for the last four Sundays in **June – 9, 16, 23, 30**. We will help orient you to what is needed, if you'd like. Please let Pastor Rick or the office know if you can help with this and thanks.

SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 2013

“Widows and Orphans”

Reading for the Week: 1 Kings 17:8-24; Psalm 146; **LUKE 7:11-17**; Galatians 1: 11-24.

Today's passages assert that faith opens us to new dimensions of reality and within these new dimensions, miraculous releases of divine energy, congruent with the laws of nature, are released. Willingness to trust God despite appearances opens us to new possibilities, new energies, and a greater sense of vocation. This is not denial of the harsh realities of life – economic shortfalls, conflict, mortality – but the recognition that these realities are not the whole story. Within the concreteness and limitations of life, unexpected possibilities may emerge. God's gentle providence brings forth possibilities where we only see limitations.

I believe that healing energies can be released in the dynamic process of divine call and human response. I believe our touch and prayers can transform mind, body, and spirit. Still, my experience is that our intercessions and anointings often are effective in incremental rather than dramatic ways, and that often the only result – and this is perhaps the most important – is a transformation of spirit that may ease the pain and give confidence in God's care, even though the ultimate diagnosis remains unchanged.

Still, the healing of the widow of Nain's son provides an important glimpse into Jesus' healing ministry and our own. Healing is grounded in compassion, in a feeling of heart-felt and visceral solidarity with the pain of others, in this case, the loss of a child's life and his mother's grief and diminished economic situation. The quest for healing challenges us to cross boundaries of clean and unclean: Jesus' own ritual purity is compromised by his touching the corpse. Finally, our compassionate, boundary-breaking action, can elicit amazing responses: the dead may not rise, but dying spirits may be revitalized. While we cannot negate the possibility of such dramatic healings, we can be God's partners in the everyday healings that

may be more life-and-world-transforming over the long haul. We can experience a life-changing abundance of divine energy in a world dominated by scarcity thinking. (Bruce Epperly, "Abundance in a World of Scarcity," *The Adventurous Lectionary*, May 28, 2013, patheos.com).

Prayer: *Provident God, whose love enfolds the helpless, the needy, and those who mourn, give us strength through Jesus Christ to be instruments of your compassion to those who are desolate or wounded by life. Amen.*

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

We had a wonderful time last Sunday with Cathleen Falsani. Both in worship and in Adult Spiritual Formation we benefited from her wisdom and grace. We were blessed to have her here because she is a friend of Pastor Tripp's and was in the Bay Area for a series of concerts by Mumford and Sons. If you have not had a chance to read her book, *Sin Boldly: A Field Guide to Grace*, we purchased 5 copies for the library so one should be available soon. We will finish up our conversations concerning the book as well as Cathleen's sharing with us in this Sunday's Adult Spiritual Formation.

The worship theme for Sunday is "Widows and Orphans." It is interesting that both the reading from Hebrew scripture and from the gospel deal with widows who lose their only sons, only to have them raised from the dead – one by Elijah, the other by Jesus. Both are miracles of compassion. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the phrase "widows and orphans" can stand for all those who are poor and outcast, desperate and downtrodden. Care for widows, orphans and the stranger in your midst was clearly mandated as righteousness. It was rooted in the expectation that gracious hospitality would be a way of life in the arid, hostile environment of the ancient Middle East.

Come Sunday at 10 AM and bring someone along to share the morning with you.

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



SUNDAY WITH CATHLEEN FALSANI

