

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
September 11, 2013

Words to Consider: *“God’s grace is not defined as God being forgiving to us even though we sin. Grace is when God is a source of wholeness, which makes up for my failings. My failings hurt me and others and even the planet, and God’s grace to me is that my brokenness is not the final word. My selfishness is not the end-all...instead, it’s that God makes beautiful things out of even my own shit. Grace isn’t about God creating humans as flawed beings and then acting all hurt when we inevitably fail and then stepping in like the hero to grant us peace—like saying, ‘Oh, it’s OK, I’ll be a good guy and forgive you.’ It’s God saying, ‘I love the world too much to let your sin define you and be the final word. I am a God who makes all things new.’”*

Nadia Bolz-Weber, Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **CHURCH CHOIR** will resume its weekly rehearsals at **7:30 PM** in the Parlor on **Thursday, September 12th**. All are welcome to join in song (and fun).

- ❖ **SENIOR CHAT, Friday, September 13: "Memory Issues"** is a subject we all will face - in one way or another. Duanni Hurd is President and co-founder of StarLight CareGivers. She has a MA in Communication and has had over 13 years of experience with major technology companies before stepping aside to pursue her passion of serving with the vulnerable. Out of her own and her husband's experience and struggles with grandparents and parents' needs they now desire to enhance the quality of life for seniors and their family members. She will share about early detection for memory issues, including Alzheimers, and how to care with people and caregivers who struggle with this issue. Held in the Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church, 670 East Meadow Drive. For information, Dona Smith-Powers, Coordinator (650) 494-3093.

- ❖ **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 10:00 AM. Worship:** *“The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day”* with Pastor Tripp preaching and **Sunday School** for children and youth. **Adult Spiritual Formation** will kick off at 11:30 AM. on the topic, "What I Did on my Summer Vacation"

- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, September 17, 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.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS



September's Special Mission Offering will be for **InnVision and the Opportunity Center**. The center functions as a service to the wider community by providing a creative response to home-less related problems and offering opportunities for the community to respond to those needs. Its highest concern is to provide a positive and caring environment that respects the dignity of every person. To date we have received **\$235** toward our goal of **\$600**.

- ❖ **MEN'S BREAKFAST, 8:00 AM, Wednesday, September 18**, at Hobee's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All the men from our Church family are welcome.
- ❖ **BAPTISTS LUNCHING TOGETHER, Wednesday, September 18, Noon** – "The Groves of ABHOW: Development of Dementia Care and the Miracle that Brought it to Life," Kay Kallandar, Vice President of Strategic Development, American Baptist Homes of the West. 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.
- ❖ **MISSIONS TASK TEAM, Wednesday, September 18, 2:00 PM** in the Parlor. If you have any interest in discussing where the church might give the title of the sale of the annex, please join us.
- ❖ **CHURCH COUNCIL, Thursday, September 19, 5:00 PM** in the Parlor.
- ❖ **RENEWAL TASK TEAM, Saturday, September 21, 9:00 AM** in the Parlor.
- ❖ **SPIRE DEADLINE** for October is **Monday, September 23**.
- ❖ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** meets on the **Thursday, September 26 at 10 AM**. All women of our church community are invited. Please join us at Hobee's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, in the "Wine Room." All women of the congregation welcome.

ROOM FOR HOPE ARTS FESTIVAL IN SAN FRANCISCO

Sponsored by Bay Area Lutherans, Bright Stars of Bethlehem presents *Room for Hope*, a cultural festival that shares the story of the Holy Land and celebrates Palestinian creativity.

When: September 26th - 28th, 2013

Where: San Francisco State University, Creative Arts Bldg., 1600 Holloway Ave, S.F.

What: Educates by means of dance, concerts, seminars, poetry, entrepreneurial development

Bright Stars of Bethlehem is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 and promotes peace in the Middle East through health, education, cultural and spiritual development for Palestinians.

For program schedule, please go to info@roomforhope.me, or www.brightstarsbethlehem.org. For more information, call Martha Meyer at 650-854-7228

A NOTE FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TASK TEAM

This team has responsibility for caring for **our Hospitality needs** on Sunday mornings and at Intergenerational Events on some Friday nights. Our Team invites all members of our congregation to participate in all activities as interest and schedules permit. The Team will circulate **a sign-up schedule this Sunday for each one to volunteer to help** with the many acts of hospitality which are available for everyone to enjoy. See Eleanor Satterlee for more information. Telephone, 650.326.5289 and/or email, ejgs@sbcglobal.net

IN THE WORLD

Syria agrees to plan to yield chemical weapons: Syria is accepting Russia's proposal to hand over its chemical-weapons stocks to prevent a military airstrike by the U.S. "Let's see if we can come up with language that avoids a strike but accomplishes our key goals to make sure that these chemical weapons are not used," said U.S. President Barack Obama, while the U.S. Senate is preparing revised legislation. Reuters (9/10)

World Happiness Report suggests policy alignment with well-being: The United Nations 2013 World Happiness Report argues that countries' policies should reflect what their populations deem as necessary for happiness. "There is now a rising worldwide demand that policy be more closely aligned with what really matters to people as they themselves characterize their well-being," says Jeffrey Sachs, director of Columbia University's Earth Institute and one of the report's authors. The Huffington Post (9/9)

Financing is the key to making Africa self-reliant for food; African farmers are seeking private funding to help improve crop yields and possibly make the continent self-sufficient when it comes to food. "In the next 10 years, African countries should not rely on food aid, but should produce their own food and buy from within Africa when they run out of food," says Mandivamba Rukuni of the Barefoot Education for Africa Trust. Inter Press Service (9/8)

Using technology to help African fish farmers prosper: Farmerline, an Africa technology startup, is using voice messages delivered by mobile phone to help fish farmers in Africa do a better job and increase revenue. Listening to farmers' needs is essential. "For us to create biggest impact, we have to focus on the farmers," says Alloysius Attah of Farmerline. Social Capital Markets (8/30)

Gender issues are becoming part of NATO's peace, security initiatives: Gender issues are increasingly being included in NATO's peace and security planning, but "[t]here's still a long way to go before women will have fully assumed their rightful place in matters of peace and security," says Mari Skare, the NATO secretary-general's special representative for women, peace and security. More cooperation is need to produce "sustained results," she says. Devex.com (free registration) (9/4)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Lynn Hunwick (September 16)
- ✚ Belated birthday greetings for Jan Gunderson (September 8)
- ✚ Paul Tuan celebrating 57 years of marriage to Jessie
- ✚ Thelma Parodi for the opportunity to look back at lessons we have learned over the years and for the people who helped to shape our life in faith
- ✚ Mary Martin for a new great granddaughter, Vivian Charlotte
- ✚ Daniel Ramirez for the fun that he and Clara are having in the marching band
- ✚ For the music of Ruth Butterfield-Winter
- ✚ For all the saints who from their labors rest, our great cloud of witnesses, who had the vision to start FBCPA and sustain it over 120 years
- ✚ For our interns, Doug and Naomi

Concerns – New:

- ✚ Marilyn Hunwick for Ramesh Kumar who is recovering from brain tumor surgery
- ✚ Chip Clark for Joanne Jones who is recovering from back surgery and a fractured rib
- ✚ Lois Ville for the family and friends of her neighbor, Marge, who died this week, especially her close friend, Clia, whose is living with dementia
- ✚ For all those affected by the ongoing civil war in Syria that peace with justice may be realized
- ✚ For the residents of the Terraces at Los Altos as they go through a time of transition
- ✚ For Betsy Anderson who is recovering from hand surgery
- ✚ For all who are affected by the summer's wildfires
- ✚ For the work of the Opportunity Center and InnVision
- ✚ All those remembering the tragedy of the bombing of the World Trade Center

Ongoing:

- ✚ Bob and Lucille Towner as Bob continues at Manor Care in Sunnyvale
- ✚ Laura Garcia for Janice and other family members with health concerns
- ✚ For Patrice and Richard Heath as she lives with cancer
- ✚ For Oleta Proctor with ongoing health concerns
- ✚ For Don and Mary Granholm, Ruth Clark, Earl and Virginia Knechtel, Carl Schilling
- ✚ 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

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2013

"The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day"

Lectionary reading for the Week: **PSALM 14**; Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; **LUKE 15:1-10**; 1 Timothy 1:12-17. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

Wendell Berry's writings are soaked in these parables found in Luke 15. His short story "Watch with Me" is a kind of extended meditation on a community watching out for a lost member with mental health problems ("Nightlife" is the nickname bestowed upon him), or as the other characters in the story put it, he had "a spell" come over him. They watch him and keep him safe until he is himself again. Toward the end of the story, still under the spell, Nightlife is in a barn, surrounded by friends who have been trying to keep him safe and he begins to preach on this very parable of the lost sheep. Berry writes, "Though Christ, in speaking this parable, asked his hearers to think of the shepherd, Nightlife understood it entirely from the viewpoint of the lost sheep, who could imagine fully the condition of being lost and even the hope of rescue, but could not imagine rescue itself."

“Oh, it’s a dark place, my brethren,’ Nightlife said. ‘It’s a dark place where the lost sheep tries to find his way, and can’t. The slopes is steep and the footing hard. The ground is rough and stumbly and dark, and overgrown with bushes and briars, a hilly and hollery place. And the shepherd comes a-looking and a-calling to his lost sheep, and the sheep knows the shepherd’s voice and he wants to go to it, but he can’t find the path, and he can’t make it.’”

“The others knew that Nightlife knew what he was talking about. They knew he was telling what it was to be him. And they were moved.”

Luke 15 begins with the Religious Authorities murmuring that Jesus receives sinners and eats with them because, “The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him,” and it is in response to their murmuring that Jesus tells these parables. But I wonder, in the first place, if the sinners were drawn to Jesus because he could imagine fully the condition of being lost? The very reason he was the Good Shepherd was because he understood entirely the viewpoint of the lost sheep and he understood them because he received them and ate with them. (Kyle Childress, “Signs, Sheep and Shepherds,” 9-8-2010, ekkesiaproject.org).

Prayer: Merciful God, your desire to bring us into your commonwealth is so great that you seek us in the places of our ignorance, and the forgotten corners where we hide in despair. Gather us into your loving embrace, and pour upon us your wise and holy Spirit, so that we may become faithful servants in whom you rejoice with all the company of heaven. Amen.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

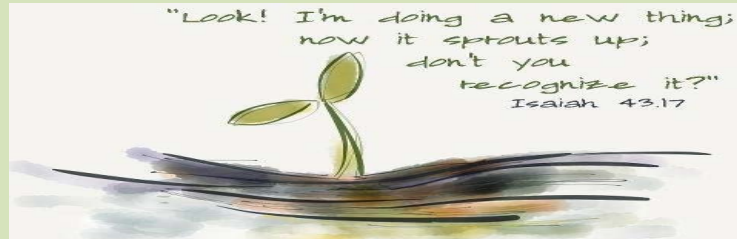
An extra large helping of gratitude for everyone who pitched in to make our Rally Day and 120th Anniversary celebration so wonderful. Special thanks to Marilyn Hunwick for all the work she did in the archives and setting up the displays, to Thelma Parodi and Lynn Hunwick for sharing their memories, to Eleanor Satterlee and Pastor Tripp for organizing the luncheon. Though we missed Jan (who was off celebrating her birthday at the 49ers home opener,) we were delighted with the musical offerings of Ruth Butterfield-Winter, who played everything from Chopin to down home gospel with gracious flexibility and a smile on her face. Pastor Tripp led the children and youth in an informative exploration of our roots in real time and via ipad. We also celebrated the blessings of our interns, Doug and Naomi, and pledged to support one another through this coming school year.

It was a great day to focus our attention on those who came before us, who built this church and kept it going over many years. As I said Sunday, their legacy is not just the rich resources they left behind, it is also their indomitable faith which informs our present ministry and calls us to participate in God's new thing as it unfolds before us.

This Sunday I will be in Denver, Colorado, preaching the installation service for my friend, Brian Henderson, as pastor of the historic First Baptist Church. It was interesting to hear Paul Tuan say Sunday that he and Jessie were married in that church 57 years ago. Pastor Tripp will be preaching and leading in worship here. His theme, drawn from the classic children's book, is "The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day," focused on Psalm 14 and Luke 15:1-10. There will be Sunday School for children and youth as well as the kick-off for Adult Spiritual Formation, considering "What I Did on my Summer Vacation." It promises to be a good day at FBCPA. I encourage you all to be here at 10 and stay for ASF. Why not bring a friend to share the day? See you next week.

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

Pastor Rick



Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path



Words of Wisdom



A History Lesson



Interns and Pastors

