

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
September 18, 2013

Words to Consider: *“In a world reeling from both the horrors of terror all around as well as unimaginable natural disaster, the church is called to feel, to embody and to proclaim the passion of a God who hurts with the world’s hurt and who longs for the peace and healing we cry out for more deeply than we can imagine. It is also called to know and proclaim that equal passion for truth and justice in the world that resides in God’s heart. The Church needs to embrace both God’s compassion for the world and God’s judgment on “those who grow strong in the land of falsehood” both in its own life and in its word to the world.”*

Howard Wallace

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **MEN’S BREAKFAST, 8:00 AM, Wednesday, September 18,** at Hobe’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.
- ❖ **CHURCH CHOIR Thursday, September 19 at 7:30 PM** in the Parlor. All are welcome to join in song (and fun).
- ❖ **RENEWAL TASK TEAM, Saturday, September 21, 9:00 AM** in the Parlor.
- ❖ **RIDE AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING, Saturday, September 21, 2:00 PM.** Join Garrett Zambrows who is riding his bicycle across the country to call attention to American Baptist efforts to stop human trafficking. Meet at the Jamba Juice at the Powell Street Market in Emeryville for a ride with him across the bicycle path on the

new Bay Bridge and back. It is a 45 minute ride and fairly level. Garrett is the son of Shawn Zambrows, ABC chaplain at Purdue University.

- ❖ **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 10:00 AM. Worship:** *"There Is a Balm in Gilead"* and **Sunday School** for children and youth. **Adult Spiritual Formation** at 11:30 AM will be led by Andy Kille on the topic, "To the Blogosphere and Beyond: Navigating the Congregation's New Blog Site." During the hour, he will introduce and orient us to our new blog page.
- ❖ **SCHOLA ADVENTUS, "Sacred and Profane: English Music from the Renaissance," Sunday, September 22, 4:00 PM,** First Lutheran Church, 600 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto. For more information, go to flcpa.org.
- ❖ **SPIRE DEADLINE, Monday, September 23.**
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, September 24, 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

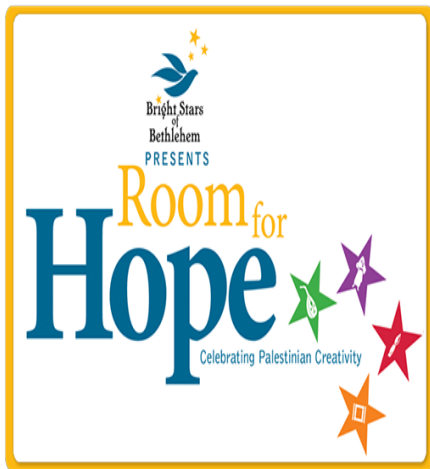


September's Special Mission Offering will be for **InnVision and the Opportunity Center**. The center functions as a service to the wider community by providing a creative response to home-less related problems and offering opportunities for the community to respond to those needs. Its highest concern is to provide a positive and caring environment that respects the dignity of every person. To date we have received **\$445** toward our goal of **\$600**.

- ❖ **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.

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



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

IN THE WORLD

How will Chinese aid to Africa evolve? China has funded various development and trade projects in Africa for decades, primarily on a state-to-state basis. Researcher Xue Lei expresses hope that China will expand its relationships with nongovernmental organizations and other groups to finance projects that directly affect everyday people. IRINNews.org (9/17)

Eliminating inequality is about more than wealth, OECD chief says: The world can reduce inequality through programs improving health and education, as well as through income and employment reforms, writes Angel Gurría, secretary-general of the OECD. "[I]t is more important

than ever to put the necessary instruments in place to help us tackle inequality and create fair and inclusive societies," Gurria argues. The Guardian (London)/Poverty Matters blog (9/18)

Why we must work together to defeat AIDS/HIV, TB and malaria: Lessening the grip of tuberculosis, AIDS/HIV and malaria will do much to create a healthier world for all, write Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Swedish government official Gunilla Carlsson. African countries need to increase investment in health services as a complement to donor funding, they write. The Huffington Post/The Blog (9/16)

Child mortality halved since 1990, UN report says: Globally, childhood deaths have been cut in half since 1990, says a report from UNICEF, the World Health Organization and World Bank. While countries in eastern and southern Africa have successfully reduced child deaths by 50% or more, those in west and central Africa have not. UNICEF estimates that 6.6 million children younger than 5 died last year mainly from malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea. ABC News/The Associated Press (9/13)

Disabled need access to disaster risk, relief information: The disabled can do a better job of preparing for disasters and preventing deaths if they have access to information about disaster risks and relief, experts say. "People with disabilities must be seen not as passive recipients of humanitarian care, but rather, as equal participants in disaster risk reduction," the news service IRIN writes. IRINNews.org (9/16)

Adding policewomen will create change in Afghanistan, Oxfam says: Additional policewomen and improved working conditions in Afghanistan will help counteract gender violence, says Oxfam. "Effective policewomen, safe in their jobs, are a critical factor in sustaining change for the better," says Oxfam's Elizabeth Cameron. Thomson Reuters Foundation (9/10)

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Tammy Poffenroth (September 21)

Concerns – New:

- ✚ For all those affected by the flooding in Colorado
- ✚ For all those affected by the shooting at the Naval Yard in Washington, DC
- ✚ 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
- ✚ 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

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 22, 2013

"There Is a Balm in Gilead"

Lectionary reading for the Week: Psalm 79:1-9; **JEREMIAH 8:18-9:1**; Luke 16:1-13; 1Timothy 2:1-7. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

Self-righteous judgment among humans, while all too common in today's religious landscape, is inconsistent with biblical thinking for at least two reasons.

First, final judgment in the Bible is always reserved for God. Second, God's response in judgment is not simply justified anger or divine satisfaction for being in the right; but Israel's God experiences sorrow and grief, even as words of judgment are being proclaimed against the people. One of the most astonishing aspects of the book of Jeremiah is found at the intersection between the prophet and God, between the human and the divine.

In Sunday's lectionary passage, Jeremiah's words and the words of the LORD mingle and merge, conveying dismay over the people's current status and the impending doom that awaits Judah and Jerusalem. The prophet's overwhelming sadness is hard to distinguish from

the LORD's grief. Thus, this passage gives us a glimpse into the inner-workings of Jeremiah, the prophet, and the God whose word destines the people for catastrophic judgment.

However, self-righteous judgment--whether liberal or conservative, traditional or progressive, embodied in an individual or in a community--does not reflect God's way of being. The smug satisfaction of being correct at the expense of others may be common in our increasingly contentious religious terrain. However, from a Christian and biblical point of view, these sentiments have no place. God and prophet are broken-hearted and despairing at the fate of the people. The proper response to catastrophic judgment is not a theologically justifying "I told you so" or "You got what you deserved." It is grief, sorrow, and lament: "Is there no balm in Gilead?" (Frank M. Yamada, "Commentary on Jeremiah 8:18-9:1," 9-19-2010, workingpreacher.org).

Prayer: God of power and justice, like Jeremiah you weep over those who wander from you, turn aside to other gods, and enter into chaos and destruction. By your tears and through your mercy, teach us your ways and write them on our hearts so that we may follow faithfully the path you show us. Amen.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

First Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado

Thanks to Pastor Tripp and everyone else who helped to lead worship and education last Sunday while I was in Denver. In spite of the abundance of rain in that region (including the devastating floods around Boulder,) I had a delightful weekend. My friend, Brian



Henderson became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Denver about 10 months ago. The congregation was down to 15 people when Brian began. By opening their doors to the community in which they are located (their elegant, historical building is directly across from the state capitol,) they have experienced some significant growth in a short time. They are the newest member of our Evergreen Region of American Baptists.

I was honored that Brian asked me to preach the sermon for his installation service. One highlight of the service was 65 men from the Denver Gay Men's Chorus singing the anthem and benediction response (not to mention the hymns!) They were quite wonderful. I was treated royally; it was a great experience.

This Sunday our worship will focus on Jeremiah's aching lament over the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Where does one find comfort and healing in a time of deep

distress? It appears that this focus follows closely on last week's sermon and worship. In so many ways it seems like the best of times and the worst of times when we consider the goings on in this old world. For some, our prayer is "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" For other it is "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no healer there?"

Adult Spiritual Formation will be led by Andy Kille. Andy has been our webmaster for several years now. For some months, Andy, Pastor Tripp and I have been developing a new approach to our online presence through a "blog page." Andy will be here to help orient us as we launch this effort – "To the Blogosphere and Beyond: Navigating the Congregation's New Blog Site." Come, explore where we have never gone before! See you Sunday at 10 and stay for ASF. Bring someone along to share the day.

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

Pastor Rick



Doug with the Children and Youth



We Hear from the Opportunity Center



Pastor Tripp Brings the Word

