

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
October 23, 2013

Words to Consider: *"Prayer is the occasion for honesty about oneself and generosity about others."*

Charles Cousar

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** this month will be on **October 24, Thursday at 10 AM** at Thelma Parodi's home, 543 South El Monte Ave., Los Altos. Ladies can bring something to share if desired. All women of our church community are invited.



NEWS FLASH! Thursday, October 24 at the United Nations Day Reception at the UN Film Festival, our own **MARY GRANHOLM will be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the UN Association.** Members of the church as well as friends and admirers of Mary are encouraged to attend and honor Mary for a remarkable and steadfast legacy. The event will be held at the **Oshman Family Jewish Community Center, Cultural Art Hall, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto.**

- ❖ **CHURCH CHOIR Thursday, October 24** at 7:30 PM in the Parlor. All are welcome to join in song (and fun).

- ❖ Save the date! **POTLUCK AND PUMPKIN CARVING, Friday October 25 at 6:00 PM** for folk of all ages in the Fellowship Hall. "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us!"



- ❖ **SUNDAY, October 27, 10:00 AM – Worship:** *A Lesson in Humility* (Luke 18:9-14) with Sunday School for Children and Youth. **11:30 AM to 1:30 PM – Advent-to-Epiphany Worship Brainstorming Party**, led by Naomi Schulz. Everyone in the congregation is invited and encouraged to help plan a wonderful Advent/Christmas/Epiphany season.

- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, October 29.**

- ❖ **OPEN HOUSE, Sunday, November 10 at 3:00 PM.** Soo Kim, Doug and Hegene Lee invite the congregation to join them in a celebration of their new home at 2320 Bryant Street in Palo Alto. Please drop by to join in the festivity and warm their home.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS



ALL SAINTS IN SONG

A service of music and memory

Friday, November 1

7:30pm

Join us as we welcome Ana Hernandez to our sanctuary to sing and pray with us for this very special All Saints worship service.

First Baptist Church, Palo Alto

305 North California Avenue

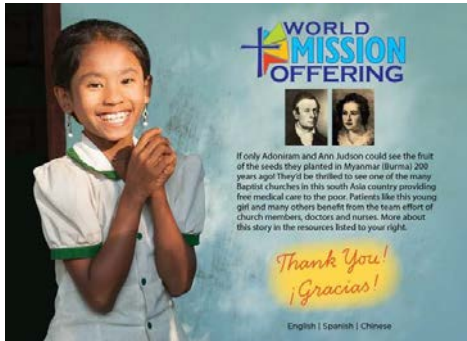
Palo Alto, CA 94301

650-327-0561

In partnership with All Souls Episcopal Parish in Berkeley, CA, we are grateful for the chance to welcome Ana. We hope you will join us. Bring an instrument. Bring your voice. All are encouraged to play and pray.

"Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen." - Episcopal Book of Common Prayer

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October's Special Mission Offering is our annual **WORLD MISSION OFFERING**. American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (operating as International Ministries (IM) began its pioneer mission work approximately 200 years ago in Burma and today works in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas. More than 100 full-time missionaries along with short-term missionaries and mission partners serve in more than 70 countries. Its central

mission is to help people **come** to faith in Jesus, **grow** in their relationship with God and **change** their worlds through the power of the Spirit. This year's theme is **Embrace the Cause**. To date we have received **\$505** toward our goal of **\$1,000**.

IN THE WORLD

A note from our missionary, Dan Buttry, reporting from the Ukraine:

Ukraine. Over the weekend I facilitated a training for psychologists and counselors. There is a Christian network of psychologists and counselors in Ukraine, and they sponsored the workshop. They also invited some secular folks, but I didn't know there were a couple of folks like that in the training until after it was over! The two secular folks really appreciated the work we did in the Bible (using Jacob and Esau's story as a key case study), one even speaking strongly about how she was able to see the Bible in a very different and positive way.

I have never trained these kinds of professionals, so I was a little nervous as I was developing the design. So I decided to use my anxiety by beginning the workshop leaning back in a chair like I was on a couch and asked them to do therapy for me. I asked them about what they might do to maximize their learning in the workshop. Also, given that they know how devious the human mind can be, what they might do to minimize their learning--and choose not to do those things. That beginning let them know we weren't going to have a weekend of lectures! The whole training went great after that as we got into issues of margins and trauma healing as well as the process of reconciliation seen with Jacob and Esau.

One of the participants, Eduard, is a teacher who has a class on conflict. He was so ecstatic about the workshop and the Bible Study Manual on Conflict Transformation. He'd never had this kind of training or interaction and acted like a thirsty man coming to an oasis. We ate our meals together over the weekend, and talked late into the evening on Saturday.

Between the class and the weekend training, on Friday afternoon I went with 6 students to downtown Kiev. One of the places we went to was the Chernobyl Museum. Chernobyl is about 60 miles north of Kiev. It was a very moving exhibition about the disaster, dealing with the criminal behavior of the government in keeping the incident secret for almost two weeks while people were going on with their normal activities and exposing them to more radiation. Most moving was the sacrifice of the firefighters, many of whom died from radiation poisoning to put out the fire and set up the concrete sarcophagus to seal with ruined reactor building. They say there is a 30 kilometer zone that will be unfit for human habitation for 20,000 years. Wow!

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Lynn Hunwick that the big storm did not hit Orissa in India
- ✚ Thelma Tuttle for a good trip to Rochester, New York, to see their grandson, Connor; they also bring greetings from the Liebolds
- ✚ Thelma Parodi "Isn't something that we can have a relationship with God. Praise God!"
- ✚ Pastor Rick for the good work of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptist over the past twenty years and for the work that lies ahead

Concerns – New:

- ✚ Janet Maxwell for Lee Weaver who is in hospice care at the Terraces
- ✚ Pastor Rick and Dan Cudworth for Patrick Hoskins, assistant conductor of The Choral Project, recovering from a stroke
- ✚ Doug Lee remembering Christians in Korea
- ✚ For our 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 the work with the homeless of the Opportunity Center and InnVision
- ✚ 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, OCTOBER 27, 2013

“A Lesson in Humility”

Lectionary reading for the Week: Psalm 65; Joel 2:23-32; **LUKE 18:9-14**; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

"The parable is one of two men who each offer polar opposite prayers. The contrast between the two prayers is impossible to miss. The Pharisee stands apart, probably so that his litany of virtues can be heard by other worshipers and by the tax collector. The Pharisee's prayer keeps the focus on himself. It is "I" this and "I" that. His list of virtues divides the community rather than unifying it. It perpetuates the us/them dichotomy we often use in thinking of other people.

The tax collector stands, on the margins, "beating his breast." This is a physical gesture associated with women rather than men in the Ancient Near East, emphasizing the unexpected nature of his actions. He keeps his head bent. His words are simple. He does not embark on an eloquent litany of his sins to match the Pharisee's virtues. He hopes in God alone, not in an extravagant outpouring of remorse. Like other powerless outsiders in Luke and in the Old Testament—the poor, the widow, the stranger—the tax collector casts himself on the mercies of God, and God hears and upholds his prayer.

Stories invite us to identify with characters. Human nature being what it is, we like to identify with the more positive characters in a story. The Pharisee would not be my choice of a character with whom to identify. If I identified with the Pharisee, that would be like admitting that I am proud of my adherence to certain moral values. It would mean I secretly felt that my credentials and education and good intentions made me better than other people and more deserving of God's attention and salvation. It's too threatening to identify with the Pharisee in this parable. People of Jesus' day would have been surprised to see a respected religious professional showing his arrogance like this. What would people of our day think of us if and when we allow a hidden arrogance to show, however briefly?

I would rather identify with the tax collector, not, of course, because he is hated by his community due to his exploitative profession, but because God liked his prayer better." (Alyce McKenzie, "The Power of Persistence, Part Two: Reflections on Luke 18:9-14," 10-21-2013, patheos.com).

Prayer: *O God, the strength of those who humbly confess their sin and place their hope in you, save us from vain displays of righteousness, and give us grace to keep faith with the true humility of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

I had a wonderful trip to the East Coast to participate in the 20th anniversary celebration of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists – “Coming of Age: A Living Jubilee.” The weather was beautiful. We met in two historic churches – First Unitarian in Providence and the First Baptist Church in America. The program was well-received and meaningful. It was good to see old friends and colleagues and to meet new ones. The work of full inclusion of lgbtqi folk in Baptist circles has come far in the past 40 years (beginning with American Baptists Concerned in 1973) but there is still much work to be done. I hope you will join me in prayer and work for that day of when we will have learned to embrace of all God’s children in love. If you would like to hear more about the event, I’d be glad to talk to you. For those of you who expressed concern, this trip was vacation time for me.

This Sunday we will focus on the familiar parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The crowd might have had some trouble with the Pharisee, but they would have despised the tax collector. What is Jesus doing when he blesses the tax collector over the Pharisee? What lesson is he trying to teach his first disciples and us about the way we see ourselves and others? It’s so easy to see the speck in someone else’s eye.

We are in for a special treat after worship when Naomi will be leading us in an “Advent to Epiphany Worship Brainstorming Party.” Naomi has been interning with well-known worship design artist, Marcia McFee, and will be bringing some of that work to share with us. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to engage in planning worship and other events for the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany season that will be meaningful to us and we can claim as our own. Please plan to be here at 10 AM for worship and Sunday School and then to stay for the workshop. A light lunch will be provided.

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

Pastor Rick





“Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God…”

Isaiah 2:3

Advent-to-Epiphany Worship Brainstorm Party

Sunday, October 27th, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm

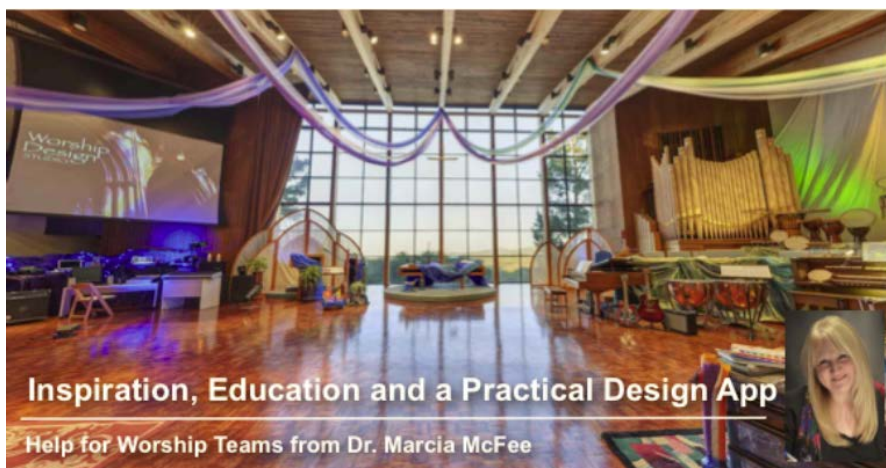
This Advent, Isaiah invites us to “go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God”, and a Psalmist assures us that “For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.” This season’s scriptures are redolent with messages of new hope and rebuilding the house of God. But, what is this house of God? What is the hope the scriptures promise? And, what do the house of God and hope have to do with First Baptist Church, Palo Alto this Advent and Christmas season?

Come join Pastor Rick, Pastor Tripp, and Interns Naomi and Doug for fun brainstorming around how we’re building our “house of God” in worship this Advent-to-Epiphany season!

We’ll be drawing on the wisdom of worship specialist Dr. Marcia McFee to inspire us through images, scripture, poetry, music, and other arts to prepare our house of God, and bless our lives with hope.

Intern Naomi worked with Marcia over the summer and will be bringing the fruits of her learning to share with us. Come prepared to have a good time!

Lunch and childcare provided



Marcia’s bio, blog, and samples of her work are available on her website:

<http://www.marciamcfee.com/>

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