

MIDWEEK MESSAGE
November 27, 2013

Words to Consider: *“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.”*

Melody Beattie

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



- ❖ **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** Church office will be closed on Thursday, November 28 and Friday November 29. Enjoy the feast.
- ❖ **SERVICES FOR PATRICE HEATH:** Visitation, Friday, November 29 from 5:00 to 9:00 PM at Cusimano Mortuary, 96 West El Camino Real Mountain View, with a Vigil at the mortuary at 7:00 PM. The Funeral Mass will be at St. Athansius Roman Catholic Church, 160 North Rengstorff, Mountain View at 12:30 PM on Saturday, November 30, followed by a reception at the home of Therese and John Enquist, 1149 West Knickerbocker Avenue in Sunnyvale. The Service of Committal will be at Gate of Heaven cemetery, 22555 Cristo Rey Drive, Los Altos, at 11:00 AM on Monday, December 2.
- ❖ **[NOTE CHANGE OF TIME!] HANGING OF THE GREENS, Saturday, November 30, 9:00 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.



- ❖ **SUNDAY, December 1, 10:00 AM. 10:00 a.m. Worship for the whole family:** *Let Us Build a House where Love Can Dwell and Safely Live,*” Pastor Tripp preaching. **11:30 a.m. Adult Spiritual Formation:** *Moods of Christmas,* from the writing of Howard Thurman, led by Pastor Rick.
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, December 3, 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.
- ❖ **MEN’S BREAKFAST, 8:00 AM, Wednesday, December 4,** at Hobee’s Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All the men from our Church family are welcome.

UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS

Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering



The **SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING FOR DECEMBER** is our annual **thank you offering for retired ministers and missionaries.** This year’s theme is “Thank You for...” all the myriad ways in which these folk have served Christ’s church in every corner of the globe. We give in gratitude for the years of sacrificial service that many of these leaders have provided, often at very low levels of income. It is a way of saying “thank you” for the blessings they have brought to the church and our lives. Our goal is for this offering **\$750.**



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 **\$624** 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

COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH 2:1-5
Barbara Lundblad

Isaiah isn't naïve. He is not a Pollyanna prophet. This vision of weapons of war turned into agricultural tools, images of death-dealing turned into food-producing is a promise for "the days to come." But biblical visions in both testaments come to us from the future, longing to shape the days in which we are living.

What can we help people see?

- **Can you see Christian and Muslim women all dressed in white?** They were lying on their bellies near the main highway in Monrovia, Liberia, where everyone could see them. It was embarrassing to President Charles Taylor. They protested until he finally agreed to attend peace talks in Ghana. When the talks faltered, the women came to Ghana. Can you see them? They linked arms around the government building until the talks started up again. The tragic civil war in Liberia finally came to an end. Can you see the women dancing in the streets?
- **Can you see the rice paddies, green and lush,** stretching as far as eye can see in Cambodia? More than a dozen programs are ridding the country of land mines and providing survivor assistance to Cambodian people. The number of men, women, and children killed or injured each year by mines has fallen from a high of 4,320 in 1996 to 286 in 2010. Can you see the farmers working in the field?
- **Can you see the children carrying signs near the Capital?** "PROTECT CHILDREN, NOT GUNS." Marion Wright Edelman and The Children's Defense Fund refuse to be quiet about gun violence. They never give up. Against all the evidence, they believe weapons can be turned into plowshares or simply turned in at the local police station. Maybe children in your Sunday School classes can make some signs.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Joys:

- ✚ Lois Ville in gratitude for our congregation and all that its members give
- ✚ Thelma Parodi says "amen" to Lois
- ✚ Marilyn Hunwick for Jeff and Cilene Luzar who are expecting their first child; for greetings from Max Vines in Australia
- ✚ Chip Clark with gratitude for Oleta's work in property management
- ✚ Charlie Clark with thanksgiving for the life of Patrice Heath; for a visit with former member, Betty Spearman (and Mary Granholm)
- ✚ Mary Martin for the celebration of Ron's birthday and for having Ron in her life

Concerns – New:

- ✚ For Richard and the family and friends, including our own community, on the death of Patrice
- ✚ Pastor Rick for Diane Gibson whose sister died last week in Denver; for Pastor Bruce Chittick of Burton Community Church who continues to be hospitalized with heart problems
- ✚ Thelma Tuttle for her brother-in-law, Nick, who is recovering well from last week's hip surgery
- ✚ Alex Spiridon for his neighbor, Bob, recovering from heart bypass surgery and another neighbor, Ken, with pneumonia
- ✚ Thelma Parodi for her daughter, Lee, who will have back surgery December 8
- ✚ 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 the lives in service of all our retired ministers and missionaries in the ABC-USA

Ongoing:

- ✦ For Bob Towner at Manor Care in Sunnyvale and for Lucille
- ✦ Laura Garcia for Janice and other family members with health concerns
- ✦ For Don and Mary Granholm, Ruth Clark, Earl and Virginia Knechtel, Carl Schilling
- ✦ 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, DECEMBER 1, 2013

First Sunday of Advent

"Let Us Build a House where Love Can Dwell and Safely Live"

"The Beginning Is Near"
Pastor Tripp Preaching

Lectionary reading for the Week: Psalm 122; **ISAIAH 2:1-5**; Matthew 24:36-44; Romans 13:1-14. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

"The word that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." In chapter 1 Isaiah graphically laid out what he had seen: violence, bribery, unfaithfulness, desolation, trampling on the poor. There are brief interruptions as God calls for repentance and offers glimpses of hope, but they are drowned out by these pictures of violence and rebellion.

Then Chapter 2 opens as though Isaiah is starting all over again -- or God is. What Isaiah sees is not taking place now, but "in the days to come." People of every nation will stream to Mt. Zion, including those who were enemies of Israel and Judah. God's instruction will go forth from Jerusalem; God will judge between the nations. The people will be transformed by this teaching. **Can you see it?**

they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

Who can believe that? Isaiah's words are carved into the wall across from the United Nations building. Who believes these words across the street in the General Assembly as they debate sanctions against Iran, as they wring their hands over 100,000 killed in Syria, and chastise the United States for inhumane treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo?

Like almost all the images we will see during this Advent season, Isaiah's picture of swords turned to plowshares seems absurd. Maybe, Isaiah's vision will be true in a far-off time, but for now, there's nothing we can do but pray, "God of Peace, bring an end to the war in Syria. Lord, in your mercy, HEAR OUR PRAYER." (Barbara Lundblad, "Commentary on Isaiah 2:1-5," December 1, 2013, workingpreacher.org).

Prayer: *God of justice and peace, from the heavens you rain down mercy and kindness, that all on earth may stand in awe and wonder before your marvelous deeds. Raise our heads in expectation, that we may yearn for the coming day of the Lord and stand without blame before your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.*

A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

Just a brief note to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, Also, thanks to everyone who helped with last night's moving Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. People of all faiths from Palo Alto participated, iSing Girl Choir made its official debut (beautiful) and we raised over \$700 for EHP and typhoon relief to our sister city, Palo, in the Philippines.

You'll see above the information for services for Patrice Heath. She will be greatly missed by Richard, her family and friends and, of course, our congregation. To accommodate attendance at the Funeral Mass, please note that we've moved the "Hanging of the Greens" to 9:00 AM on Saturday. Please come help decorate the church we will have coffee and refreshments as we make our house ready for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Then return on Sunday at 10:00 AM for the first of what promises to be a lovely sequence of Advent services. We'll spend some time on Adult Spiritual Formation considering seasonal writings from the great Christian contemplative theologian, Howard Thurman. Bring someone along to share the day.

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

Pastor Rick



ADVENT TO EPIPHANY 2013

AT FIRST BAPTIST PALO ALTO

"Come, Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of God..." Isaiah 2:3



Saturday, November 30

10:00 AM Hanging of the Greens - decorating the church for children, youth and adults

Sunday, December 1

“Let Us Build a House where Love Can Dwell and Safely Live”

10 AM Worship and Sunday School for Children and Youth

11:30 AM Adult Spiritual Formation: *Moods of Christmas*, Howard Thurman

Sunday, December 8

“Let Us Build a House where Prophets Speak and Words Are Strong and True”

10 AM Worship and Sunday School for Children and Youth

11:30 AM Adult Spiritual Formation: *Tracks in the Straw*, Ted Loder

1:30 to 4:30 PM All Church Holiday Open House at the Spiridons,
2047 Edgewood Drive, Palo Alto

Friday, December 13

7:00 PM iSing Girl Choir: “Be the Joy” A festive concert of holiday favorites from around the world

Sunday, December 15

“Let Us Build a House where Hands Will Reach Beyond the Wood and Stone”

10 AM Worship and Sunday School for Children and Youth

11:30 AM Adult Spiritual Formation: *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, Ann Weems

4:00 PM Christmas Caroling and Chili Supper
Singing songs of the season to friends and neighbors

Sunday, December 22

“Let Us Build a House where All Are Named, their Songs and Visions Heard”

10 AM Worship and Sunday School for Children and Youth

11:30 AM Christmas Brunch and Pageant - bring finger food to share

Tuesday, December 24

5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service

A brief service of candles and carols for the family

Sunday, December 29

“Christmas Continues”

10 AM Worship for the family

Sunday, January 5

“Have you Seen the Star?”

10 AM Worship for the family