



JULY 2017
SUMMER

*Our Special Offering:
One Great Hour of Sharing*

THE SPIRE

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Life Around the Church

Betsy Anderson

The end of June was really busy here.

The last week we had a piano camp for four days. The teacher brought in two extra grand pianos, one in the Parlor and another in the Sanctuary. In the mornings, they had master class and performance by a guest pianist, and in the afternoons, they went off to practice. The skill level of every participant was a joy to hear, and hear we did with so many pianos in use. New Mozart was kind enough to let them use two of their rooms upstairs as well. On Thursday evening, they had a recital with everyone performing, and they and the extra pianos were gone by Friday afternoon.

The same afternoon the piano camp folks left, the wedding people came in to decorate and have their rehearsal late in the day. The bride is a nanny to two sweet little girls I had met before when all three came by the church to make preliminary arrangements. The bride's parents cooked delicious Mexican food for the rehearsal dinner and the wedding dinner, both in the Patio. There were 40 guests at the rehearsal dinner on Friday, and 150 at the wedding dinner on Saturday.

The 5-year-old flower girl Charlotte, sitting on the stairs to the balcony in all her finery, confided to me that this was her first wedding. And I told her it was a lovely one to be her first. "Yes, it was lovely," she commented, smoothing the skirt of her lace dress and admiring her fancy shoes. And it really was.

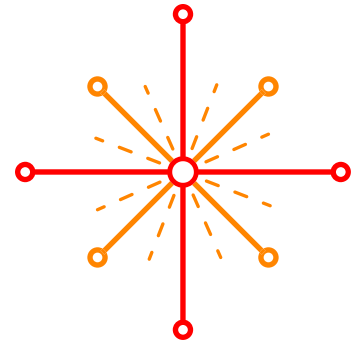
When the bridal couple left after the reception, instead of tossing the usual birdseed to celebrate the sendoff, all of the guests whipped out lit sparklers and waved them in the air. It being the First of July and all. This was slightly disconcerting since I would prefer that they not burn the place down after such a lovely occasion. But the sparklers went out quickly and the happy couple was on their way to a new life in Illinois where the groom has accepted an associate pastorate.

It was much quieter the second week of July. iSing began their day camp on July 11th, and things have picked up again. Everything in balance.

Happy Summer!



CHURCH CALENDAR



WORSHIP THEMES JULY 2017

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 02 | FREE AT LAST
GENESIS 22:1-14; PSALM 13; ROMANS: 6:12-23;
MATTHEW 10:40-42 | GREGORY STEVENS |
| 09 | THE JESUS WAY
MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30; GENESIS 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67;
PSALM 45:10-17; ROMANS 7:15-25A | GREGORY STEVENS |
| 16 | DIVIDED
GENESIS 25:19-34; PSALM 119:105-112; ROMANS 8:1-11;
MATTHEW 13:1-9; 18-23 | RICK MIXON |
| 23 | PROMISES
GENESIS 28:10-19; PSALM 139:1-12, 23-24; ROMANS 8:12-25;
MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43 | GREGORY STEVENS |
| 30 | HONOR
GENESIS 29:15-28; PSALM 105:1-11, 45B; ROMANS 8:26-39;
MATTHEW 13:31-33, 44-52 | RICK MIXON |

JULY BIRTHDAYS



ANTHIA LEE HALFMANN
JULY 2

BETSY ANDERSON
JULY 8

DANIEL RAMIREZ
JULY 16

GREGORY STEVENS
JULY 3

NANA SPIRIDON
JULY 14

JOHN POFFENROTH
JULY 28

PHILIP HAYES
JULY 7

LIONEL KIRTON
JULY 15

RICHARD BARRY
JULY 31

CHURCH

BY HUGH SATTERLEE, CLERK

COUNCIL MINUTES

The June 12th meeting opened at about 7:00 PM. Rick opened the meeting with a prayer of thankfulness for the church, family, friends, the wisdom we have been given, and for grace. Those present were Jane Chin, Moderator Dan Cudworth, Don Ha, Pastor Rick Mixon, Eleanor and Hugh Satterlee, and Vice Moderator Carolyn Shepard.

Carolyn served a delicious boysenberry pie topped with ice cream – an undeniable perk of attending Council meetings.

Jane distributed the finance committee's Treasurer's reports for May. Pledge income has increased and is now per plan. \$10,000 was drawn from Special Funds. No Special Funds were converted this month to bolster the budget. All other income streams are close to plan.

The Peninsula Macrobiotic Group appears to be ceasing operation here at the church. Despite the recent successful repair and cleanup, the hostess believes the stove is unsafe and has not scheduled their usual Monday evening dinner. And work continues to upgrade the lighting in the Fellowship Hall.

Peninsula Peace and Justice Center is closing operations in our church. The space in room 3 was to be occupied by iSing as office space, but iSing prefers to wait and move once to two offices upstairs.

Rick indicated that Bill Owen's own electronic organ is being made available. He suggested that it be located in the space now occupied by the Chickering piano in the church and that the Chickering be relocated to the parlor.

Rick reported on the continuing investigation by the City of Palo Alto into activities in the church. All the activities being pursued will be reviewed to determine that the public is being properly served. This is important because the income derived is important to the church's finances and all benefit the public.

Because Gregory was ill, Rick reviewed a report from him describing his activities since the last Council meeting. A tentative name, Mosaic South Bay, is suggested for the new religious group envisioned. A list of Core values was included along with a list of core justice projects. The new group will have a multi-faith and inter-faith identity, and will be accessible to all especially the many which are poorly served by society. The target demographic will be the middle-class age groups, 18-45 or 30-45.

A lengthy, in-depth discussion ensued. Hugh offered a list of observations and questions which the church must address concerning how to fulfill the church's responsibility to our children and youth, and to the question of continued church governance considering the aging and diminishing membership. Rick will explore availability of an intern to help with this activity..

The date for the next Council meeting was not set. Rick closed the meeting with a short prayer about 9:15 PM.

*Diverse Ways to Offer Care
and
Sanctuary for These Times*

Thursday, July 13, 7pm

First Congregational Church, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto



Join a discussion of ways faith communities and individuals can support immigrants, refugees, Muslims and others who are threatened.

"Sanctuary" can mean many things.

Rev. Deb Lee of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity has vast experience in helping communities and individuals discern and find concrete ways to engage. Options such as advocacy, networking, accompaniment as well as providing physical sanctuary will be discussed. Congregations not ready or able to offer physical sanctuary can still find important ways to actively participate.

Everyone welcome.

See www.multifaithpeace.org for more information.

Pastor Gregory

Jesus was an under-class Palestinian Jew who wouldn't skate through customs or a border crossing without some serious problems – especially with the newly enforced travel bans. The Bible is also a product of the Middle East, if embodied with all its complexities the Bible wouldn't pass the travel-ban test either. As we enter July we will focus on immigration and the turbulent forces working against migrants and those escaping brutal war zones.

Unlike our own country's leaders, American Baptists are taking action with their faith to provide safety and healing for migrants. Currently the Lebanese government is forcefully preventing any help from reaching the Syrian and Iraqi refugees under the fear that if they receive help (food or medical) the refugees will chose to stay in Lebanon. These children of God are caught between raging battles, conditions of famine, and hostility from world superpowers.

A medical team of American Baptists held a total of 7 clinics, treated over 700 refugees (mostly Syrian and some Iraqis), including a new-born baby! The clinics were held in the city of Zahle, gateway to Bekka valley, and in Nabaa, one of the most crowded districts in Beirut. The Team was assisted by a group of Lebanese volunteers and translators from True Vine Ministries in Zahle, and Resurrection Church of Beirut.

This is the work of our faith in action.

We do not follow Caesar or his orange minions, rather we serve the God of compassion, love, welcome, and healing. We follow a Jesus who was known to be the Prince of Peace and a Mighty Healer: how could we possibly treat migrants with such hostility and how could we ever support health care policies that rob the sick making the rich even richer? I don't think that's possible.

Let's get to God's work. The work of healing and restoring, of welcoming and including, all people no matter who they are or where they are on Life's journey!

We are Christians and they will know us by our love!

Love bigly,
Pastor Gregory





My first time at the Mission Summit was this year and I had a wonderful time. My favorite highlight was when the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (AWAB) hosted a meeting to share about any updates and the strategic moves being taken to further the mission and vision of the organization.

GOD IS LOVE

Towards the end of the meeting they gave out awards to the current leaders whose commitments have made big impacts on the organization and on the larger American Baptist denomination. To my surprise the award was called, "The Rick Mixon Award." It was given for strong commitment and bold leadership.

I spent most of my days on the Orientation to American Baptist Life track where we learned about the various ministries and branches of our denomination (and the histories of their developments). Our former Evergreen Executive Minister, Marcia Patton, was my advisor and provided us a wonderful history (from her own experiences) of the AB struggle for full affirmation of women and queers in pastoral leadership. She has pioneered both fields and what an incredibly strong woman she is for it! She just published a book about her experiences creating Evergreen and standing on the side of Love for marginalized communities (an experience she could relate to when trying to find ministry positions as a woman in the church). We will have a copy soon in our Church Library.

The networking was also a huge plus, with Pastor Rick knowing just about everyone it also made it very easy. From the General Secretary to East Coast church planters, I was introduced and made connections with many pastors I will be following up with to collaborate on new ministry models.

This was a great trip and I am excited to find more ways my leadership can be of service to the American Baptist denomination and the Alliance of Baptists.

-Pastor Gregory

POETRY CORNER



The New Colossus (Statue of Liberty Poem)
by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

July Special Offering

July is the time when we take our annual offering to support One Great Hour of Sharing. The theme for 2017 is You Are Here, "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." Matthew 25:35.

This is the offering that responds to natural disasters and human caused disasters around the world, including here in the United States. Many of the larger disasters are captured by the news media, but others are not. American Baptists are able to make a difference by partnering with its international and national networks to make a difference in these multiple disaster situations.

Internationally, OGHS was able to impact the some of the following areas in 2016: China, flood relief; Cuba and Haiti, Hurricane Matthew relief; Democratic Republic of the Congo, tornado relief; Ecuador, earthquake relief; Lebanon and Zambia, refugee relief. Those listed above are just a few of the countries OGHS was able to help.

Nationally, flood relief was provided through Baptist churches and conventions in Iowa, Louisiana, New York, West Virginia. The Flint Water Crisis was addressed through ABC of Michigan. Hurricane Matthew relief went to Church World Service in South Carolina. Again, these are just a few of the disasters that OGHS was able to respond to.

This is an important offering where we can make an impact on reaching people who need help in these disaster situations. Our goal for 2017 is \$800. Please help us in this endeavor to "be there" for others in need in our world.

Immigration Station

Carolyn Shepard and the Mission Team have put together valuable resource material on immigration issues and services and made it available in the Community Office. This information includes material about organizations providing free legal services and counseling, plus dates and times of local public meetings to help answer any questions for both immigrants or those interested in helping with this cause.



HELP WITH FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS



I have flower arrangements scheduled for most of the year, but I still need help in July and October. If you are able and would like to provide flowers for the sanctuary on a Sunday in either of these months, please let me know. You can either donate the cost of the flowers or submit a chit for reimbursement. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your creative gifts to our worship.

Carolyn Shepard
650-595-5635



COLLECTION BOX

As announced at the Quarterly Business Meeting in May, we have contributed 3 bags of books to the Jail Ministries in Santa Clara County and 3 bags of books to Ten Books A Home. Contributions of books are ongoing, with a box in the Narthex for the Jail Ministry and a box in the entryway in front of the office for the children's books



CROP WALK

I have agreed once again to be the team leader for the Crop Walk in October. Last year our local Crop Walk raised over \$20,000. EHP received \$5,000. This money helps all kinds of projects related to hunger. Watch for more updates this summer.



TRIP TO NICARAGUA

The Mission Team has been discussing the possibility of setting up a trip to Nicaragua. We have been in conversation with a couple of potential congregations in the US that might be traveling there in 2018 & 2019 and with whom we could join. At this point, we need to know who would be interested before we proceed any further.

Please let Pastor Rick or Carolyn Shepard know if you would be interested.

Carolyn Shepard





SAVE THE DATE

ALL CHURCH RETREAT

"ALL ARE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE"

AUGUST 4 - 7

**7PM - 9PM | FRIDAY - CHURCH PARLOR
10AM - 4PM | SATURDAY - VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN
10AM | 11:30AM - FIRST BAPTIST PALO ALTO**

CALL BETSY AT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO RSVP

**FACILITATOR:
NAN SWANSON**





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