

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

April, 2009

From the Pastor

Sometimes we forget who we are.

We can get so caught up in what we are doing that we lose the connection with our heart and soul. Or maybe we listen too much to what others think about us or to what they expect from us and we start to become who they think we should be.

Sometimes we forget who we are. This can happen with a church (or any other organization) as easily as it happens with a person.

Lest we forget who we are as a church I think it is helpful to remember the beginning of our church's constitution, the *Book of Order*:

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. ... Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. ... In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.

This is a beautiful statement of our identity, full of grace and truth. Whenever I need to be reminded that this church is not my church, not our church, not anyone but Christ's church, I read these words.

Whenever I realize that I'm tied up with worry about our finances, I find it helpful to remember that this is Christ's church and he gives to her all that is necessary for our mission to the world. When I start to think that there aren't enough able

bodies around to do what we need to do, I remember that Christ gives to the church all that is necessary for our building up. If I should feel that there aren't enough voices here on a particular Sunday to make a joyful noise to the Lord, I remember that Christ gives the church all that is necessary for our service to God.

If you might be having any of these thoughts or feelings read through this passage from our *Book of Order* again and give its truth some time to sink deep into your soul. ...

I am thankful that we as Presbyterians have this beautiful and clear statement of who we are as a church. But even though I thought I knew this pretty much by heart I recently noticed something about this statement that had never seemed as important to me as it does now.

Put simply, this whole statement is in the present tense. These wonderful words about who we are don't look back, not even once. Amazing!

If I were to ask you to tell me about who you are, most of you would probably include a little about where you have come from. Think about it. Could you tell me who you are without using a past tense, or a construction that refers to a past action (for example, "I'm a married man.")? We often think about who we are in terms of who we have been and what we have done.

But the church's identity—because we are Christ's church—is always about who we are in relationship with Christ our Lord. It is never about who we have been. Who we are as a church is always who we *are*, in the present, because Christ is with us now through the power of the resurrection. Christ is risen indeed!

—Pastor Mark

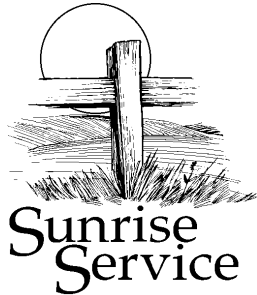


MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 9

6:30 PM — Simple Supper (Sign up in the social hall or call the church office.)

8:00 PM — Tenebrae (service of darkness)



Easter Sunday

April 12

6:15 AM

Harry Schmidt Park



For all the kids!

Easter Sunday

9:30 AM

Meet in the Social Hall



Easter Flowers

Bring an easter lily to decorate our sanctuary for Easter in memory of a loved one. Sign up on Palm Sunday or call the office.

And bring some flowers on Easter to decorate our Living Cross.



Coming up ... April 25

Clean out your closets, garage, whatever and save the stuff for our yard sale. We'll begin collecting after Easter.

Birthdays

- 1 Barbara LeFever
- 15 Betty Adams
- 22 Paul Friesen
- 25 Marlene Costa
- 27 Dawain Costa

Anniversaries

- 16 Marlene & Dawain Costa
- 20 Bob & Ruth Williams



“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones”-Proverbs 17:22

As we are approaching April first, Mark is a bit suspicious of me. You see, I have a history of playing practical jokes on my dear husband on April Fools’ Day. I am by nature a night person-which counterbalances Mark’s sunny morning disposition, I might add. So historically I’ve planned my pranks and surprised my trusting husband just after midnight on April first when he is drowsy and gullible, and I am hitting my stride! Before you say “No fair”, I need to tell you that Mark has been a very good sport, and we have shared gales of laughter resulting from my little jokes. (Only there was one time when my farce became reality within 2 weeks and Mark had to dig up a sewer line for real..... but that’s another story).

As our Scripture reflects, laughter and cheerfulness are indeed good medicines. Science and Medicine have come to recognize some of the benefits in our bodies resulting from laughter: lowering of blood pressure; and the release of endorphins, one type of brain chemical known as neurotransmitters, which function to transmit electrical signals within the nervous system. Endorphins interact with the opiate receptors in the brain to reduce our perception of pain without the dependence or habit formation narcotics may cause. In addition to decreased feelings of pain, endorphins elevate our mood, modulate our appetite, and enhance our immune response. High endorphin levels lower the negative effects of stress. All with no side effects and at no cost!

Norman Cousins was a renowned author when in the 1970’s he was told that he had little chance

of surviving a series of illnesses. He developed a recovery program incorporating large doses of Vitamin C, along with a positive attitude, love, faith, hope, and laughter induced by Marx Brothers films. "I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep," he reported. Cousins received the Albert Schweitzer Prize in 1990. He died of heart failure on November 30, 1990 in Los Angeles, California, having survived years longer than his doctors predicted: 10 years after his first heart attack, 16 years after his collagen illness, and 36 years after his doctors first diagnosed his heart disease. Before his death in 1990 Mr. Cousins was a Senior Lecturer at the School of Medicine, UCLA, and helped many hospitals make available comedic videos and creative activities to supplement traditional medications and therapies. (References: Anatomy of an Illness, and Head First, the Biology of Hope- books by Norman Cousins.)

You may remember the movie in which Robin Williams portrayed the real-life doctor who was nearly expelled from medical school for ‘clowning around’ in the hospital. “Patch Adams”, the real physician, also discovered the healing quality of humor. One scene depicts lethargic children diagnosed with cancer, extremely frightened to be in the hospital undergoing treatment. With the introduction of levity and laughter, the kids were transformed back into animated and lively children with bright eyes reflecting hope and energy.

So, I’d like to prescribe a daily dose of laughter. Read the funny papers. Rent a comedy and invite a friend to laugh together with you. Place a joke book where you’ll read it often, (We have one in our bathroom- honest!) --- . Choose to provide humor and light to nourish your mind, spirit and body just as you would nourish a plant with sunshine.

I’m so glad that joyful laughter so often resonates within our congregation. May we each find a “belly –laugh- a- day” to supplement our other Vitamins.

Yours with a grin ☺ —Nancy

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street
Gustine, CA 95322
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Permit No. 12
Gustine, CA 95322

Sunday School, 9:00 AM — Worship, 10:30 AM

Pastor — Mark Hollingsworth

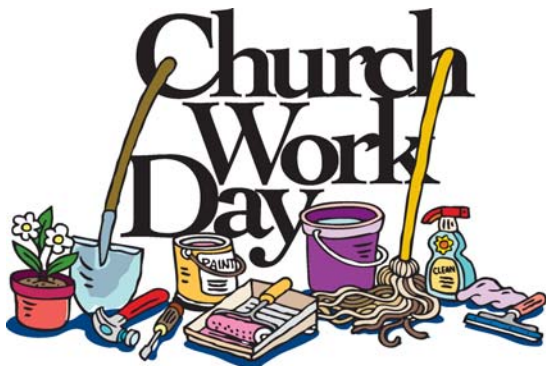
Treasurer — Patricia Brown; Choir Director — Jim Conrad

Secretary — Med Hoover; Parish Nurse — Nancy Hollingsworth

Office Hours — 9:00-Noon, Wednesday, Thursday and by appointment

Telephone: (209) 854-6772; email: pastormark@wefollowjesusingustine.org

Web Site: www.wefollowjesusingustine.org



Saturday, April 4

Come in the morning:

After 8 and leave at noon

Come in the afternoon:

After 12 and leave at 3

Cleaning, Painting, Weeding, Etc.