

# Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

April 2008

## From the Pastor

I read a poem this morning (today's poem on the Poetry Daily website). A couple of lines caught my attention because they spoke to some things I had already been thinking about. I had been thinking about a recent memorial service, and about Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and about what makes us who we are.

This poem, "Dreaming of the Dead" was written by Anne Stevenson in memory of Anne Pennington. Here's the part that caught my attention:

So whatever it is you are,  
Dear Anne, bent smilingly grave  
Over wine glasses filled by your fire,  
Is the whole of the life you gave  
To our fictions of who you were.

In these short lines I heard the poet affirm a few of things that I also believe:

- A person's life is a gift to others.
- Our image of another person is never the same as who that person truly is.
- We can have meaningful and lasting relationships with others even when our images of each other are partial and distorted.

As I prepare for a memorial service, I want to find some thread that runs through the different stages of a person's life, something that we can hold on to that defines that person's identity. That can be difficult when a life takes twists and turns. We can sometimes better be defined by how we have changed over the years than by how we haven't. A person is often more like the person she gave away to others as the person she kept for herself. So what is it that makes us who

we are?

In thinking about that question I turned another question on its head. Instead of wondering how old I will be in heaven—which stage of me will live forever—I wondered how I am now like the me that God eventually will raise from the dead. And it seemed obvious that my true self is that person, the one to whom God will give a new body on the day of resurrection. And then, wave after wave of hope rolled over me; in the resurrection I will be who I truly am ... and I will know who I truly am ... and others will know me for who I truly am ... and I will know others for who they truly are.

It is a blessed miracle to know someone for who they truly are. And I wonder if that was the miracle which took place when Jesus appeared to his disciples after he rose from the dead.

The Bible tells us that Mary Magdalene and Peter and John and the rest of his disciples didn't recognize Jesus at first. And I had always thought that the reason they didn't was because Jesus' body had been transformed in the resurrection. (But wouldn't the Son of God always be who he truly was? And wouldn't he always know that? And why would he need to be transformed at his resurrection?) So now I wonder if God had actually changed Jesus' disciples so that now they could then see him as he truly was. Once their fictions of who he was were washed away they didn't recognize him at first.

If God could work this miracle for the first disciples because Jesus rose from the dead, God can work that miracle for us because the risen Jesus lives today. God can open our eyes that we can begin to see Jesus for who he truly is. Praise the

Thank You  
for the  
Flowers



Check out the flowers in the memorial garden. John Schlak has added the plants people brought in for Easter decoration into the garden. Thank you to everyone who donated and to John for the planting.

### Birthdays

- 1 Barbara Le Fever
- 15 Betty Adam
- 25 Marlene Costa
- 27 Dawain Costa

### Anniversaries

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



Thank you all for donating to the fund to replace the roof over the entrance to the Social Hall. As of today we are within a few dollars of our goal.



*“Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him (or her), ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his (or her) physical needs, what good is it?” James 2:15-16*

April 25, 2008 is **Malaria Awareness Day**. A five year-old girl from Pennsylvania learned about malaria and told her church. I’ll tell you later in this article what happened next.

First, some hard-to-read facts:

- 1 500,000,000- (five hundred million) people a year get malaria
- 2 1,000,000 -(one million) people a year die from malaria-90% are African children
- 3 Approximately every 30 seconds someone dies from malaria (that’s 2,880 each day)
- 4 Malaria accounts for up to ½ of all hospital admission & outpatient visits in Africa each year, amounting to \$12 billion a year in lost productivity
- 5 Malaria is both preventable and treatable, which is why the disease has been eliminated in many parts of Asia, Europe, and the Americas; but not in Africa.

That is where little Katherine Commale came into the story. At five years of age she learned about this awful disease and felt sad to know children her age were dying. Then she found about

about bed nets which cut down the spread of malaria by 90% . Since nighttime is when most mosquitoes spread malaria by biting people, sleeping under an insecticide-treated net can keep a family safe.

Katherine built a little diorama with dolls and pieces of netting, and took it to her Methodist church, telling her story in Sunday school. The church made bookmarks & pins to tell people about malaria. Katherine and her family have raised over \$18,000 so far for “Nothing but Nets”, a grassroots fundraising campaign created by NBA Cares after an article in Sports Illustrated urged readers to donate to the UN fund. A \$10 donation can enable the UN Foundation to deliver a treated net to a family in Africa for a family of four to use for up to 7 years. 100% of the money goes to nets because Ted Turner donated \$1billion to fund the United Nations’ Foundation. The grand total of nets donated: 1,918,056.

Besides individual donors like you and me and Katherine, the National Basketball Association and the United Methodist Church are partners in this campaign. Tonight I went online to research this article, and donated \$10 from Mark and me. When I did, there was a message that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is matching all donations as well. Diverse partners, to be sure.

The website says “You can save a family. Your church can save a village.” If you are interested in more information, please talk to me or go online to :

[www.nothingbutnets.net](http://www.nothingbutnets.net) .

Please remember to protect yourself from our local mosquito concern again this season and avoid West Nile Virus.

With a thankful heart,

*Nancy*

# COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street  
Gustine, CA 95322  
Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
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](mailto:pastormark@wefollowjesusingustine.org)

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Friend to  
Church

