

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

December, 2008

From the Pastor

Evangelism and Advent. Two words I hadn't put together with much thought before this Sunday's sermon.

Sure, we will invite people to join us for an Advent service or for Christmas Eve candlelight service. And our visitors will likely hear an evangelistic component in the sermon. And we will sing about our Savior and about Christ being born in us. And we may even retell the story of a baby who was born to save his people from their sins, and will save anyone who calls upon his name. All of this is evangelism and all of this we do during the Advent season, but all of it is related to the birth that happens on Christmas and not to the waiting that happens during Advent.

I have always been able to connect evangelism and Christmas. When you listen to the story the connection becomes pretty clear. But what about Advent?

We seem to have made Advent the beginning of the Christmas season instead of the season that comes before Christmas. We seem to have made Advent into a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas instead of a time of preparation for the coming of the Christ.

This is easy to do. After all, Advent this year will come before Christmas this year. But Advent this year will not come before Christ's birth; that happened a long time ago. The only way we can make Advent into a time of preparation for the coming of Christ is in our imaginations. And we are able to do this. We can imagine ourselves back in a time before the birth of Jesus. We can sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" as if God had not yet come to be with us. Advent invites us to make this imaginative leap.

What do you think it was like when people only had a vague promise of a Messiah? What was it like when God had not yet come into our world in the flesh? What were people longing for, and what were they fearful of, before the savior of the world was born?

This year as I was thinking about these questions, I realized that this imaginative exercise of Advent is a helpful preparation for our work as evangelists. As I thought about what it was like for people who lived before Jesus birth, I began to think about what it is like for my neighbors who do not yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Do they long for the coming of a messiah? And if they do, are they conscious of that longing?

I realized that if we can empathize with those who do not yet know Christ we will be better prepared to share the good news of Jesus with them. If we can listen to the longings and the fears of people in whose heart's Christ has not yet been born, then we will be better able to invite them to welcome him in.

Advent invites us to use our imaginations and to put ourselves into a time before Christ. When we do this we can become more aware of those people who are living today in a time before Christ. Not only this, it can help us listen to, and relate with, those around us who are not yet Christians.

It was obvious on Sunday that many of us have not tried this imaginative exercise of Advent. I invite you to try it. Begin to make Advent a time for evangelism.



Saturday, December 13
5:00 PM

We'll begin with dinner. The church will supply barbecued tri-tip. Bring a side dish to share. If you would like to host a table, please sign up in the social hall or call the church office.

After dinner we will enjoy a Christmas program.

Birthdays

- 5 Kathy Conrad
- 12 Ruth Williams
- 18 Emilio Hollingsworth
- 27 John Schlak

Anniversaries

- 23 Maudie and David Todd



ADVENT
Devotional

We have more copies of our advent devotional, "Open the heavens and come down ..." available at church or you can find the devotions online at cpc-advent.blogspot.com.



Financial Report

October income	\$ 6,806.96
October expenses	\$ 5,867.75
Checking acct. balance	\$ 1,123.51



“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? (S)He who has clean hands and a pure heart” Psalm 24:3-4a

December 7-13, 2008 is **“National Handwashing Awareness Week”**. Please **lend a hand to protect your family and community!**

Did you know that if each one of us NEVER put a finger in our eyes, nose or mouth, we would prevent infections? That is the simplest and most effective way to prevent an epidemic or widespread pandemic. Direct contamination by touch of our own membranes inside our nose, eyes and mouth is how infectious diseases enter our body, not by the ventilation systems in our buildings. If we simply follow the four principles of hand awareness, we will be in virtual isolation regardless of the people around us:

1. Wash your hands when they are dirty or before eating
2. Do not cough into hands (If you need to direct a cough in a hurry, turn and cough into your upper arm/ armpit area)
3. Do not sneeze into your hands. (Lacking a tissue, also aim sneezes into your armpit area)
4. **Above all, do not put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth!!**

There are 5 steps for correct handwashing:

1. Wet the hands
2. Use soap & warm water
3. Scrub:- wash between fingers, wash wrists; under fingernails, backs of hands –wash for at least 20 seconds, each area
4. Rinse off (let water flow on hand held with fingertips down (In a public restroom, use a paper towel to turn off the water, instead of your hands)
5. Dry hands

Washing hands frequently while preparing food is important to prevent food-borne illness. Most such illnesses, commonly called food poisoning, occur from food prepared commercially. About 20% of the estimated 76 million cases are from home prepared food. Symptoms include sudden onset of vomiting and/ or diarrhea, either within a few hours of eating, or after about 12 hours. See your doctor if symptoms continue past 1 day.

The most dangerous instrument in our kitchens is the dishcloth or sponge. Because they are porous, they trap water, food and grease, making the perfect place for bacteria to grow. UC Davis researchers have discovered that 10-12 seconds in the microwave will kill micro-organisms. Remember to launder dishcloths and replace sponges regularly. Another item of concern is the cutting-board. Wooden boards may hold blood and juices. Washing your board in hot soapy water after each use is recommended. We have recently added silicone cutting sheets, designated for fruits & vegetables, meat & fish to top our cutting board. These mats were inexpensive, and can even be washed in the dishwasher.

Please see the posters in our restrooms and Parish Nurse bulletin board. And remember: **keep your fingers away from your mouth, nose & eyes!**

Merry Christmas! May we all have a healthy and joyful Holiday Season.

Nancy

More information available at:
www.henrythehand.com

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street
Gustine, CA 95322
Address Correction Service

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: emark@inreach.com

Web Site: www.wefollowjesusingustine.org



Church Decorating Party

Friday, December 5

6:00 PM

We will begin with a light supper
and then work together to trim the tree
and decorate the sanctuary.