

Good NEWS

Community Presbyterian Church

February, 2008

From the Pastor

Did you know there are some stained-glass windows at the back of our sanctuary?

I have no idea who chose to put them in the back. I assume the decision was made for practical reasons. The front of the sanctuary abuts the side of the social hall so that wouldn't work. And the side windows need to be able to be opened so that air can breeze through in the summer. Really, the only place to put stained-glass windows is in the rear of the sanctuary...unless you are planning to air-condition the place.

On the rare occasion when I get to listen to a sermon, at presbytery, on vacation, or at a conference like I attended last week, I enjoy looking at stained-glass windows, in front or to the sides. Sometimes it helps me to better focus on what the preacher is saying. Sometimes it attracts my attention more than the sermon.

But our beautiful stained-glass windows remain hidden for most of our worship service. That's a shame because the sermon they proclaim is one we need to hear, even if sometimes we might not want to hear it.

You know there are stained-glass windows at the back of our sanctuary. ... Do you know which bible story they depict?

It is a story out of Matthew (25:31-46) which talks about feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick. It includes a great line by the King (and by extension, Jesus), "As you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me."

I recently read a poem by Marie How which brings out the spirit of this story and of our stained-glass windows. It is called "The Star Market":

The People Jesus loved were shopping at
the Star Market yesterday
An old lead-colored man standing next to
me at the checkout
Breathed so heavily I had to step back a
few steps.

Even after his bags were packed he still
stood, breathing hard and
Hawking into his hand. The feeble, the
lame, I could hardly look at them:
Shuffling through the aisles, they smelled
of decay, as if the Star Market

Had declared a day off for the able-bodied,
and I had wandered in
With the rest of them—sour milk, bad
meat—
Looking for cereal and spring water.

Jesus must have been a saint, I said to my-
self, looking for my lost car
In the parking lot later, stumbling among
the people who would have
been lowered into rooms with ropes, who
would have crept

out of caves or crawled from the corners of
public baths on their hands
and knees begging for mercy.

If I touch only the hem of his garment, one
woman thought,
could I bear the look on his face when he
wheels around?

You may have to read the poem again to make
it personal. And then take time to listen to our
windows.

Pastor Mark



ASH WEDNESDAY

Service of Ashes

Wednesday, February 6

Potato Bar – 6 PM

Worship – 7 PM

Birthdays

- 1 Michael Ray
- 1 Madeline & Jacqueline Linville
- 4 P.J. Hetland
- 9 David Todd
- 27 Jim Conrad
- 27 Heather McDonald

Anniversaries

- 13 Blair & Jessica Wallace
- 14 Leroy & Dottie Gray
- 20 John & Alice Schlak



This year we will have our weekly lenten get-togethers on Thursdays beginning on **February 14**.

We will meet for dinner or dessert at 6 PM hosted by one of the groups of our church. Following our meal we will follow Jesus through a new miracle each week.





“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1

February’s topic, chosen from national health-care observances, addresses what many people might term to be one of the “dirty little secrets” of our Christian, especially our Protestant congregations. February 10-16 is National Children of Alcoholics Week.

The National Association for Children of Alcoholics has as their mission, advocating for all children and families affected by alcoholism and other drug dependencies. The group celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and I highly recommend their website: www.nacoa.org. They also have a toll-free phone number: 1-888-554-COAS.

Did you realize that 25% of American children are living where alcohol negatively affects their environment? Other drug abuse affects countless others. Evidence now confirms that living with alcoholism and drug addiction in the home during crucial developmental years can create:

- ? lifetime mental health consequences
- ? lifetime physical health consequences
- ? current-time fear and confusion

The NACoA (see above) website has a wide variety of free resources and tools available to help families and children dealing with chemical abusive environments. There are special links for teachers, clergy, and health professionals.

Special links include:

1. Celebrating Families!™— a new intergenerational curriculum for families with one or both parents having a serious drug or alcohol problem
2. Handbook for Student Assistance called Help Is Down the Hall, with basic information on how to begin, conduct, and evaluate a student assistance program
3. Just 4 Kids—a tool to help children learn how alcohol & drugs can hurt everyone in a family; how to feel safer and less stressed; find ways to deal with stress at home, and to find hope even if their parents don’t change

For health professionals, the website has practical, step by step instructions and free forms free to download and print. There are also educational offerings for clergy and faith ministers.

Let’s seriously consider what our response should be to this problem of such great magnitude. In our sleepy little town, I dare say, even in our congregation, there are those who hurt and worry every day because of addictions of their loved ones at home.

Let’s respond as a unified family of faith, and choose Jesus’ Way of walking alongside our friends with help and guidance and encouragement. Let us have humble hearts and prayerful attitudes. Perhaps we can learn how to ask our children the question: “Have you ever been concerned about someone in your family who is drinking alcohol or using drugs?” and then be ready to deal with their answers.

I plan to order some free pamphlets to bring to the social hall. Please let me know if I can help in further ways.

Yours in Love during the Valentine’s season—

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

Web Site: www.wefollowjesusingustine.org



Souper Bowl of Caring

Each year on Super Bowl Sunday the deacons collect money for our local food closet, Agape. This is part of a nationwide program which raises millions of dollars for hunger assistance programs.

Please add your 2 cents, or more, to our soup pot this Sunday, **Feb. 3.**