

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

July, 2010

From the Pastor

On this, our first day back from New York, I noticed a few American flags around town, flying in anticipation of the 4th. That got my patriotic juices flowing.

When we were in New York City we were exposed to a wide variety of art and I happened to purchase a few new poetry books. That had already started my creative juices flowing.

The combination of the two—the patriotic and the creative—got me thinking about Abraham Lincoln and his famous little speech at the battlefield in Gettysburg.

I learned the Gettysburg Address by heart almost fifty years ago and I can still recite most of it. Its ideas have influenced much of my thinking and its rhythms often find their way into my speech.

At times I have carefully analyzed its structure and grammar, like I would do with a passage from the Bible. For example, the little phrase “under God” is used as an adverb to modify the phrase that follows, “shall have a new birth of freedom.” It is not used as an adjective to modify the noun that comes before it, “nation,” as it has come to be used in our modern Pledge of Allegiance.

So today, with the flags waving and the echoes of big city culture in my ears, I wondered what that little phrase in the beginning of Lincoln’s address, “conceived in liberty,” might mean. I asked myself how “in liberty” modified the image of the birth of our nation. That didn’t lead me anywhere.

Then I noticed that “conceived in liberty” at the beginning of the address is mirrored by “a new birth of freedom” at the end. And then a whole wave of interesting possibilities arose.

Of course, following the metaphor, a nation

conceived in liberty would have a birth of freedom. But Lincoln’s great insight was that one birth of freedom (four score and seven years before) was not going to be enough. Our nation needed a *new* birth of freedom.

Freedom, if it is not reborn again and again, dies. The freedom our independence gave to our citizens would have died if our nation had not granted freedom to its slaves. And that freedom would have died had our nation not had a new birth of freedom with the civil rights movement.

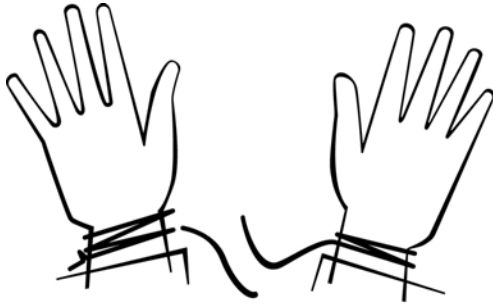
For a nation to remain free it must have new births of freedom, times when everyone becomes more free because some are granted freedom they weren’t then experiencing.

It has been noted that this idea of a new birth of freedom is the most religious—Christian, biblical—part of Lincoln’s address. A new birth of freedom only comes to us as a gift of God, it only happens “under God.”

As a nation conceived in liberty must have new births of freedom in order to remain free, so also the church must have new births in order to remain free. This truth has been a touchstone for Presbyterians for many years, “Reformed and constantly reforming.” To truly honor the birth of something important in the past, we must be open for God to bring forth something new now.

As we remember the birth of our nation (eleven score and fourteen years ago) let us be open to a new birth of freedom in our time. And as we celebrate the birth of our congregation (five score years ago) to a new birth of God’s spirit among us. Let us pray together and work together for a new birth of our congregation.

Pastor Mark



Forgiveness is
FREEDOM

The Greek word which is usually translated as forgiveness has the connotation of freedom. This is what the Bible generally means when it speaks about forgiveness. Only secondarily does the Bible talk about forgiveness as mercy, as we found in 2 Corinthians 2:7, "Now, instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow."

Birthdays

- 2 Sharon Acord
- 4 Robynn (Bento) Perez
Betsy Ross Silvester
- 13 Magali Hollingsworth
Robert Wrobbel
- 20 Maya Hollingsworth
- 21 David Galatro
- 24 Warren Axe
- 25 Evan Costa
- 27 Candee Bento
- 30 Belinda Burke

If we have forgotten to include your Birthday or Anniversary in the newsletter. Please drop us a note with your request or call us at 209-854-6772



Last Sunday, **June 27**, the Rev. Sandy Brown was our guest preacher. We were able to send a special offering of \$906 back with him for the ministry of Calvin Crest.



DO NOT USE YOUR
FREEDOM
AS A COVER-UP
FOR EVIL; LIVE AS
SERVANTS OF GOD.

1 Peter 2:16, NIV





***“The disciples went and woke him saying
“Master, Master we’re going to drown!” He got
up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters;
the storm subsided and all was calm.” Luke 8: 24***

Our topic for July 2010 is “Lightning Safety”.
Let’s consider two kinds of storms:

I have a framed plaque hanging in our hallway
that was a present from my friend Ruthanne who is
from Richmond, VA. It says:

***“Sometimes God calms the storm. Sometimes He
lets the storm rage and calms His child.”***

Of course the plaque is using “storm” as a
metaphor for trials that come into in our lives. It’s
universal that “Into each life some rain must fall”-
(another metaphor), and some of us have experi-
enced or are currently experiencing a cluster of
“storm clouds”. In such times it can seem a real
challenge to find the extra measure of faith it takes
to trust and be calm and live in the reality that there
will be bright times in the future. At least that has
been my experience.

In the Luke story we find that the awesome
power of nature made even the seasoned fishermen
who were Jesus’ disciples feel small and vulnera-
ble. Our two years in Richmond demonstrated the
power of storms in a remarkable way. Summertime
there is hot and humid. Many times a gorgeous day
of sunshine would suddenly turn overcast and com-
mence with thunder and lightning and rain and hail,
along with strong winds. Just as quickly as it began
the storm would be over, with the oppressive heat
and humidity back in double strength.

It just so happened that there were several light-
ning strikes in our neighborhood. One caused a
chimney fire for the professor who lived across the

street. One hit a telephone pole, and the worst was
our friend’s kitchen partially burned after lightning
struck the house causing a short in the 110+ year
old wiring inside the house. Those storms were
awesome- and powerful.

Even though Gustine has fewer storms, weather
patterns are changing, and many of us have occa-
sion to be outside in recreation areas where storms
often occur.

The National Weather Service has begun a cam-
paign to encourage all of us to take shelter at the
sound of thunder and not wait until we see light-
ning—that may be too late to be safe,
“When Thunder Roars Go Indoors”

(www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/index). This is an
effort to save lives by taking a new approach to ed-
ucate the public about lightning dangers. Fear al-
ready exists for lightning, but thunder needs to be
seen as the early warning for lightning. This cam-
paign encourages the public to take action when
they hear thunder rather than waiting for lighting or
rain. Each year about 58 Americans are killed by
lightning. Hundreds of others are injured. It is im-
portant to note that the reported number of injuries
is likely far lower than the actual total number be-
cause many people do not seek help or doctors do
not record it as a lightning injury. People struck by
lightning suffer from a variety of long term, debili-
tating symptoms.

As far as ‘weathering the storms of life’, Psalm
91:4 has brought such an image of comfort and
safety to me in times when I needed a safe place. It
says: “He will cover you with his feathers, and un-
der his wings you will find refuge.”

Dear friends, seek refuge, and be safe in God’s
care-

Nancy

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street
Gustine, CA 95322
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Sunday School, 9:00 AM — Worship, 10:30 AM

Pastor — Mark Hollingsworth

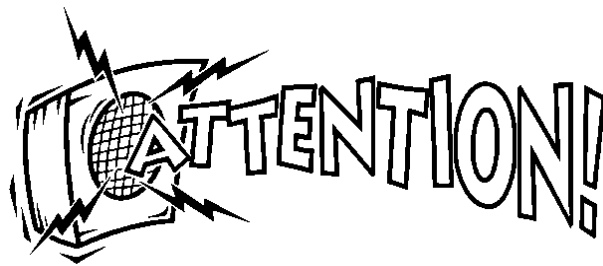
Treasurer — Dorothy Gray; Choir Director — Jim Conrad

Secretary — Med Hoover; Parish Nurse — Nancy Hollingsworth

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

Telephone: (209) 854-6772; email: cpc-gustine@earthlink.net

Web Site: www.wefollowjesusingustine.org



Time change because of the 4th of July parade
8:30 AM for worship service
Sunday, July 4