

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

March, 2008

From the Pastor

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

“She is risen!” “Am I risen indeed?”

“He is risen!” “Am I risen indeed?”

The words we announce each Easter are words we will one day hear for ourselves. As each Christian dies and is resurrected that person’s name is announced along with the great news, “He is risen!”; “She is risen!” And I imagine that many of us will stand amazed and respond, “Am I risen indeed?”

Personally, I’ll want to feel my new body. I’ll want to try it out—touch my toes, do a handstand, see how high I can jump and how fast I can run. Then, following Jesus’ example, I think I’ll ask, “Does anyone here have something to eat?”

On Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection. We remember how Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. In a variety of ways, from meeting at sunrise to singing the hymns, we recount the events of that day almost two thousand years ago.

On Easter we also look forward in hope to our own resurrections to be together with him. “If we have been united with Christ in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.” (Romans 6:5) And at Easter, with the remembrance of Jesus’ resurrection and the hope of our own, we receive power to live a new life. “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) We believe that Jesus’ resurrection is a fact of history

and we trust him with our lives because God will raise us together with him.

Our celebrations of Easter will not be complete with the announcement of Jesus’ resurrection. It will only be complete when we connect that past event with our own future and then receive the power to live a new life here and now.

Sometimes, in Christian thought and teaching and preaching, the connection between Jesus’ resurrection and ours is severed. Sometimes we miss the tie between Jesus’ resurrection body and the new bodies each of us will receive in the resurrection. Sometimes the connection between our coming resurrection and our current lives is lost.

I sense that these connections are lost because we don’t talk very much—or think very much—about the final resurrection. And much of this has roots in the tradition we have inherited. People tend to talk more about heaven or paradise, about pearly gates and streets of gold, about eternal reward and final rest, than about resurrection.

This past week I heard something that illustrates this loss of connection. A fellow pastor said about someone who had died, “He is now enjoying paradise because he believed in the resurrection.” It would be more biblical, more consistent and more accurate to say, “He is now enjoying his resurrection because he trusted in Jesus.”

This Easter let’s joyfully celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. And let’s also look forward to that day when God says to each of us, “You are risen. You are risen indeed.”

Pastor Mark

March 20

6:30 PM — Simple Supper.
Please sign up in the social
hall.

7:30 PM — Communion



Birthdays

- 4 Evelyn Pascoe
- 11 Dottie Gray
- 14 Jo Fisher
- 14 Bob Williams
- 14 Tyler Conrad
- 16 Maudie Todd
- 20 Anna Wrobble



Help to decorate our sanctuary for
Easter and remember a loved one
who is enjoying the resurrection.

Fill out the insert in the bulletin on
March 16, or call the office. Then
bring your easter lilly before service
on Easter.

Anniversaries

- 26 Larry and Kathy Mendonsa

Sunday, March 23



EASTER
SCHEDULE

7:00 AM — Sunrise Service, at the Peterson
shelter in Harry Schmidt Park

9:30 AM — Easter Egg Hunt, for elementary
and pre-school children
— **Decorating the Living Cross**

10:30 AM — Service of the Resurrection



“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak.” Matthew 26:41

This month of Easter I have chosen to address the difficulty of following through with resolutions and good intentions. Our verse above comes smack-dab in the middle of that poignant drama in Gethsemane when Jesus is agonizing over his impending crucifixion, and his close friends, including fearless Peter cannot even stay awake and pray for one hour. Hearing this passage during our annual Maundy Thursday service is always wrenching to me because I can feel Peter’s shame and anguish and guilt for failing Jesus in his time of greatest need.

This Lent season, instead of ‘giving up’ something I enjoy, such as chocolate, I determined to consciously make choices to enhance my health. In particular, I saw room for growth in healthful eating and regular exercise, with a new emphasis on enriching evening activities (versus mindless TV viewing), and an earlier bedtime. I have come to understand the spiritual aspect of such intentions; these issues live deep inside.

Nearing the halfway mark of Lent I admit to you that I’m not doing all that well in keeping my resolutions. In fact, some areas seem worse than before. I have come to recognize a sort of insidious sabotage whenever I set out on new spiritual paths. In retrospect I can often discern unanticipated circumstances and discouragements. It seems that unseen forces are determined to thwart my plans and invade my thoughts. In fact, I do believe that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare,

and the first few weeks of Lent this year seem to fit that pattern. A startling insight came to me when Mark and I had a half-day at the coast together last week, he told me I was like a porcupine to be with!

Thank God that Jesus knows my entire situation, and has a prescription for my ills—“Watch and pray.” God is truly awesome and powerful. I need only invite his presence. Then I can forgive myself and begin fresh each new day. I remember life is a marathon, not a sprint.

I also have found that a thankful attitude sets the tone of my whole day and helps me to respond to others and myself in a more kindly way. So, as I resolve to **fail but keep trying**, I am also going to implement a suggestion I heard on the radio. For the next three weeks **I will try to not complain about anything**. Anyone want to join me in this experiment???

May this Easter bring Resurrection power and energy to us all. May we find strength to carry through and accomplish those things God has whispered for us to do for him.

Happy Easter. Christ is Risen!

Nancy

Postscript-

This Easter, on March 23, I celebrate the twentieth anniversary of my cancer surgery. I thank God for these years and for the blessings of a wonderful church family in which to be living, Thank you.

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

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**Don't forget to
Set Your Clocks Ahead!
Sunday, March 9
(It's earlier this year)**