

# Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

May, 2010

## **From the Pastor**

I spent the first decade of my life as a blond ... before my hair darkened into a brown (before it lightened into a gray). I think this may be why a bumper sticker I saw in Merced last week made sense to me at first. It said: "Not All Dumbs are Blond."

"That's right!" I thought to myself, "I'm glad someone is finally sticking up for blondes." So I pointed it out to Nancy. But when I read it along with her, then I got it. And then it seemed even funnier to me than it should have.

Even though this statement has been turned around it hasn't affected its truth. Not all blondes are dumb. Yes. Not all dumbs are blond. Yes. No matter which way you order it, it's true.

Here is a statement I have been thinking about recently which is true whichever way you order it: Not all holidays are holy days.

Some holidays are also holy days, most notably Christmas and Easter. But the two holidays this month, Mother's Day and Memorial Day, are not. While they both have some aspects about them which are holy, neither one finds its origin in any particular religion. They are holidays but not holy days.

When you turn this statement around it is also true: Not all holy days are holidays. My three favorites each year are Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Pentecost.

When holy days are also holidays the cultural tends to crowd out the spiritual. Traditions and family expectations sometimes come into conflict with our ability to gather together to worship God as a church. (Our weekly holy day, Sunday, is also a weekly holiday, part of the Week-end, and this brings about its own weekly conflict between the cultural and the spiritual.)

There is something special about holy days which are not holidays. They belong to us Christians. We know about them. We get them. They are ours and no one else's. They are also free from much of the cultural baggage that comes with holidays. On these holy days we can be as spiritual as we want to be without anybody expecting anything different.

This month we get to enjoy one of these days, Pentecost. (And fortunately this year Pentecost doesn't fall on Mother's Day or during the Memorial Day weekend.) This year we celebrate Pentecost for itself, we can let go of a lot of cultural baggage and be as spiritual as we want to be.

So on Pentecost Sunday we will focus our worship on the gift of the Holy Spirit and on the birth of the church. What wonderful gifts God has given to us! And what a wonderful mission God has called us to be part of! And we'll have a picnic, something very spiritual, at least by Jesus' standards.

By the time I got to this point in this article I realized that I have always brought some expectations into the celebration of Pentecost, expectations for a more powerful and apparent work of the Holy Spirit within the congregation than on a 'normal' Sunday. I have hoped and prayed, and asked the church to pray, for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on each anniversary of that mighty wind and those tongues of fire and the miracle of people hearing those Galileean disciples praise God in each of their native languages.

So I wonder if my expectations and the accompanying anxiety may have been in conflict with my desire to worship together with God's people. Maybe. So this year I'm going to try to chill out and treat Pentecost even more as a holy day.

*Pastor Mark*

## Pentecost — May 23

Please wear red for worship. (You can, of course, wear picnic clothes to worship this Sunday.)

Join us for our picnic on the church patio after worship. Hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share.



### May Birthdays

- 1 Barbara Wrobbel
- 2 Sharold Adams
- 3 Patricia Brown
- 6 Mark Hollingsworth
- 12 Harrison Wallace
- 14 Marion Butts
- 14 Tristen Costa
- 16 Savannah Inaudi
- 16 JoAnn Lupton
- 21 Ron Arnold



Sharold Adams is turning 99 on May 2. By his reckoning that means he is celebrating his birthday for the 100th time. His family is hosting a drop-in birthday party for him on Sunday, May 2, from 2 to 4 PM at Emeritus, 3420 R Street, Merced.



Our annual yard sale has been postponed until Saturday, May 15. We are accepting donations now. Call the church office (854-6772) to schedule a time to drop stuff off or have it picked up. You can also volunteer to help out by calling Dottie Gray (854-6000)



***“Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” James 2:16-17***

Today our Prius turned over 200,000 miles. It also had an empty gas tank, so before I drove home to Gustine I needed to buy gas. As I was filling my tank, a teenage boy approached me and said “Excuse me, Ma’am.” I could tell by the look on his face that he was about to ask me for something. He explained that he & his brother had just driven back to California from Ohio and they needed money for enough gas to get to their Mother’s house in Ripon. In his hand were a couple one dollar bills and some change. He asked for a couple dollars to help buy gas.

You know the feeling. A mixture of compassion and suspicion flooded my mind.

The Bible verses above do not mince words. To do nothing is to be an example of dead faith. That’s my heart speaking. My head, however, sends off a series of warnings to not get involved—don’t make eye contact; don’t be an enabler for drug or alcohol use; don’t be taken advantage of—after all ‘you work hard for your money’ and ‘you have needs too—for yourself & your church & family’.

Today I looked this young man in the eye and made some small talk about being from Pennsylvania. Instead of handing over cash I offered to take him into the station and prepay for some gas. Once inside I asked him if he & his brother had

eaten today. He said yes, this morning. It was now 6PM, so I steered him to the food section and encouraged him to pick out something. When he decided his brother would enjoy a lunchmeat sandwich I told him to pick up two, He said no, they would share. I told him I have raised three boys and know how boys need to eat. He chose a second sandwich but declined getting beverages, saying they could get water.

After I paid \$10 toward gas and for the two sandwiches, we parted ways outside the doorway but not before he gave me a hug and uttered “Thank You and God Bless You” many times over. I smiled and said “You’re welcome. Travel safely.”

Not always have I responded positively to those who ask. When we visit Oakland or New York City I get told to not look people in the eye. Sometimes the panhandlers there frighten me. Even in Merced I drive by those who stand begging from commuters near the freeway. My heart sinks but I do not stop and talk. I always feel badly but don’t quite know what to do.

It’s not easy for us Christians to be Ambassadors for Christ in this world. I hope those two young men today did not use the money they still had for drugs or alcohol. I prayed for them on my drive home and also prayed for myself to be more faithful and to be able to recognize and obey God’s direction each and every time He places an unexpected need directly in front of me. May we all demonstrate our gratitude to God by simply sharing whatever we have available to share.

Happy Springtime —Nancy

# COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street  
Gustine, CA 95322  
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Gustine, CA 95322

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

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## Mother's Day