

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

October 2009

From the Pastor

September has been quite a month! With the chicken barbecue and the Festa service at our home, with a wedding the day after a memorial service, with community activities and family obligations, I felt like I was running just to keep up. But now this week has begun at a slower pace and I've actually been able to do some reading.

One of the articles I read this week took me back many years, back to the time when I was questioning the Christian faith, and back to the time when God led me through my questions.

The article, "God in the Quad," is written by James Wood who claims to be "the non-believing son of an academic zoologist who became a priest in late middle age." Mr. Wood is familiar with the doctrine and practice of Christianity from the inside. He exhibits a profound respect for believers and for their faith. More than that, he is aware of how our faith is lived out by ordinary people:

Christians tend to apprehend God through his revelation in Jesus, and feel quite happy to talk about God's sacrificial loving-kindness, His mercy, His gentleness, His power to move mountains and heal wounds, His ability to number every hair on our heads—and, by implication, to help us get our next job or save Aunt Jane from cancer.

Woods was able to take me back in time when he wrote about "God's embarrassing Incarnation as Jesus." He said, "The Christian God *is* personal—that is precisely the stumbling block for many of us who cannot persist in belief."

That was precisely why, at twenty years old, I was unable to persist in the belief of my teen-aged years. Like the author, I could not bridge the gap between a personal God who was incarnate in Je-

sus and an immortal and invisible God who had created our universe.

Obviously, I came through that time and came back to the faith. Reading that article has helped me to appreciate again what God did in my life back in 1977.

I had been trying, with my own understanding, to bridge the gap between God incarnate in Jesus and God immortal, beyond time and space. I couldn't do that, just as James Woods confesses that he cannot. But I let go of my efforts to figure it out and then God stepped in and sent me a word from the Bible:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:1-3)

I realized that God is able to bridge that gap even if I can never figure out how God does it. And I accepted the testimony that God had in fact bridged the gap and become incarnate in Jesus. Then the personal God in Jesus took me by the hand and led me back across that gap into the presence of God who is beyond time and space.

What an amazing trip! And surprisingly easy, with the right guide. Once again I remember what it was like back when and am very thankful that God brought me to where I am today.

Pastor Mark



Sunday, October 18 Special Worship Service

In order to celebrate World Food Day (October 16) we will have a special worship service. We will remember and give thanks to those from our congregation who helped begin the Agape food closet and then commission those who are currently serving Agape and other food programs in our community.

(See Nancy's article on the next page.)

October Birthdays

- 5 Kathy Mendonça
- 6 Mike Azevedo
- 9 Gloria Avila
- 13 Sandra Hensley
- 16 Michael Mendonça
- 21 Jerel Steckling
- 30 Joel Hollingsworth

October Anniversaries

- 5 Mark & Nancy Hollingsworth
- 8 Ron and Valerie Arnold





“Jesus called his disciples to him and said: ‘I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.’” Matthew 15:32

October 16, 2009 will be the 29th observance of World Food Day. If you have a computer, go to: www.worldfooddayusa.org AND www.feedingminds.org

World Food Day (WFD) is a worldwide event designed to increase awareness, understanding and informed, year-around action to alleviate hunger. World Food Day is observed each October 16th in recognition of the founding of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945. The first World Food Day was in 1981.

In the United States this effort is sponsored by 450 national, private voluntary organizations. (Note- I checked and Presbyterian Hunger Fund and Presbyterian Women are listed along with 448 other organizations!!) . WFD planning is done at the community level. In every community there are people already involved; the challenge is to coordinate community planning and increase what happens.

Congratulations to Community Presbyterian Church of Gustine for being a founding and sustaining partner in Agape, our local food bank. Our congregation members have been faithful, year-round contributors of food, labor and funds to this local food bank since its inception. Currently, Valerie & Ron Arnold (current Deacon and Elder respectively of our church) are key leaders, and Jerel Steckling (former Elder/ current

Deacon) was instrumental during the infancy stage of the program. Similarly, Gloria Avila (also former Elder & current Deacon) continues even into her retirement as coordinator the “brown bag” food distribution program in our community. At our potlucks and even at our Communion table, our church does not want anyone to go away hungry.

Obviously, as a church family, we take Jesus’ compassion for the hungry seriously, as well we should.

Contemplate how we can increase our ministry to the hungry in Gustine. Let’s pray separately and together, asking God to lead us in how to help; in new or bigger or more personal ways to feed the hungry in our midst. We know this is a time of extreme need in our area. Please consider the quotes below as a starting point:

- Never before has man had such capacity to control his own environment, to end thirst and hunger, to conquer poverty and disease, to banish illiteracy and massive human misery.”~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy, before the UN General Assembly
- "Never doubt a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”~ Margaret Mead
- "For now I ask no more Than the justice of eating.”~ Pablo Neruda, Chilean Poet, Noble Prize Winner
- "We want children to grow up strong and healthy because they might grow up to do something great.”~ First grade student

Blessings in this time of harvest----*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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WHATEVER IS *true*
WHATEVER IS *honorable*
WHATEVER IS *just*
WHATEVER IS *pure*...
IF THERE IS ANYTHING
worthy of praise.
THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS.
PHILIPPIANS 4:8, NRSV