

Good News



Community Presbyterian Church

November, 2010

From the Pastor

Last week, in between a couple of errands in Turlock, I stopped in for lunch at Chipotle Mexican Grill. In their patio area, at the table next to me, three men were gathered around a blueprint. I would have loved to have been invited over to look at those plans. I get great pleasure in using my imagination to move from the two dimensions of a blueprint to the three dimensions of a house or landscape or shopping center.

Although I can function well in virtual worlds of two dimensions, reading and writing and arithmetic, I much prefer living in a three-dimensional world. I would much rather be digging in my garden than watching TV.

Paper, of course, is two-dimensional; and everything that is drawn or written or printed on paper is two-dimensional. But some two-dimensional objects, like that blueprint, are intended to create three-dimensional realities. And a few of them actually do become reality.

The Bible, as any book, is a two-dimensional object. But the Bible invites us to use it as a blueprint; to construct a three-dimensional life, our life in this world which can begin to be conformed to the image of Christ.

One dimension of the Bible is its theology, its teaching about God and ourselves and our world. This is the content of our faith, the things we know and the things we believe. They are essential for forming our lives as Christians. But they cannot accomplish that goal if they stay only in our minds and in our mouths and don't find their way into our hearts. They must make their way from thoughts into character traits.

A second dimension of the Bible is its ethics. These are instructions (commandments) both gen-

eral and specific that are meant to guide our lives in practice, in the here and now. But if these are used merely to judge others, or if they are followed simply in the hope of earning a reward and not out of a desire to become a new people, then they will fail to achieve their goal. When we hear commandments addressed to us we need to put them into action until they become habits infused with joy.

These two dimensions of theology and ethics are intended to come alive in each one of us who accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. We are meant to become new creations with a transformed character and a transformed manner of living in this world. The word of God is meant to become flesh in us the same way the Word became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth.

The word became flesh when Jesus was born into our world. Then the flesh became word as a few early disciples recorded the words and life of Jesus in what we now call the New Testament. And now it is possible for that two-dimensional word to become a three-dimensional life in each of us and in our life together as a church.

Don't let the Bible remain a two-dimensional object by learning it and knowing it and believing it and repeating it. Let the Bible become a three-dimensional force by taking its truth into your heart and by following its commandments with your body.

If you haven't experienced it already, I think you will find that taking the two-dimensional words of Scripture and forming them into a three-dimensional life (with the help of the Holy Spirit) is both joyful and fulfilling.

Pastor Mark

Harvest Dinner

And Election Meeting of the Congregation

Saturday, November 13

7:00 PM



This is a planned potluck with pork tenderloin provided. If you would like to bring a dish to share and haven't yet been asked, please call Eva Goman (854-3169).

Birthdays

- 1 Leroy Gray
- 1 Brian Gray
- 3 Amelia Pearl Duarte
- 3 Lori Ford
- 3 Med Hoover
- 6 Tracy Escatel
- 21 Jenna Acord
- 22 Ardyce Hedlind
- 26 Danné Hoover
- 26 Aaron Hollingsworth
- 26 John Schlack, Jr.
- 27 Jane Steckling

Anniversaries

- 11 Richard and Med Hoover
- 18 Jim & Kathy Conrad
- 18 Bill and Sandy Hensley



1ST SUNDAY OF *Advent*

November 28



“Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name; you are mine. Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”

Isaiah 43:1B &5A

I started to write about national GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) week, but just couldn't do it. That topic just wouldn't come together for me. I just couldn't ignore the 'proverbial' elephant in our room-or in our congregation to be more accurate.

We are individually and collectively living through a time of crisis.

Our Central Valley and Merced County have taken a giant hit from the recession. Unemployment and food closet requests are way up. Teachers' numbers are down so classroom size is up. It appears that crime and violent crime has increased as well. And our church, after an amazing period of grace- has taken a financial and attendance hit.

The majority of our serving Elders and Deacons are coping with recent or current family crises, many of them of a serious nature. Each week we pray for four women who are surviving and fighting breast cancer. Our miracle transplant Elder is battling a new diagnosis with his usual good humor and optimism. Others continue long confrontations with chronic diseases such as COPD, diabetes, and coronary artery disease, and disabilities. Prayer chain has been very busy passing along concerns and requests for healing and strength.

There are also active battles being waged in

our midst against addictive chemicals and depression and sleeplessness.

Yet I see our church family being present-for one another as well as for a visitor with concerns about her grandson. I see outreach to schoolchildren and neighbor children. I see loving hearts offering someone in need a place to stay (two offers to 2 different people this week alone). I've seen furniture being delivered to a burned-out family. Food & workers sent to Agape. Help of many kinds suddenly appears when the need is presented. As we are able, we share- and by God's grace we are always able!!

In this Church Family I see love in action, which is, after all—God's Spirit at work in us and among us and through us to others. Thank you all for your loving hearts.

We may be small in numbers just now. Our budget may be diminished. We are challenged by trials and difficult tasks every day. Please find encouragement in the example of our Lord-who never had his own place to lay his head. He and twelve (eleven faithful) walked and talked and ate with the common people of their region. They loved those they met and did what they could. And the world has never been the same. We need not fear whatever may come our way, individually or as a church, because of God's promises.

Trust and believe and PRAY with me with love & hope for our church and her people.

Shalom—Nancy

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

399 Sixth Street
Gustine, CA 95322
Return Service Requested

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Permit No. 12
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

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

Web Site: www.wefollowjesusingustine.org



*Set your clocks back an hour
Saturday night or Sunday
morning before coming to
church on November 7.*