

KENSINGTON PRESS

APRIL 2010

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SAN ANSELMO

An Inclusive Community

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

My favorite scripture for the season of Easter is the story of the trip to Emmaus from the gospel of Luke. I like the story for many reasons, two of which are the anonymity of one of the one of the disciples—that means it could be you, the reader—and that the story perfectly captures the mood and lack of perception by the disciples found in almost all of the resurrection stories.

In this story, the two disciples are so wrapped up in their own sadness and disappointment that events did not work out the way they expected that they do not comprehend the nature of the guest who has joined them on the road. The NIV says that they look downcast. The ambiguity of this English translation is wonderful. That they look downcast could refer to their appearance or it could mean the direction of their vision, they can only see so far in front of them because they are looking at the ground.

At the risk of *eisegesis*, I like this particular translation because it connects us to the times that we become so disappointed or saddened by the ways things work out that we can see no solution or hope for the present. We are confronted daily by situations that seem intractable. From conflicts around the world, to the economic stress in our daily lives, to the plight of education, or the rearing of children, it seems that there are no solutions, no way out, no hope.

Even the church seems to suffer from this downcast vision. Last year, for instance, our denomination announced that the Presbyterian Church had suffered our largest drop in membership over the last fifty years. If the present trend continues, our denomination will have fewer than two million members in two or three years. Individual churches suffer the same crunch--declining numbers and declining revenues.

When we become downcast, it is not difficult to get entangled in the "Ain't It Awful" game. We become so locked into despair that even when someone does propose a solution, we may be tempted to resist the offering. We cannot see beyond the present troubles. In story of the trip to Emmaus, the disciples listen to their guest interpret scripture but they still don't see who the guest is. Sometimes it seems so much easier to remain enmeshed in downcast vision.

Joyce Rupp, in her book, **May I Have This Dance?**, writes,
Continued on page 6

The Colossal Church Closet and Cranny Clean-Out

Whether it is at home or church, stuff accumulates over time. At church almost every closet, cranny, and storage area has piles of stuff that has accumulated over years. Some stored items are needed and frequently used. Some of the stuff may no longer be used, but folks are afraid to throw it out because they don't know whose stuff it is.

On Saturday, May 8 we will have the Colossal Church Closet and Cranny Clean-Out to sort through all this stuff. We want to make it an event that combines sorting stuff with fellowship and fun, much like last year's Great Spiff Up. We will start at 9 AM with coffee and juice and order pizza for lunch. We will ask each church committee, board, and group to identify where they store their stuff in April and ask that each group have a least one person at the May 8 event.

Together We Clean.



Holy Humor Sunday

(not an April Fool's joke!)

Holy Humor Sunday has its roots in history. For centuries, in Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant countries, Easter Monday and “Bright Sunday” (the Sunday after Easter) were observed by the faithful as “days of joy and laughter” with parties and picnics to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Parishioners and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, sang and danced. It was a time for clergy and people to tell jokes and to have fun.

The custom of Easter Monday and Bright Sunday celebrations were rooted in the musings of early church theologians (including Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Chrysostom) that God played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead. Easter was “God’s supreme joke played on death.” *Risus paschalis* – “the Easter laugh,” the early theologians called it.

In recent years the celebration of the Easter laugh has been revived in what has become known as Holy Humor Sunday – the Sunday after Easter. This year, the worship planning team has put together a worship service for Holy Humor Sunday, April 11, which will feel very different from a traditional worship service in many ways, but will still contain all the elements of a standard worship service.

Our worship will be formatted along the lines of a radio show similar to “A Prairie Home Companion,” Garrison Keillor’s program on public radio. But worked into that format will be worshipful music, the prayer of confession and the morning prayers, the time with young disciples and a short sermon. Our goal will not be belly laughs, but fun and celebration that Christ is risen, indeed. It will be, as our call to worship will put it, lighthearted but not lightheaded.

Join us for joyful worship on April 11, Holy Humor Sunday.



New Additions to the Church Library

- **Have a Little Faith**, by Mitch Albom. This is a true story of love and faith from the author of **Tuesdays with Morrie**.
- **Working on God**, by Winifred Gallagher, takes us on a journey of discovery through three faiths - Judaism, Christianity, and Zen Buddhism.
- **Blood Brothers**, by Elias Chacour, a Palestinian Christian priest, tireless worker for peace in that area, and a personal friend of some in our congregation.
- **The Purpose-Driven Life**, by Rick Warren, a New York Times best seller for many weeks.
- **Great People of the Bible and How They Lived**, from the Reader’s Digest Press.
- **Who’s Who in the Old Testament**, by Donald Sommerville
- And for the children, there is the delightful story of **The Abbot and I**, written by Sarah Elizabeth Cowie, as told by Josie the Cat as she takes children on a tour of a monastery.

Closely-Knit Group

After making many infant caps and afghan squares, not to mention warm caps to distribute to our Duncan Hall shelter visitors at Christmas, the knitters of FPCSA—now known as the Closely-Knit Group—have included a new ministry--prayer shawls. They are warm, colorful and cozy but also very practical as they are machine washable and dryable.

We are working with the Older Adult Ministry and so far, the recipients have been folk who were hospitalized or dealing with health issues, but as our supply increases, we hope to offer them to our shut-ins and others who are dealing with personal issues of one sort and another.

We welcome more knitters to join us. Baskets of yarn and instructions are available at the coffee hour after Morning Worship. If you are a knitter wannabe or if your skills are a bit rusty, please contact Phyllis Schlobohm at 388-3082, or Maggy Hughes at 469-1948 to arrange for instruction and/or mentoring.

TWK, Together We Knit!



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/alisonlongrigg/3609578709/>

Children, Youth and Families

Easter Egg Hunt and Maypole

On Easter Sunday, April 4, we will have our Maypole and Easter Egg Hunt. Thank you to Staci Conti for organizing the Maypole and Rebecca Conant for organizing the Easter Egg Hunt. Donations of plastic eggs, candy or small trinkets, and baskets for the children will be much appreciated.

There will also be activities for children in Duncan Hall after the Time With Young Disciples for those children who do not wish to remain in worship.

Fundraiser for Mission Trip and Youth Triennium

The youth who are going to Mississippi this month and those who are going to the Presbyterian Youth Triennium in July are sponsoring a chili cook off on Sunday, May 23 following worship. Get out your savoriest, hottest, and best chili recipes for this fun and tasty event. We will have more details next month.

2010 Mission Trip

Eight youth and three of their adult sponsors will go back to Mississippi on April 10th. Past trips have been organized through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (one the agencies we support through our One Great Hour of Sharing offering), but this year we will be working through IRD and staying at Grace House, and these two entities are beginning a project to construct 40 houses with hopes of building up to 100. Our youth group will be the first group to participate in this start up program. The project is new and exciting, and we are delighted that we can break new ground. You will hear more about the group's experience after we return to San Anselmo on April 17th.

The youth committee is sponsoring several fundraisers to help our youth go to Mississippi and do this important work: the Potluck Supper and Auction in March, a chili cook off in May, and the continuing coffee sales. Your support and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Presbyterian Youth Triennium



PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM 2010

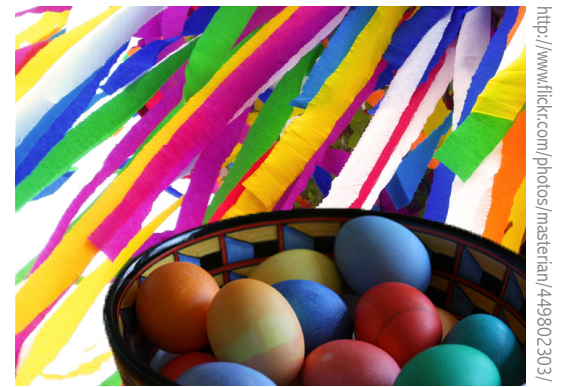
The Presbytery of the Redwoods is sending a delegation of 10 youth and 2 adult sponsors to the **Presbyterian Youth Triennium** in July. Every three years over 6000 youth and adult leaders gather on the Purdue Campus for a national youth event for the Presbyterian Church. The event also invites international guests from Presbyterian churches all over the world. During the four days of the event, the youth gather to worship, study together in small groups, and listen to inspiring nationally known keynote speakers. Three of our youth have registered to go to the Triennium: Taylor Crouch, Mary McBurnie, and Juliana Steccone. Karl Roulston has volunteered to be one of the adult sponsors. A portion of the fundraisers sponsored by the youth committee will go to help our youth get to the Triennium.

In Memoriam

Dale Missimer, January 29, 2010
Lucky Phelps, March 12, 2010
Carol Houston, March 16, 2010
Ed Sargent, March 19, 2010

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things... and the God of peace will be with you.

(Phil 4:8-9)



Presbyterian Women

Annual Women's Retreat

This year's retreat will take place April 30th-May 1st at the Ralston L. White Retreat Center in Mill Valley. Our theme this year is **Being Salt and Light**. In telling his disciples to be salt and light, Jesus encourages us to be effective followers. Salty people are mixed right into the middle of life, adding zest and making a difference. People full of light bring the hidden into view. They show up in dark places of world and light up their environs with the compassion of God. How do we do the hard work of being salt and light?

The retreat will be led by the team of Jo Gross, Sally Johnson, Joanne Whitt, Martha Spears, Betty Stott and Virginia Thibeaux. Susan Plath will also give a short presentation on Saturday afternoon.

Please plan on joining us for this weekend of fellowship, reflection, laughter and leisure. The cost is \$140.00 and includes 4 meals and the overnight stay at beautiful Ralston White Retreat Center. Sign up using the brochure that was in your March KP or by calling Martha Spears at 459-02667 or Betty Stott at 454-7405. We will also be taking signups after church at coffee hour beginning April 11th. Full or partial scholarships are available.



from the Photographs of Frank Snyder, Miami University Digital Collection



Save the Date: May 12th

Our **Annual Spring Mission Tea** will be on Wednesday, May 12th at 2 pm in the Fireside Room. We gather to celebrate our Birthday Offerings which go to aid projects for women and children in the U.S and abroad.

Our guest speaker will be Virginia Stuart, the wife of the interim President of SFTS. As neighbors, this will give us an opportunity to extend hospitality and get acquainted. Please save the date, plan on attending, and enjoy good food and fellowship. For more information, call Betty Stott, at 454-7405



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/497848886@N00/460646046/>

Presbyterian Women Statement of Purpose

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace,
- and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.



I Can No Other Answer Make, But, Thanks, And Thanks.

~William Shakespeare

After over 18 years serving as the editor of our church newsletter, the Kensington Press, Elder Diane Fairchild is stepping down for health reasons. Every month, Diane gathered articles, edited them, sometimes wrote them, and then formatted them into the pleasing-to-the-eye, easy-to-read, informative periodical we receive month after month. Sometimes she needed to remind people gently that an article on a particular topic might be appropriate, or that the deadline was coming up (or past). She did this kindly and without judgment. She was always very flexible about deadlines, managing to fit last minute articles into the KP if it was at all possible. She took easily to the computer software demands of the job. Her taste and her grammar have always been impeccable. In order to gather the items she needed, she attended staff meetings once each month, and her presence and contributions at staff meetings were always appreciated.

Along with the entire congregation and our many friends and neighbors who rely on the KP for news and schedules, I thank Diane for her years of service. Well done, good and faithful servant!

Thanks also to Martha Olson-Joyce, who put together the February KP, and to Virginia Thibeaux, who has taken on the position of KP editor. Our congregation is truly blessed by the gifts of these three women. ~Joanne Whitt
(I am filling some very large shoes! If you have comments or suggestions for the KP, please let me know. ~Virginia)

Poets and Prophets

(This is a new feature which will appear occasionally)

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Spotlight of National Debate
over Israel-Palestine

~Walt Davis

Sabeel board members said the conference held at our church on March 5-6 was one of the largest and best of the thirty conferences sponsored by Friends of Sabeel in the U.S. over the past five years. Sabeel supports Palestinian Christians seeking a peaceful and just reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. About 500 people attended the conference. "The conference was thoughtful, sobering, and energizing at the same time," said Dave Jones, "and it was wonderful to have all the rooms of our church facility overflowing with people working for peace and justice." Over thirty members of our congregation participated in the conference which generated consternation among Bay Area Zionists.¹

Local Zionist criticism is part of a larger national and international attempt to silence any criticism of Israel's policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territories. The 2008 General Assembly of the PC(USA) created a Middle East Study Committee (MESC) to go to the Middle East, talk with leaders of our partner churches in the region, and interview Muslim, Jewish, and secular leaders in each country. The MESC report and recommendations to the July, 2010 General Assembly can be found at www.pcusa.org/middleeastpeace/pdf/middleeastpeace-fullreport.pdf - Mar 18, 2010

In mid February, three weeks before the MESC report was released, representatives of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) launched an attack on the PC(USA), the World Council of Churches, Sabeel, and other "liberal Protestant churches." A form letter which the SWC claims it sent to 300,000 supporters asking them to lobby Presbyterians states: "Adoption of this poisonous document (the MESC report) by the Presbyterian Church will be nothing short of a declaration of war on Israel and her supporters." Following the SWC lead, other Zionist organizations have launched similar attacks.

These attacks follow the pattern of what these organizations have done in recent years as Christian denominations prepare for their biennial or quadrennial national assemblies. The major reason for the attack on the PC(USA) is that we do not share a Zionist perspective on the conflict or a Zionist solution to it. Instead, since 1948 our church has called for a just peace based on international law, United Nations resolutions, and respect for the human rights of all inhabitants of the Holy Land. Since 1948 the PC(USA) has repeatedly affirmed Israel's right to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders. At the same time, the PC(USA), like many Jews in Israel, the U.S., and all over the world, has opposed Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestine.

¹ There are many forms of Zionism, but common to most political/religious forms of Zionism is 1) the premise that Jewish security and survival requires that the state of Israel be recognized as Jewish state in which non-Jews do not have the same rights as Jews; 2) the ongoing Israeli confiscation of Palestinian lands is permissible because in the Bible God promised the land from the Nile to the Euphrates to the descendants of Abraham. This second claim requires belief in the myth that all modern-day Jews are descendants of the ancient Israelites.



Church members Dave Jones, Ron and Rolline Vestal.
Photo by Richard Schlobohm

April 1**Maundy Thursday**

Service of Tenebrae with Communion
7:30 p.m.

Fool's Errand

The Rev. Dr. Kevin Buchanan, preaching

April 2**Good Friday**

Service of the Seven Last Words of Christ
Noon to 3:00 p.m.

The Rev. Dr. Laird J. Stuart

The Rev. Laurie Garrett-Cobina,

The Rev. Dr. Tici Truly

The Rev. Sam Alexander

The Rev. Leslie Veen

Lisa Larges, M.Div.

Scott Clark, M.Div.

(Worshippers may come and go during the three-hour service)

April 4**Easter/Resurrection of the Lord**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Service for the Lord's Day
Communion

Look for the Living

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Luke 24:1-12

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching

For this week's announcements and calendar, go to the homepage of our web site: www.togetherweserve.org

(Continued from page 1)

"Resistance can be the source of negative thoughts and feelings. We can so easily criticize and find fault rather than give praise and affirmation."¹ She continues with concern, "I have noticed it in Christian church settings, seemingly in direct opposition to the expressed belief in the Easter story of change and transformation."²

At the end of the story of the Road to Emmaus, the disciples invite their guest to dine with them. It is in the breaking of bread that their eyes are finally opened—they are no longer downcast—and they recognize their guest as Jesus. They rediscover hope in the midst of loss; death and despair do not have the last word. God can bring new life and do new things even when our vision is short sighted. In astonishment and joy, they travel all the way back to Jerusalem to share the good news. We have been called to be those same disciples, to lift up our eyes and see new possibilities and grow in trust that God is working through us to be transformed and to transform the world around us. Yes, it is easy to be morose and downcast, but we are an Easter people. God is working new things through us even now; can we trust and hope?

I am excited that Easter falls on a communion Sunday this year. As we break bread together, what will we see anew? What excitement and hope will we find, as individuals and as a community, in the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ?

Shalom,

Kevin

¹ Joyce Rupp, **May I Have This Dance?** (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2001, p. 60.)

² Rupp, p.58.

April 7

The Service for Wholeness and Healing
Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., the Sanctuary
Prayer, Taizé Music, Iona Liturgy

April 11

Holy Humor Sunday
2nd Sunday of Easter

A San Anselmo Home Companion

John 21:1-19

Holy Humor Sunday is an old Easter custom begun by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity celebrating Jesus' resurrection with joy and laughter on the Sunday after Easter. Our worship will be in radio show format.

April 18

3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-6 (7-20)

Psalm 30

Revelation 5:11-14

John 21:1-19

What Kind of Love?

The Rev. Dr. Kevin Buchanan, preaching.

April 25

4th Sunday of Easter

Simon the Tanner

Psalm 23

Acts 9:36-43

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt, preaching

Adult Education

No Passports Required, No Embassies for Protection: A Study of Acts
~A Bible Study led by Herman Waetjen

The Acts of the Apostles continues the journey Jesus inaugurated in the Gospel of Luke. That journey, culminating in his death and resurrection constituted a New Exodus into the Promised Land of freedom, justice, love, healing and restoration. Commissioned by the risen Christ before his ascension, his disciples embark on a journey beyond Palestine, a journey into an alienated and hostile world, dominated by the imperious Roman empire. Simon Peter summons his fellow Jews to enter into God's New Exodus. Paul of Tarsus, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, iconoclastically invokes the unclean Gentiles to enter God's new Exodus by undertaking a journey that will take him ten thousand miles on foot and by sea. As he moves through Antioch of Pisidia to Iconium and on to Lystra and Derbe and into the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, crossing the Hellespont to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth, he will receive forty lashes minus one from the Jews, he will be beaten with rods three times, and shipwrecked, he will be adrift at sea for a day and a night. No passports are required for this journey, but there are also no embassies for protection. Paul's journey will end in the capital city of Rome, where he, by proclaiming God's New Exodus, will leave the reader of the Acts of the Apostles to ponder whether the Good News of God's New Exodus will ever transform a power-oriented and money-ordered world.

To those who are interested in attending this course, you are urged to read through the entire Acts of the Apostles -- and, if possible, in one sitting.

Upcoming Music Events

Sunday, April 18, 4:00 PM

The Ugandan Orphans Choir

We are hosting this wonderful choir for a concert and a 3-day stay, April 18-20. The Ugandan Orphans Choir, under the ministry of Childcare Worldwide, is a group of ten children, ages 9 -14, who sing, play their African drums and other instruments, dance traditional dances in colorful costumes, and sing praise songs they have learned in English. Their joy is infectious. They will also share with us about the needs of AIDS orphans in Uganda as well as demonstrate God's powerful hand at work there. This concert is not to be missed! Bring your friends! A freewill donation will be requested.

Help is needed with their mealtimes at the church. Please contact Cheryl Finley at 460-6945, (email: [fneal6@comcast.net](mailto:fineal6@comcast.net)), for more information on how you can help.

Friday, April 30, 7:00pm

Marin Girls Chorus: Sound of the Waves: Water Songs and Sea Chanteys

\$15 suggested donation, (includes intermission goodies and treats!) Directed by Martha Wall, the 80-voiced choir will delight you with their sweet sound.

Gospel Singing Workshop

with Deborah Rae Thomson

Join in a community singing celebration of traditional & contemporary Black Gospel music

Sunday, April 25th 2010 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Fairfax Community Church
2398 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

*R.S.V.P. email registration

*\$30 Adults (\$40 at the door)

*\$20 Students, Seniors (60+) Groups (10 or more)

gospelgrace@att.net or call 415-461-8460

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website: www.togetherweserve.org

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ADULT STUDY

9:00 a.m.

SUNDAY WORSHIP
& SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:00 a.m.

(Nursery Care)

The Rev. Dr. Joanne Whitt
Pastor and Head of Staff

The Rev. Dr. Kevin Buchanan
*Interim Associate Pastor for Children,
Youth & Families*

The Rev. Beverly Brewster
Parish Associate

Mary Wright Gillespie
Associate Pastor Emerita
Sally Johnson

Director of Music Emerita

J. Carolyn Johnston
Business Manager

Tom Lannert
Church Custodian

Kathleen McCalla
Office Administrator

John Parfitt
Organist

Martha Spears

Coordinator of Older Adult Ministries

Martha Wall

Director of Music

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The students at Yale thought “cogito ergo sum” was what it was all about and Yale was encouraging them to think that, whereas I felt very deeply it’s “amo ergo sum” (I love, therefore I am).

--William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

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