



# COMMUNICATOR

News from Claremont Presbyterian Church

July/August 2009

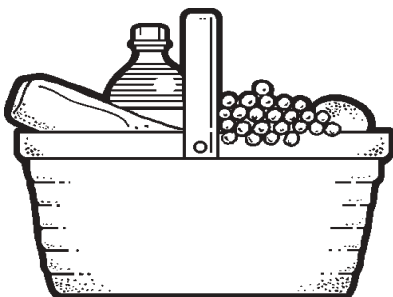
## From the Pastor

Trees don't lie. Last week my family and I were walking down the National Mall in Washington, D.C. looking for the Vietnam War Memorial. I gazed in the direction the map indicated we should go and murmured, "That can't be right . . . the Vietnam Memorial doesn't have all those big trees near it!" Then it hit me. Twenty years ago, the last time I had visited Washington, the Vietnam Memorial did *not* have big trees near it – but now it did. Trees can grow a lot in two decades.

Chances are, if I had walked down the Washington Mall regularly over the last twenty years, I would not have noticed those trees growing. It would not have occurred to me that the landscape would look dramatically different to someone who had not seen it change gradually over the weeks and months and years.

How many other changes in our lives sneak up on us – coming on so gradually that we do not notice? What about our lives would look startling different to someone who had not seen us in twenty years? And does the same thing happen to churches? Do things about communities of faith sometimes change so gradually over time that the people in that community barely notice? The truth is that the small decisions we make each day, the minor habits we adopt, the little things we decide to do or not do can add up to dramatic changes of course over time. Often we are so unconscious of this process that the changes catch us off guard when we finally realize that they have occurred. But perhaps we can become more conscious of how the small decisions we make each day chart the course of our lives – as individuals and communities. As someone once said, "How we spend our days is how we spend our lives."

If you were to leave Claremont Presbyterian Church today and come back in twenty years, what would you hope to see? How are the small decisions we make about our life and faith today carrying us toward that vision?



## Summer Picnic Planned for July 12

Plan to stay after worship on July 12 for a church family picnic. The children from our summer Vacation Bible School and their families will join us. Bring a potluck side dish or dessert to share. The church will provide coffee, lemonade and water. The PYGs will provide delicious grilled hot dogs, hamburgers and a vegetarian option in exchange for donations to their upcoming work project in Nogales, Mexico. This would be a great Sunday to invite a friend to join you for church!



## Join Us in Rome

It's not too late to register your children, grandchildren, neighbors, or friends for Vacation Bible School.

Forms are available in the CPC Office.

VBS is scheduled from 5:30 ~ 9:00 p.m.,

July 6 through July 10,

and is designed for children

Kindergarten - 6th grade.

A contribution of \$10.00 per child is requested.

For additional information, please call the church office at (909) 624-9693.

## Summer. Surprise.

On Sundays through July, 3rd - 6th grade-aged children are invited to participate in Summer Surprise, a fun way of experiencing the stories of the Bible during worship. Each Sunday, after the Time with the Children, young people can accompany Pastor Rocky and other grown-ups in hearing the stories of Israel crossing the Jordan, of David facing a giant, of Esther saving a nation, and many more.

We'll also spend some time contributing things to worship that help the whole church tell the story. From a pile of rocks to pages of a book: there's no way to tell what will appear in the Sanctuary as a witness to our children's learning of God.

Children are invited to bring friends and to come prepared for fun. Seriously.

## Don't Forget the Red Wheelbarrow!

Summer is here and often we forget to fill the Red Wheelbarrow in the Narthex. The hungry are with us all year long.

If you travel or are planning a vacation please remember the homeless. This time of year they are in great need of small personal hygiene items such as small shampoos, soaps, toothpaste, combs, Kleenex, lotions, fingernail files, shaving cream, etc. Collect these from your hotel while on vacation traveling, or purchase these small sample items at your local pharmacy and drop them off at church. Of course, canned food is always welcome too.

We hope you all have a wonderful summer!

## Intergenerational Summer Choir

We thank the Chancel Choir, Music Director Jenelle Westerbeck Anderson and Organist/Assistant Music Director Geri DeMasi for a marvelous year of music.

Summer Choir will begin on July 5 and continues through July 26. On those four Sundays, anyone who likes to sing is encouraged to join us at 9:00 a.m. as we rehearse an easy-to-learn piece for the 10:00 a.m. worship service. This year we are inviting all ages and encouraging families to come sing together. You may come all four Sundays or any of the four that you wish.

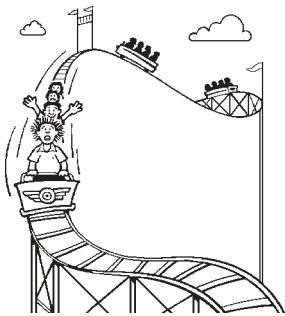
During the remaining Sundays of the summer, worship music will be provided by individuals or ensembles from our congregation.

## Produce Sunday Is Back

Several weeks ago the people of CPC responded to a call to bring their locally grown fruit and vegetables to church, so that it might be donated to the Beta Center food pantry in Pomona. Here's some good news: you can do it again!

On the first Sundays of July, August, and September, we invite you to pick the apricots, tomatoes, and any other types of produce growing on your trees and in your gardens. They will be collected during worship and then taken to the food pantry for immediate distribution.

That's July 5, August 2, and September 6. Come and share of your bounty!



## Help School Children with Supplies

The CPC Deacons adopted the children at Oakmont Elementary School in Claremont several years ago. Each August, in preparation of the new school year, we fill 30 backpacks chock full of school supplies and present these to Kevin Ward, the principal at Oakmont, for distribution to kids in need throughout the year. Here are several ways you can help support this caring ministry:

- 1) When you are out buying school supplies, buy something extra. We are collecting binders, spiral notebooks, ruled paper, crayons, pencils, pens, rulers, scissors and glue sticks.
- 2) Monetary donations will be accepted on the patio after worship on August 2, 9 and 16. Checks can also be mailed to the church office, with Oakmont Backpacks on the memo line. Your Deacons will purchase backpacks and any remaining items that are in short supply.
- 3) Volunteer your time to pack the backpacks in Fellowship Hall after worship on Sunday, August 23.

## Conscientious Projector Comes to Claremont

The Church and Society Commission invites you to the beginning of an exciting new partnership between Claremont Presbyterian Church, Progressive Christians Uniting and the Claremont Forum. Each month the Conscientious Projector Project will invite the whole community to view and discuss a film relating to current social issues.

On Wednesday, July 15, the unique documentary film "Made in L.A." will be screened for the public at the Claremont Forum at the Packing House in the West Village (of Claremont) at 7:00 p.m. "Made in L.A." follows the remarkable story of three Latina immigrants working in Los Angeles garment sweatshops as they embark on a three-year odyssey to win basic labor protections from a clothing retailer.

Come and experience a powerful film alongside conscientious neighbors.



## CPC at Claremont's Fourth of July

This July 4th, share your enthusiasm about our congregation and its ministries. Sign up to help out in CPC's booth in Memorial Park during the morning and early afternoon OR plan to be part of the CPC float in Claremont's Fourth of July Parade. For more information, call the church office.

## Men's Breakfast Group Changes

The Men's Breakfast has changed the day and location of our weekly meetings! Starting July 1, 2009 we will meet Wednesdays at Mt. San Antonio Gardens. We will meet in a private dining room but take our buffet breakfast in the main dining room. The time is still 7:24 a.m. and the price is still \$8.00 per person. Parking is inside the complex just in front of the dining room in Visitor Parking spots. There is ample parking. Walking and carpooling are encouraged!

The group will not meet during the month of August.

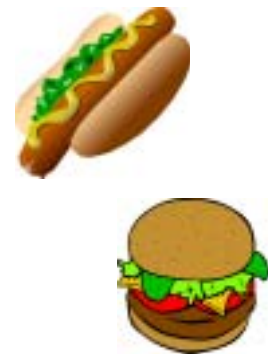
## Hot Dogs Come From PYGs

On Sunday, July 12, the Presbyterian Youth Group (PYGs) invites you to an all-church picnic immediately following worship. Come and have a hot dog, hamburger or veggie burger for nothing more than a contribution towards the PYG work trip to the Arizona/Mexico border in August. From August 1-8, our youth will partner with Borderlinks, a leader in international experiential education, to experience life on the border. They will run a day camp for children in Nogales throughout the week while also meeting with community and church leaders in order to gain an understanding of life in a border town. Throughout the week, we will look for ways that God is at work to save people, and we will ask the hard questions about the things we need to do, as God's people, to more and more participate in God's healing work, on the border as well as at home.

So come enjoy some great summer picnic fare with the assurance that your hot dog is taking PYGs to Mexico as ambassadors of God's good news.

## Circle One Dinner Meeting

Circle One of the Presbyterian Women of Claremont Presbyterian Church will have a dinner at Mt. San Antonio Gardens on Wednesday, August 12 at 6:00 p.m. Come to the outside dining room patio on Padua Drive off Bonita Avenue in Claremont. The buffet dinner will cost \$11.00 per person (which includes tax and tip.) You may pay Barbara Myers at the dinner. For more information call Barbara Myers.



## CPC Staff Email Addresses

Pastor Karen Sapio

Associate Pastor Rocky Supinger

Parish Associate David Lutz

Director of Christian Education Susan Townzen

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Music Director Jenelle Westerbeck Anderson

Director of Music for Children & Youth Melissa McIntosh Landis

Finance & Publications Associate Jo Colclough

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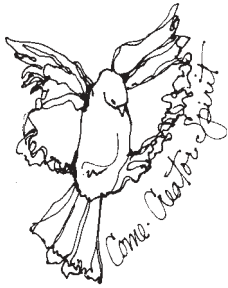
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## Session Digest

At its May meeting, the Session:

- Met with the '08-'09 class of confirmands, heard their stories and read their statements of faith, and commended them for their faithfulness.
- Authorized a "Mutual Ministry Committee" to continue the work initiated by Sarah Green in coordinating with Emmanuel's congregation
- Spent time in reflection on the recent Officer's Retreat, and committed to an increased commitment to sharing of cares, concerns and prayers.

~Steve Sittig,  
Clerk of Session

## Fellowship Hall Under-Stage Storage

Fellowship Hall has extensive storage space underneath the stage. CPC Custodian, Ray Valadez, has been working hard over the last several weeks organizing the items in storage and labeling the spaces. If your group uses items that are stored underneath the stage, please return them to their assigned place. This will help everyone who uses the space to find their supplies when needed.



The *Communicator* is published monthly (except in summer) by Claremont Presbyterian Church. Submissions are subject to editing for content and length. To submit an article or item for the monthly calendar, please contact the church office by the 15th of the month by telephone at (909) 624-9693, email [jcolclough@claremontpres.org](mailto:jcolclough@claremontpres.org) or fax to (909) 624-4743.

**Editor:** Jo Colclough

### Pastors

Karen Sapio  
Rocky Supinger

### Church School

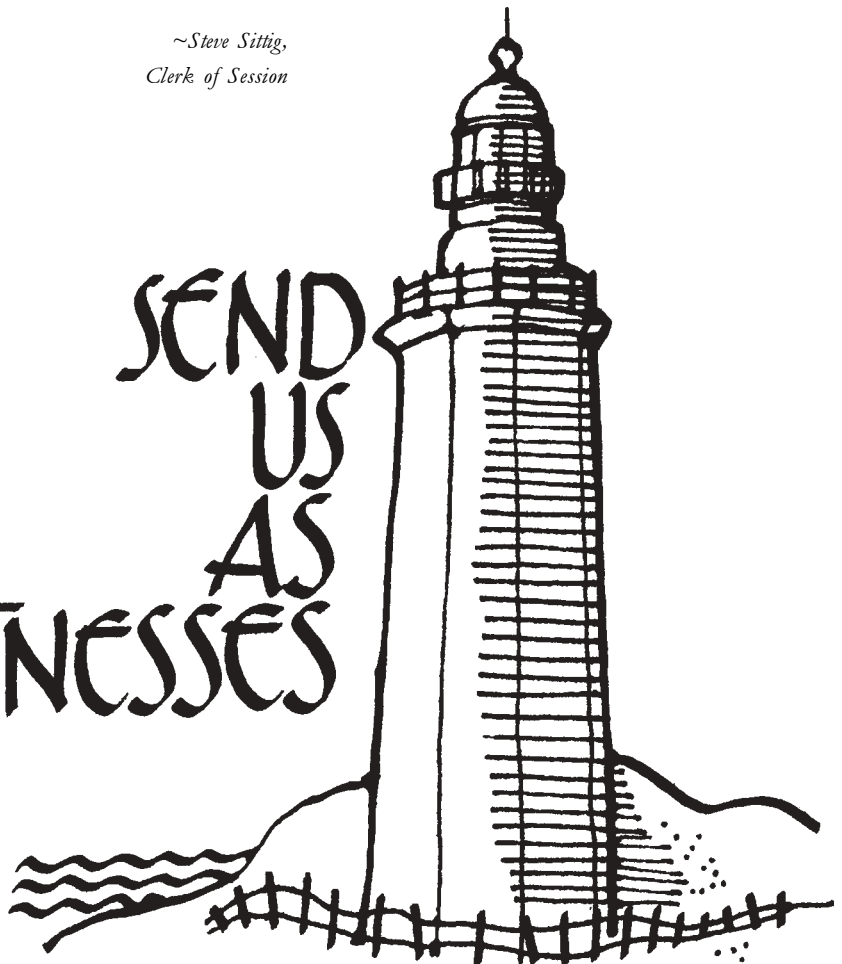
9:00 a.m.  
(Except in Summer)

### Worship

10:00 a.m.

Nursery Care  
available both hours

SEND  
US  
AS  
WITNESSES



## People in the Church: The “Death Class”

During Lent a group met to discuss *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*, a book of interviews conducted by that lovable agnostic, Studs Terkel, on the subject of death. We had a surprisingly good time. Terkel himself said he made a similar discovery, that death was a topic people usually avoided, yet when given permission they soon became quite voluble. Terkel found this “the most exciting” of all the books he had published.

Erin Thomas, our former Interim Associate Pastor, heard Terkel talking about this book on Krista Tippett’s radio program, *Speaking of Faith*. She urged me to consider creating a discussion group, I presented the idea to David Meneffee-Libey, and quite suddenly it was arranged and advertised as “Coffee and a Good Book,” with David and me as discussion leaders.

The delightful humor shared by our group was another surprise. As our first meeting came to a conclusion, the Elders were gathering at a side entrance to the church to prepare for communion. Pastor Karen Sapio told me, “We could hear loud laughter coming out of Room 1. One Elder remarked, ‘That must be the Contentment group.’ ‘No,’ another Elder corrected, ‘that’s the Death group!’”

As a group, we numbered twenty or more, ages forty and above, and I am guessing that most of us had encountered the death of a loved one at some time in the last five years. A significant number of us were Pilgrim Place residents, accustomed to the ever present mingling of death and life in their own special community. David and I suggested some selections to discuss for the first week or two; after that other members made suggestions. My initial efforts as a college professor to construct a highly focused and structured inquiry were soundly and blessedly defeated. We traveled serendipity and enjoyed every moment of our journey.

Some strong themes emerged. As a group we were much less interested in the shape of the hereafter and much more concerned about this life now. What provides meaning? What calls us? Have we been faithful? Elsie Harber brought our attention to the interview with Rabbi Robert Marx, who told Terkel, “Death is to me the antithesis of everything I’ve given my life to achieve.” Thinking about death made us think more about the uses of our lives now.

Because Terkel implied and I thought that a key attribute of religion is to give some assurance of a life after death, that the “circle” is indeed “unbroken,” I was surprised to learn that most people in our group appeared uncomfortable with the promise of a heavenly next life. We preferred questions over answers, ambiguity over certainty. Steve Sittig urged us to read the interview with Tom Kok, a Christian Reformed minister, whose sincere but standard doctrinal views struck Steve as somewhat “hollow.” And David quipped, “I have a real intolerance of certainty.”

One of our strongest discussions emerged from Tom Duggan’s selection of Carlos Cortes, who spoke of the Day of the Dead in Mexico: “The poet Octavio Paz says that in the capitals of Paris and London the word ‘death’ gets caught on

the tongue, burns the tongue, but in Mexico they embrace it, they play with it, and they celebrate it.” Tom affirmed these words. As a minister he related stories of times in Europe and especially America where survivors did everything they could to deny that death had occurred. David Lutz added similar stories from his own ministerial experience.

It’s not simply the survivors who shun death, but the larger community as well. We have a strong tendency, Tom noted, “about a week after the funeral” to avoid those who continue to grieve. We don’t know what to say, we’re afraid we touch a raw nerve and become the cause of more grief. We’re embarrassed, and we’re afraid we might embarrass others. One of the greatest deficiencies, group members said, is the failure of the community to provide real solace in the weeks and months after a death. No one proposed a remedy, and to me that suggested that this is a problem deeply embedded in our society. One member who had felt overwhelmed by the loss of a loved one told of attending services at another church “where no one knew me. I would sit there and just cry.”

“How much harder is all this,” asked another member, “when the death is a suicide? How do we sort through feelings of helplessness and guilt?” How indeed?

Another topic raised was how we honor the memory of a beloved one. Our modern mobility makes cemeteries less likely places to visit and renew memories. Carol Pielstick shared a page which she carries everywhere in her purse. It is written in the first person, as if her deceased husband, Russ, were saying to her and the children how he would like them to keep him in their lives.

In sum, I thank Erin for her thoughtful suggestion, David for his eager approval, and the members of our group for sharing not only Terkel’s stories but their own as well. We touched death, we touched lives, and I am greatly enriched by the experience.

~Dick Johnson

## Financial Highlights

| CLAREMONT<br>PRESBYTERIAN<br>CHURCH<br>AS OF 05/31/09 | ACTUAL    | BUDGET    |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Pledges   | \$211,678 | \$227,083 |
| Reserves  | 0         | 0         |
| Other Income  | 44,153    | 28,542    |
| Expenses  | (248,972) | (271,454) |
| VARIANCE  | 6,858     | (15,829)  |
| CHILDREN’S<br>CENTER<br>AS OF 05/31/09                | ACTUAL    | BUDGET    |
| Income  | \$236,287 | 259,947   |
| Expenses  | (239,904) | (267,978) |
| VARIANCE  | (3,617)   | (8,031)   |

# COMMUNICATOR



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(909) 624-9693

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Deadline for next issue of the *Communicator*: August 15

## Save the Date!

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 13 | Kick-Off Sunday                             |
| September 13 | PYG & PYGlet Roast                          |
| September 20 | Bag-It Sunday                               |
| October 4    | Joint Worship with<br>Emmanuel Presbyterian |

## Before you Travel

Don't take your pledge on vacation! Church expenses remain steady through the summer when many of you go on vacation. If you are able to bring your pledge up to date before you leave, that is very helpful.

## PW Prayer Chain

If you or a loved one are in need of prayer, the Prayer Chain of the Presbyterian Women is there for you. Please contact Carolyn Knight with your prayer request. Please be sure you have the permission of the person for whom you are requesting prayer.