



COMMUNICATOR

News from Claremont Presbyterian Church

May 2009



Worship Plans

In May we begin our
Preaching Through the Bible series

Sunday, May 3 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Genesis 1

“Creation”

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

Sunday, May 10 10:00 a.m.

Youth Sunday

Genesis 2

“The Fall”

Worship led by the Youth of CPC

Sunday, May 17 10:00 a.m.

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Genesis 12:1-9, 18:1-15

“Abraham & Sarah”

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

Sunday, May 24 10:00 a.m.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Genesis 25:21-34, 35:1-15

“Jacob”

The Rev. Roger Shervington preaching

Sunday, May 31 10:00 a.m.

Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-8, 12-28, 45:4-5

“Joseph”

The Rev. Rocky Supinger preaching

Preaching Through the Bible

At an intersection near a Portland nursing home I often visited, there was a church with a big, un-missable sign that stared you in the face if you hit a red light there. In bold letters this church’s sign proclaimed, “WE ARE A BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH!” Since one drove past several other churches in the mile leading up to this intersection, I could not help but interpret this as “judgment by signage.” The implication seemed to be that the churches one had just driven past were NOT Bible-believing.

Are we a Bible-believing church? Today that label usually implies a church that takes Scripture literally, is suspicious – if not outright hostile – to historical/critical approaches to Bible scholarship, and sees inter-faith dialogue as valuable only if it leads to the conversion of the non-Christian participants in that dialogue. Given that definition of “Bible-believing” few at CPC would be eager to take up this label, much less put it on our church sign!

Does that mean we have to hand the Bible over to the fundamentalists? I hope not. As we mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, we remember his vision of a church where everyone – pastors, lay leaders, members, even children – was passionately engaged in reading and interpreting Holy Scripture. This was a radical vision in his day when the Bible was not widely available in the language of the common people and only priests, monks and church scholars were approved as competent interpreters of Scripture. The idea of giving the Bible directly to the people to read and interpret was considered foolish and dangerous.

For the rest of this year, we are going to attempt to inject a little of that danger into our lives by preaching through the Bible, Genesis through Revelation, for the rest of the Sundays of 2009. Our CPC family includes everyone from Bible scholars to people just beginning to explore the scriptures. We will all make this journey together – the more experienced sharing their wisdom, the newcomers sharing the insights that often get stifled by over-familiarity. For those who want to explore more deeply, there will be an Adult Education class on Exploring the Old Testament this spring and one Exploring the New Testament this fall.

I look forward to us making this journey together!

Sunday Morning at Nine Adult Education

People We Should Know

Room 1

People who are fairly new to the area or new to us at CPC will share their perspectives on a variety of topics.

- May 3** Joe Hough, Ph.D, newly appointed Interim President of Claremont Graduate University, Past President of Union Theological Seminary in New York will share insights on new directions for interfaith dialogue.
- May 10** Pastor Teddy Chuquimia, Pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church will share his journey from Bolivia to the U.S. to the Presbyterian Ministry.
- May 17** Sister Terry Dodge from Crossroads, Inc., a mission partner of CPC that helps women transition from prison life, will speak.
- June 7** Rita and Wadie Alkhouri, members of CPC who came to the U.S. from Syria will share their experiences as Christians living in that culture.



Exploring the Old Testament

Chapel

May 3, 10, 17, 31 and June 7, 14, 21, 28

Pastor Karen Sapio and Jim Butler, professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, will guide us through the Old Testament in this eight week series.

May 31 Are You Smarter Than A Sunday School Student?

Fellowship Hall

On Teacher Appreciation Sunday adults, children, youth and teachers will gather in Fellowship Hall to form teams for a Bible Knowledge Contest. Lifelines will be available from the pastors and also to resource materials. This will be a fun time to test our knowledge of the Bible and celebrate the learning that has taken place in the Sunday School classes during the year. You won't want to miss it.

May 24 Memorial Weekend - no classes meet



Youth Sunday is May 10

On Sunday, May 10, CPC will celebrate the gifts of our high school youth as they lead us in Lord's Day worship. This is a special Sunday on our church calendar because, though we enjoy the benefit of our young peoples' gifts in worship throughout the year, on Youth Sunday we are blessed to be led by them in every aspect of worship: prayers, music, readings, and, of course, preaching. As is the custom at CPC, the sermon(s) will be delivered by some of our high school seniors. The students are looking forward to this Sunday, and they're sure you are too.

In addition to being Youth Sunday and Mother's Day, May 10 is also the first day to buy stock in the youth group's (PYG) mission trip to Tucson and Nogales this August. For a bargain price of \$2.00 per share, you can claim your stake in the work that the PYGs will be doing on your behalf. This is a hot stock.

Pentecost Offering

May 31

CPC has a long tradition of generous giving to the Pentecost Offering, one of the regular PC(USA) offerings that support different aspects of the life of our local, national and international church.

So, what is the Pentecost Offering? It supports ministries to children at risk, youth and young adults, and leadership development, at the community level, national level and international level of our church.

40% of the Offering will stay right here, in our own community, to help support children at risk in our area. The Christian Education and Leadership Commission has chosen to dedicate the local portion of this year's Pentecost Offering to be shared between supporting two important projects:

- (1) Scholarships for Vacation Bible School, so all community children who choose to attend may do so.
- (2) The new pilot project of Claremont After-School Programs, Inc. (CLASP) to expand tutoring and mentoring services to Oakmont Elementary School students, the school with which CPC has developed a special relationship.

Please bring your Pentecost Offering envelope, filled with your generous contributions, to church on May 31 – Pentecost, and we will see what the Holy Spirit has in store for all of us, including the children here in our own community.

Teacher Appreciation and Bible Trivia Challenge

Think you're up to taking on the Sunday School Team in a Bible trivia competition? If so, come and help celebrate the time and efforts that our volunteer teaching staff have dedicated to CPC throughout the year. Our thank you will include a light breakfast and, hopefully, a fun challenge for you! **Sunday morning, May 31 at 8:45 in the Fellowship Hall.**

Confirmation on Pentecost

Sunday, May 31 is Pentecost Sunday, when we re-enact the first church's encounter with the Holy Spirit that commissioned Jesus' followers to tell the good news to men and women the whole known world over. Pentecost is a perfectly appropriate day for CPC to celebrate this year's confirmation class.

Over the course of this academic year, confirmands from CPC and Emmanuel have invested lots of time in exploring the Christian faith. They have had weekly meetings with a mentor to read the Gospel of Mark and to pray; they have engaged in some form of service and learning in their community; they have participated

in a weekend retreat; they have attended 10 weeks of "catechism" classes to learn about the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostle's Creed. They have put immeasurable thought, energy, and hope into the process, and they deserve the church's recognition and congratulation.

On Confirmation Sunday we will celebrate all of our confirmands'

accomplishments and welcome into active membership those who desire to take that step by making a profession of faith. We hope that you will be blessed by this special service of worship. In addition, CPC and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church invite you to an informal reception in honor of confirmands from both congregations from 11:00 - 11:30 on the patio.

Children's Sunday School Summer Break

Children's Sunday School will dismiss for the summer on Sunday, June 7. Our last day of regular classes will be May 24. On May 31, we will hold the Teacher Appreciation Breakfast and Bible Trivia Challenge in the Fellowship Hall. Our final Children's/Youth Worship Experience of the academic year will be on June 7. Summer Surprise, activities for third - sixth graders during worship, will begin in mid-June.



Children/ Youth Worship Experience

Come celebrate with us as we honor the Jewish holiday of Pentecost. We'll meet in Angell Courtyard at **8:45 a.m. on Sunday, June 7.** All youth, from preschool to high school, are invited.

Vacation Bible School

Summer is just around the corner and with it . . .

Vacation Bible School (VBS).

This year's dates are **Monday, July 6 through Friday, July 10.** VBS will be in the evening, tentatively planned for 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. If you would like to help plan, teach, serve, or perform, please contact Susan Townzen.

People In the Church: Responses to *The Shack*

After hearing so many people talk about *The Shack*, a current best-selling novel, I wanted to know what people at CPC thought about it. A number of people were forthcoming with their comments.

The Shack is a self-published novel by a first-time author, Wm. Paul Young, who says he originally wrote it not for publication but to explain himself to his children. Its main character, Mack (whom Young says is himself) receives a note from God inviting him to come to a shack in the Oregon woods where, years before, a serial killer murdered Mack's youngest daughter. Still burning with anger – both at the killer and at God and even himself for failing to prevent the murder – Mack decides to go. At the shack he meets the Trinity. God has taken the form of a large African American woman. The Holy Spirit is a luminescent figure. Jesus looks like a Middle Easterner. Through a series of encounters, Mack learns the importance of love and is able to reconcile with his dead father and to forgive the killer.

In some ways it's hard to fathom the remarkable popularity of this novel. No doubt part of the reason is its refusal to get caught up in any of the debates that pit today's churches against each other. Like the modern megachurches, *The Shack* is free of any entanglements with traditional denominations. Jesus declares to Mack that he is not a Christian and that he is interested only in relationships, not in institutions. Nor is there any mention of the concerns of social justice that have dominated liberal Christianity for most of the past century. The book remains highly personal. It seeks to explain why evil exists, and why forgiveness is essential.

What did CPC people say about *The Shack*? The ones who spoke to me panned the book as literature, disagreeing vehemently with Eugene Peterson's comment on the book cover that it was a modern *Pilgrim's Progress*. It might be more likened to a children's tale, something like *The Wizard of Oz*. Howard Rice passed on a review that likened Young's depiction of the Trinity as "Aunt Jemima, Tinker Bell, and a wooden Jesus."

Despite such shortcomings, most people found the book helpful in setting aside more traditional images of God, especially that of a stern judge bent upon sending sinners to hell, and instead raising in refreshing ways the question of who is God and how do God and we relate to each other. One respondent said he was grateful for the image of God as a "large Black woman,"

infinitely loving. Another reported that two friends said the book had profoundly changed their lives. "It's great for getting us to talk about God," remarked Marilyn Hamilton, while also noting "it didn't speak to me." Bob Jacoby was much more enthusiastic, declaring, "I get such a sense of exhilaration and freedom about God when I read it. God is laughter, no judgment, and forgiveness. It is a very provocative book for me. I ordered copies for my two daughters."

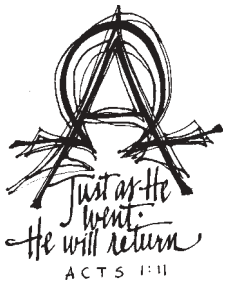
How does evil get insinuated into this lovely scene? Young has two answers, both of them derived from traditional theology. The first answer is that God has granted humanity free will, in order that we can consciously choose love and life. The second is that humans brought evil into the world by choosing independence and seeking power, rather than choosing submission and love. The solution for Young is for everyone to love one another. Most CPC readers found this solution to be entirely too facile. As Elsie Harber pointed out, "it's a very appealing theology – 'let's all just get along.' Avoid the power trips in the larger society." Jim Brashler found another way to challenge Young's perspective. Since God has bestowed upon humanity free will, God can no longer be considered all-powerful. Young asserts that God works to bring good out of evil, but Jim asks, "do we have sufficient sense of God's omnipotence to believe that?" Having witnessed in our lifetime several Holocausts, it seems highly important to ask such a question.

People also found the book highly imaginative in its attempts to convey the wonder and awe of being in the presence of God. Ed Aluzas, a former Associate Pastor of CPC, appreciated the imaginative description of colors. Bob Jacoby was impressed by "the reality of the sense of wonder."

"Maybe the best parts of the book," Elsie Harber told me, "and the parts most fruitful for exploration are the quotations at the heading of each chapter, quotations from Robert Frost, Paul Tournier, Dostoevsky, Kahlil Gibran, Marilynne Robinson, Jacques Ellul, C.S. Lewis, Henry Van Dyke, Albert Einstein, T.S. Eliot, Frederick Buechner, etc. The quotations suggest the author has thought more deeply than the book reveals."

Ed Aluzas gave special attention to the book's treatment of forgiveness. Elsie Harber also praised this section as "sound psychology."

See **Shack**, next page



Shack (cont. from Page 4)

Sharron Bentley acknowledged, “It’s hard work – much harder to forgive than be angry.” Young, whose own struggle apparently involves forgiving his father for abusing him as a child, clearly affirms that forgiveness is necessary for the health of the victim. Forgiveness, Young has God say, is not the same as forgetting, nor is it the establishing of a relationship. But it is essential to escape a self-imposed prison of hatred and move on with one’s life.

In sum, CPC people generally found *The Shack* worthy of an interesting discussion, but perplexing at the same time. For liberal Christians, particularly, the book seems to lack any consideration of concerns regarding the larger society. It is perhaps most rewarding to those who grew up with the image of God as judge, or who encountered churches in which the message of God’s love seemed submerged by authoritarian power struggles, or who experienced abusive relationships in families that professed religious values. In that sense the vast popularity of *The Shack* might be interpreted both as a poignant commentary upon the all too frequent harm done in our own time by religious institutions, coupled with a cry of profound hunger for better, more loving relationships.

~Dick Johnson

Big Bear Summer Camps for 3rd - 9th Graders

In my first year at CPC, I’ve been impressed by the number and quality of activities that our young people are involved in during the summer, from Little League to community theater and well beyond. Our kids do some pretty cool stuff.

One of the options for children and youth at CPC who are entering the third through ninth grades is summer camp at Big Bear Lake Conference Center. This is a chance to enjoy a camp experience full of challenging physical activities like a ropes course and climbing wall, while also encountering God in a beautiful mountain setting and making new friends.

- Junior Camp, which is for children entering third through sixth grade, is July 12-18.
- Junior High Camp, which is for youth entering seventh through ninth grade, is July 19-25.

Registration materials were mailed in mid-April and are due back by July 1. If, for some reason, you didn’t receive a Big Bear Summer Camp packet and would like one, please call Pastor Rocky at (909) 624-9693 to request one.

May 3 Is Big Sunday!

The PYGs invite you to join them on Big Sunday as they work with young people from Temple Beth Israel and the Claremont Islamic Center to clean up and paint parts of Anthony Munoz Park in Ontario. We’ll gather immediately after worship and caravan to the park, where we’ll work until about 4:00 in the afternoon.

PYGs Going to the Border

In August, the youth group (PYG) of CPC will travel to the US-Mexico border for its annual work project. They will work with and learn from Borderlinks, an experiential education group that “brings people together to build bridges of solidarity across North and Latin American borders and promote intercultural understanding and respect.”¹

Below is an excerpt of a letter written by the Borderlinks Executive Director, The Rev. Delle McCormick, to supporters of Borderlinks in September of 2008. The Nogales Casa program to which she refers will be where the PYGs spend most of their time during the trip.

Why do people continue to risk everything to cross this desert? Why are so many people still losing life and limb in the desert? Why, with billions of dollars of investment in “border security” and policies that have a stranglehold on the 12+ million migrants currently living in the United States, do the deaths and human rights violations continue unabated?

These are questions we are committed to asking at BorderLinks. Through our immersion educational programs, we raise awareness and inspire action around global political economics which Latin American bishops have called “savage capitalism.” Individuals and groups come to BorderLinks to learn about immigration, and how we are called to seed hope in our communities and the world.

We . . . are expanding the depth, breadth and vision of our Nogales Casa programs to include direct service, education and action. We are proposing a meal program that ensures food security, education for healthy nutrition, sustainable food practices and weekly grocery bags for the most needy in the Bella Vista community and beyond. A new program for the unemployed will teach computer and English skills. Plans are also underway for a community garden and labor and produce will be divided between the Casa lunch program and community volunteers. Possibilities for a free clinic, expanded day care program, and collaboration with the new women migrant’s shelter are also being considered.

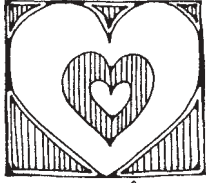
Please pray for our group’s preparation for this trip.

¹Taken from the Borderlinks website, www.borderlinks.org



so that
the name
of our
LORD
JESUS
may be
glorified
in you

2 THESSALONIANS 1:12



with
God's
Word
in your
hearts

May 1 Is Friendship Day

May Friendship Day of Church Women United, the celebration in which we share a meal together, will be celebrated on Friday, May 1. The title for the celebration is "Building on our Stories." It will be held this year at the United Church of Christ, 233 Harrison Avenue in Claremont beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$12.00 and will be available from Carolyn Kingshill, Keywoman for CPC.

Blood Drive May 15

On Friday, May 15 from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. Claremont Presbyterian Church will conduct their Annual Blood Drive in Fellowship Hall. If you are in good health, are at least seventeen years of age, and weigh at least 110 pounds, I hope you will consider donating a unit of this Life Saving Gift. We are part of the Southern California Region that provides blood to more than 150 hospitals. This region needs to collect over 1500 units of blood each day to meet patient needs. Just 3% of our population in Southern California donates.

Some other facts you might like to know:

- The number one reason people do not donate is that they were not asked to do so.
- One pint of blood can save 3 or more lives.
- An adult body contains 10 - 12 pints of blood.
- When you donate, you can find out your blood type.
- The most common type of blood is O positive.
- By the time we are 75 years old, 80% of us will have used blood ourselves.
- 40% of the blood we need comes from other parts of the country.
- You are eligible to donate every 56 days or 8 weeks.

So please call the church office at (909) 624-9693 to make an appointment to give your Gift of Life. You may also sign up on the patio following worship on May 10. We thank you and you will be blessed for doing so.

(Make sure that you drink a goodly amount of fluids before and after donating so those fluids may be replenished within 48 hours and the red blood cells within six weeks.)

~Ruth Auld

Session Digest

At its March meeting, the Session:

- Opened its meeting with meditations and exercises from Buddhist and Chinese traditions, led by Elder Quinn.
- Discussed Presbytery actions on proposed amendments to the Book of Order.
- Shared ideas from *Unbinding the Gospel*, as a Lenten discipline.
- Endorsed a campaign to protect regions of the San Gabriel Mountains as wilderness areas.

~Steve Sittig,
Clerk of Session

All Church Family Camp

Who: Our WHOLE Church Family, friends and neighbors of all ages, stages and configurations.

What: A cozy weekend of worship, fun and fellowship.

Where: Beautiful Rancho La Sherpa, in the Santa Ynez mountains just north of Santa Barbara. This camp features comfortable dormitory-style lodging with new, not-yet-squeaky bunk beds with spring mattresses, a large dining hall with a full kitchen staff, a craft building, large pool, ropes course, hiking trails and an easy drive to Refugio State Beach.


When: Memorial Day Weekend, 2009. We'll carpool up on Saturday morning, May 23, arriving in time for lunch, and head back down the hill after breakfast on Monday, May 25.

Cost: \$123.50 per person, including two nights lodging and 6 meals - due by May 10. Some scholarship aid is available.

Registration forms are available in the church office. For more information call the office at (909) 624-9693.

Women's Bible Study - New Start

Our Sunday Evening Women's Bible Study is re-grouping. Join us Sunday, May 3 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Anita Hughes to discuss future plans regarding what books or topics to explore and whether Sunday evening continues to be the best time to meet. All women are welcome. For more information, contact Pastor Karen Sapio at (909) 624-9693.



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 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

Performing Arts Series 2008/09

Look closely at the picture below and you may recognize the faces of CPC Youth.
Come hear Sally Soto, Jess Croughan and Patrick Bernal in the

Claremont High School Jazz Band

directed by **Rick Melanson**

Saturday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m.



The CHS Jazz Band is composed of 38 youth that attend jazz class during zero period (this is early morning before most of the other classes start.) The instruments played include: Saxophones (Alto, Tenor, and Baritone), Trombones, Trumpets, Flute, Drum Set, Piano, Vibraphone, Guitar, Bass, and on occasion, vocalists from the Choir program of Mr. Joel Wilson. The CHS Jazz Band plays anything from big band to funk, including tunes sung and played by Frank Sinatra (*Fly Me To The Moon, I've Got You Under My Skin, Witchcraft*), the Count Basie Orchestra (*Moten Swing, All of Me*) and The Tower of Power (*What is Hip?*) Some other songs include *Blue*

Bossa (composed by Kenny Dorham), *Why Musicians Can't Dance* (Bill Liston), *The Chicken* (Pee Wee Ellis), *Georgia on My Mind* (composed by Hoagy Carmichael, made famous by Ray Charles), and countless others. In April 2008, the CHS Jazz Band traveled to the Reno Jazz Festival and also participated in jazz competitions sponsored by Upland High School, Fullerton College, Riverside City College and Brea Olinda High School. In 2007, the CHS Jazz Band competed at Riverside Community College to take 1st place, and Western States Jazz Festival at Upland High School for 3rd place.

Rick Melanson is the director of the CHS Jazz Band. He received both his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at the USC Thornton School of Music. Rick has been teaching at CHS since the fall of 2005. He teaches Music Appreciation and the Guitar classes and is the director of the El Roble Jazz Band as well. Rick is a professional musician. He loves jazz, and has his own jazz group. Rick strives to make Jazz Band fun, enjoyable and challenging for the participants. He is also able to share his experience as a professional with them. The kids love to perform and love the challenge of learning new music.

~Presbyterian Performing Arts Committee

COMMUNICATOR



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

Graduate Recognition Sunday

On Sunday, June 7 we will honor all graduates in worship, with a special emphasis on our high school graduates. If you or a loved one is graduating from high school or receiving an undergraduate or graduate degree, please let the church office know.

Save the Date!

- June 7 Graduate Recognition
- June 21 Summer Surprise begins
- July 5 Summer Choir begins
- July 6 -10 Vacation Bible School

CLAREMONT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS OF 03/31/09	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Pledges	\$121,508	\$136,250
Reserves	0	0
Other Income	31,153	17,125
Expenses	(151,361)	(163,732)
VARIANCE	1,300	(10,357)
CHILDREN'S CENTER AS OF 03/31/09	ACTUAL	BUDGET
Income	\$142,165	155,968
Expenses	(139,750)	(160,787)
VARIANCE	2,415	(4,819)

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.

A more complete financial report is available in the church office.