



COMMUNICATOR

News from Claremont Presbyterian Church

October 2008



October Worship Plans

Sunday, October 5 10:30 a.m.

World Communion Sunday

Worship service combined with
Emmanuel Hispanic Presbyterian Church
Sarah Green preaching

Sunday, October 12 10:00 a.m.

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

Sunday, October 19 10:00 a.m.

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

Sunday, October 26 10:00 a.m.

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Rev. Karen Sapio preaching

From the Pastor

“The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of your God.” Exodus 34:26

I have a friend who is pastor of a church in a suburb of Washington, D.C. She commented once that every time there is a major election, half the people in her congregation lose their jobs. This is because about half of them work for Republicans and the other half work for Democrats. You can guess that things are very tense there around now as the whole congregation faces a shaky economy AND uncertainty about future employment. As my friend drove to work last week listening to the political and economic news she thought, “What an *interesting* month to begin a stewardship campaign!”

Our welfare here in Claremont is not as closely tied to the fortunes of political parties, but I and the other members of this year’s Stewardship Committee have found ourselves thinking that same thing.

Notice, though, that the key word is “interesting”, not “hopeless” or “ominous” or “depressing”. That is because difficult times bring out the texture and complexity of the walk of faith. The wilderness times can bring greater clarity about what is really important, a sense of gratitude for family and friends, a deeper calling to reach out to those who are suffering, and a desire to stand strongly with organizations that are doing life-giving work in our community.

Sometime in October, you will receive materials for this year’s Stewardship Campaign. We hope this can be the beginning of an “interesting” time for all of us as we sort through priorities, give thanks for blessings, and recommit to God’s life-giving work around us and among us.

World Communion Sunday Service with Emmanuel Presbyterian Sunday, October 5 at 10:30 a.m.

This year our annual World Communion Sunday Worship celebration with Emmanuel will include music by both choirs, instrumental soloists, incorporation of visual arts, a procession of flags representing the nations of the world and a presentation of bread and grains from many cultures for our Communion table. You will want to be there and bring friends!

Flags needed: If you have a flag from another country that we could borrow for our procession that day, please call the church office and let us know. Thanks!

Sunday Morning at Nine Adult Education

Faith Perspective on Election Year Issues

Fellowship Hall

Many of the hot topics in this year's elections are of particular interest to people of faith. Join this group each Sunday for a presentation on an election year issue followed by lively discussion.

September 28	"Same Sex Marriage"	Wendy Menefee-Libey and Sonnie Swentson
October 5	"A New Energy Crisis?"	Scott Randles
October 12	"Torture as a Moral Issue"	speaker tba
October 19	"The Missions in California Church History"	Ward McAfee
November 2	"Perspectives on Israel and Palestine"	Rizek Abusharr's tour group



Four Sundays in the Gospels with Dale Lindsey Morgan

Southwest Room

September 28	Mark	"Take up your cross"
October 5	Matthew	"Upon this rock I will build my church"
October 12	Luke	"You shall be my witnesses"
October 19	John	"Come and see Jesus"

These classes are offered with absolute beginners in mind – no prior Bible study experience needed; in fact, the less, the better. Teens, mid-lifers, and golden-agers are all welcome. Bring an inquiring mind – and a Bible, if you have one (but not that dust-covered King James you keep on the coffee table.) This class will be FUN, as well as informative and, hopefully, inspirational.

Before attending CST and spending 25 years as a church pastor, Dale spent 13 years as a full-time Christian educator specializing in junior high youth work. During those years she wrote seven national junior high level Bible studies for the United Presbyterian Church USA and two for adults. During recent years as a church pastor, she had a monthly column in *Presbyterians Today* magazine: "Bible Explorations, a Study of the Prophets." She is also the author of two Presbyterian Women's Horizons Bible Studies: "What She Said: Quotable Women in Scripture" (2004-2005) and the current Horizons study, "Jubilee! Luke's Gospel for the Poor" (2008-2009).

Before retiring to Pilgrim Place last year, Dale served as Associate Pastor of Claremont United Church of Christ, Congregational from 1983-1987 and as Pastor of Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara from 1987-2007. She has also been a trustee of San Francisco Theological Seminary and a member of the General Assembly Council.

The Gospel of Jesus with James Robinson Coming in November

Southwest Room

What was the original "good news" the first disciples heard from Jesus? Come hear and discuss Professor Jim Robinson's insights based on a lifetime of research and reflection.



Family Issues Round Table

Chapel

A series for families of all shapes, ages and configurations to gain insights and skills for life together. Unless otherwise noted, these sessions will be led by our Parish Associate, The Rev. David Lutz.

September 28 "Open Table Discussion"

Share issues and get support and insight from others: facilitated by Pastor Rocky Supinger.

October 5 "Parenting Teenagers"

The parents' job is to manage the family; the teenagers' job is to grow up. These job descriptions aren't always compatible.

October 12 "Couple Communication"

A simple way to talk through with differences.

October 19 "Open Table Discussion"

Share issues and get support and insight from others: facilitated by Pastor Rocky Supinger.

November 2 "The 'Sandwich Generation': Dealing with Aging Parents"

Dealing with our aging parents or dealing with our adult children: both can be a challenge! (Whichever generation shows up for class this day determines the agenda!)

PYG (Presbyterian Youth Group)

Ask adolescents to name something they're good at and you'll be lucky to get a serious answer. So I learned at the annual PYG/PYGlet Roast, the kickoff event for youth ministry at CPC.

I learned that some of them are good at "stuff." Others are good at "things." Another has a talent for "singing . . . I think." While still others profess a talent for "ummm . . . singing and acting, I guess?"

Singing and acting, I guess?

And so it begins, another year of ministry to and with high school students, my first here at CPC. Nobody can say what the next several months hold for us, what growth we will experience or what frustrations we will harbor. But, briefly, I can say what participation in PYGs will look like this year. Sort of.

First, it will look like listening. We will afford one another that fundamental human gift; we will listen to one another. We will listen for the movement of God's Spirit among us and in the world.

PYGs will look like learning. Teenage life is complex and complicated, twisted and true. So we'll celebrate it, look at it, critique it, and otherwise take it apart in order to hold it up to the light of God's mercy and purpose.

Imagination. It will look like imagination, God's and ours. We will inhabit the scriptures and mine them for the good ore of the gospel.

Finally, PYGs will look like action. As we follow God out into the our community and the larger world, we will act as God's agents of change, peace, truth, and grace. This may take us to Mexico or Montclair – we'll follow where it leads.

Pray for us on the journey. Better yet, join us. PYGs gather from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. on Sunday nights in the PYG Room. Come if you dare.

Welcome, Melissa Landis

The search committee for a new Youth and Children's Music Director has completed its work. They are excited to introduce Melissa Landis as our new director. Melissa has pursued doctoral studies at the USC Thornton School of Music and currently teaches voice and choral music at Mt. San Antonio Community College and the University of La Verne. She has previously directed choirs for young people at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, the Episcopal Church of Our Savior in San Gabriel and at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Arcadia.

Third Grade Bible Breakfast

CPC has a long standing tradition of presenting third graders with a Bible to call their own. The Bible is presented during worship and the young people and their families celebrate together with breakfast prior to worship. This year's Third Grade Bible class is in the planning stages and will begin in January. If you have a third grader, or an older child who has yet to receive a Bible, please contact CPC Director of Christian Education, Susan Townzen.

Saturday Cinema October 18

This year our dinner, film and discussion group has moved from Friday to Saturday. Each month we invite the CPC community and friends to gather for a potluck dinner at 6:00 p.m. followed by a movie at 7:00 p.m. After the film, stay for a free-wheeling discussion of the movie with your fellow viewers. A children's movie is shown for those too young for the main feature.

October's Feature is *The Asphalt Gospel*. On Easter 2006 six ordinary people left their homes, jobs and families for a journey on foot into the heart of America. Against the background of increasing intolerance from the Christian Right, they spread a message of compassion and inclusion. The story of their 2,500 mile walk to Washington, DC will surprise you and maybe make you feel a little more hopeful.

Of particular interest to CPC folks: Eric Elnes, the coordinator of the cross-country expedition is a friend of Pastor Sapio. Also, our own Gail Duggan joined the group for the final leg of their journey to Washington.

Congregational Meeting/ Breakfast Before Church on October 26

CPC's 2008 Stewardship Committee invites the Centre congregation to a wonderful Buffet Breakfast Sunday, October 26 beginning at 8:30 a.m. Following a time of sharing food and community with new friends and old, Pastor Sapio will convene the official meeting of the congregation. Our agenda will include election of elders and deacons for the class of 2011 and the presentation of the preliminary budget for 2009. Adult Education classes will not meet that morning, but children will be dismissed to their Sunday School classrooms at 9:00 a.m. For more information, contact Stewardship Commission Chairperson, Delores Kelley.



Advent Workshop

The Advent Workshop is just around the corner. If you'd like to help, please contact Susan Townzen.

First Things First

“The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of your God.”

Exodus 34:26

It is that time of the year when the Claremont Presbyterian Church family must gather together both spiritually and physically to develop a budget to continue our work for Christ in our community and the world.

This year, in view of the economic picture, we are developing a very modest budget. We feel that CPC members are very faithful in their giving and we are asking you to entertain one of the following three options:

1. Increase your pledge by \$100 for 2009. This is less than \$2.00 per week.
2. Increase your pledge by \$150 for 2009. This comes to an increase of approximately \$2.80 per week.
3. Increase your pledge by \$200 for 2009. This is an increase of approximately \$3.80 per week.



I have brought you the first fruits

We feel that if all of us could see our way clear to choose one of these options, we will have

enough money to enlarge our youth activities and maintain all the programs of our church. If you are unable to choose one of these options we know you will do whatever you can for our church and that is really what we are asking everyone to do.

It is our hope that you will join us for a Special Stewardship Breakfast in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, October 26, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. The program for this breakfast will be the annual meeting of the congregation to receive the “asking budget” for 2009. There is no admission charge for this breakfast but free will offering baskets will be available. We will have reservation cards available during worship services on October 12 and 19. The last day we will be able to receive reservations will be Monday, October 20, 2008. Please join us in praying for a positive response to this campaign so that God can continue to do wonderful things in our midst and for the spirit of Christ to lead us in these fiscal matters.

Sincerely,

Dee Kelley

Stewardship Chairperson

People in the Church: Wadie and Rita Alkhouri

The stories in our Bible often tell of the clash of cultures, usually describing vicious conflicts, wars, conquests, and either annihilation or enslavement of the losers. With so much reason for suspicion and fear of the outsider, it seems rather remarkable that the God of the Israelites demands that they show hospitality. “Love the stranger,” God says, reminding his people that “you once lived as strangers in Egypt.”

Jesus makes this injunction even more explicit. “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But he is then asked, “who is my neighbor?” He answers with the story of a man who helps another. But in his story it is the stranger, the Samaritan, an outsider, who provides the kindness. Jesus’ story tears down the walls of suspicion and fear. “Which one was the neighbor?” he asks his listeners. When they tell him it was the Samaritan he instructs them, “Go and do likewise.” Clearly Jesus asks something quite special of his followers. How do we respond?

Bridging cultures is not an easy task. That thought readily comes to mind when one visits the Alkhouri family in Claremont. Many changes, new and challenging, occur when people leave

familiar surroundings and travel to a distant country. Wadie and Rita Alkhouri come from Syria. Many of their traditions are very dear to them. But changes abound. Their three delightful children – Leila, age 5, Angelina, 4, and Christopher, 6 months – were born in America and represent the life they have chosen for their future. When I visited them one evening, the girls played around us, pausing occasionally to ask questions or make perceptive comments, while Christopher – definitely my nominee for this year’s “baby Jesus” – happily lay on the couch stretching his legs before quietly falling asleep.

Like many immigrants, the Alkhouris are fusing a delicate but rich merging of cultures. For example, when their daughters were born they were baptized in their neighborhood church in Syria, at the urging of relatives. Baptism in Syria, they say, is “very important, like a wedding” with a huge dinner celebration. And in Claremont their housewarming party in 2005 brought 150 guests, all related family members, most from the large Syrian population in Glendora and San Dimas. But when their son was born this year, Wadie and Rita took the name Fuad, Wadie’s father’s name, that

(See Alkhouris page 5)

Alkhouris (cont. from page 4)

would traditionally become the child's first name, and instead made it his middle name. The English name, Christopher, honoring Christ, became his first name.

Like many Syrian Christians, Wadie and Rita are well-educated professionals. Wadie came to America in 1990 for college and eventually a medical degree in Psychiatry from the University of Massachusetts. Rita, trained in law, met Wadie during one of his frequent visits to Syria. They married in 2002 in the (Presbyterian) Evangelist Church of Damascus and settled in Southern California, moving to Claremont in 2005.

Their choice too of Claremont Presbyterian Church reflects an intriguing merging of cultures. In Syria, Christians are a small minority, now some 7% of the population, who tend to live close to each other in tightly connected communities and attend neighborhood churches. The churches form the center of culture and society, sponsoring many activities beyond worship. They are the focus of personal and social identity. Among the Syrian Christians, Presbyterians are an even smaller group. Wadie's grandfather attended a Presbyterian mission school, and the family has been Presbyterian ever since. In fact, Wadie says his sister, Roula Alkhouri Stewart, is the first woman minister from the Middle East ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Following their Syrian traditions, Wadie and Rita looked first in Claremont for a neighborhood Presbyterian church.

CPC welcomed them and their children with open arms. At their first visit, "the kids came out of Sunday School happy." That clinched it for them. "We were done." There was no need to look any further for a church home. Rita especially was astounded when at their second meeting Pastor

Economic Stimulus

During the summer, the Mission Commission of CPC encouraged our congregation to pledge a portion of their economic stimulus check to our Community Stimulus effort. A total of \$4081.00 was received.

Two-thirds of that total, \$2721.00, has been sent to the Beta Center food security program of the Inland Valley Hope Partners. The final \$1360.00 is being used to support the Community Meal for the Hungry program sponsored by the Claremont Interfaith Council on the last two Sundays of the month. Purchases have included athletic equipment, games and hygiene kit supplies.

Karen Sapio called her by name and smiled. They have found the church to be warm, inviting, and supportive of their own goals: a community that helps to nurture and teach their children important religious traditions.

Perhaps because Christian communities are tightly connected in Syria, the Alkhouris tend to see relatively little difference between denominations. All Christians are "pretty much the same to us," they say. Rita was raised in the Catholic tradition, her mother was a Maronite Christian, and as an adult she taught Sunday School in the Orthodox Church. From these experiences she extracts fundamental insights: Jesus came to teach us how to live a better life, love each other, and be happy, she says. "That's really what matters." Religion is practice, such as attending church, not rules. The church is very important because it brings people together and engenders a strong spirit in them.

What would they like to see more of at CPC? There are two things: "More young families!" they both reply. Young families are often identified as the future of church communities. In Syria, they say, the churches are teeming with young people. Why is it not so in America? At CPC? Has religious tradition in America been watered down? This issue both mystifies and concerns them. Secondly, as busy parents and professionals, they find themselves unable to get to church by 9:00 a.m., and wish that the children at the 10:00 a.m. hour received "a little more religious instruction." Still they find CPC an immensely rewarding experience for themselves and especially for their children. "We feel like we belong."

And as their neighbors, we at CPC rejoice.

Special Film Screening

The Mudd Theater at the Claremont School of Theology will be the site of the screening of *Encounter Point* by JustVision on October 19 from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. *Encounter Point* is an 85-minute feature documentary film that follows a former Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner, a bereaved Israeli mother and a wounded Palestinian bereaved brother who risk their lives and public standing to promote a nonviolent end to the conflict. Their journeys lead them to the unlikeliest places to confront hatred within their communities. The film explores what drives them and thousands of other like-minded civilians to overcome anger and grief to work for grassroots solutions. It is a film about the everyday leaders in our midst.





Not Too Late to Be a Pollworker

The Church and Society Commission urges you to consider volunteering as a pollworker in a hard-to-recruit area on Tuesday, November 4. Pollworking requires participation in a training session and availability at the polling place on Election Day. The trainings are offered every day during October.

By volunteering at a polling place in a hard-to-recruit area, you will help assure that everyone gets to participate in the democratic process, regardless of where they live.

Pollworker applications can be picked up in the church office, or obtained online at http://www.lavote.net/voter/pollworker/PDFS/POLLWORKER_APPLICATION.pdf.

We hope you will give this opportunity serious consideration. Please ask Pastor Rocky if you would like more information.

New Member Classes

Are you interested in becoming a member of Claremont Presbyterian Church? Our next set of new member classes will be held on October 12 and October 19 at 9:00 a.m. in the church library. Speak to one of the pastors for more information or check our church website, which is www.claremontpres.org and click on the "Membership" tab.

Become a Senior Companion

Are you a young, active senior man or woman who is looking for some meaningful part-time work? Do you enjoy helping others, being part of others' lives? Then you might want to become a Senior Companion. Senior Companions provide, information, caring, companionship and frequently transportation to other older, frail or physically challenged seniors.

You must be at least 60 years old and living on a limited income. You need to be willing to work 13 to 32 hours per week as an independent volunteer. You receive a non-taxable non-reportable stipend, a gas allowance and a small amount for meals. A Senior Companion receives yearly training and attends monthly meetings at the La Verne Community Center.

If you are interested call the church office for the phone number of the Director of the Senior Companion Program. An application, map and invitation to an informational meeting to be held on November 12, 2008 will be mailed to you.

Thank You, Volunteers

Do you ever wonder how the Communicator arrives at your home to keep you informed about what is going on at CPC? Well, each month staff member Jo Colclough edits and publishes the Communicator. Then a dedicated group arrives to fold, stuff, label and seal the publication so it is ready for mailing. Thanks go to this team of volunteers, Char Maloney, Joanne McCandless Ken McCandless, Betty Springer and Arlene Smith, who work hard and have some fun in the process.

A Way to Save Resources

Many members and friends of CPC receive the monthly Communicator electronically and read it on their computer. This is a great way to save paper. If you would like to join the group it couldn't be easier. Just email your request to Jo Colclough at jcolclough@claremontpres.org and next month you will be among the paper free.

Evening Service of Remembrance

A special worship service celebrating the saints whose lives have touched ours will be held Sunday, November 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the CPC Sanctuary. It will feature Kate Reid's jazz piano and vocals.

November 1 and 2 have long been days set apart by Christians to remember those who have died. Called All Saints Day in Europe and Dia de los Muertos in Latin American countries, these days have been times when people gather to remember loved ones and honor those whose lives were particularly inspiring examples of living the Good News of Jesus.

This special evening vespers service will move us through remembrance to thanksgiving to hope of eternity. Make plans now to participate in this unique time of memories and celebration.

Mike Farrell to Speak

The Claremont Community is invited to hear Mike Farrell, of M*A*S*H* fame and numerous human justice causes, on October 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Avery Hall, Pitzer College in Claremont. This is an event sponsored by the Pomona Valley chapter of the Death Penalty Focus. The program will include music, a few brief testimonies by families of victims, and an opportunity to have Mike Farrell sign his recent book and hear from him regarding this important issue. Call the church office for a number to call for more information.



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 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

Free Performing Arts Series 2008/2009 presents

CONVIVIA

Saturday

October 4, 2008

7:00 p.m.



Erica
Lazerow
Davis

Meredith
Brammeier

Jenelle
Westerbeck
Anderson

The women of Convivia were brought together by a love of vocal music and the desire for a new artistic challenge. The trio specializes in both early music and contemporary compositions. Convivia's repertoire includes madrigals, motets, folksongs, jazz, commissioned pieces and anything else that captures the group's interest.

WELCOME BACK

Bones West

Directed by Peter Fournier

Saturday November 15 7:00 p.m.



A dynamic trombone band consisting of about 30 performers including: trombonists, rhythm-section, vocalist and conductor. The Big Band sounds were first brought to CPC in February 2007 to remember Bill Bentley.

Coming this Season:

JACK SANDERS

GUITAR AND VIHUELA

February 7, 2009

7:00 p.m.

GOSPEL CHOIR

from Azusa Pacific University

March 14, 2009

7:00 p.m.

JAZZ BAND

from Claremont High School

May 09, 2009

7:00 p.m.

~Presbyterian Performing Arts Committee

COMMUNICATOR



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Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 624-9693

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

Where Are They Now?

Do you know a member or friend of CPC who has graduated from high school within the last eight years? Really? Oh, do tell us their address, so that we might stay in contact with them and continue to enfold them in the life and care of our community. Addresses can be emailed to Pastor Rocky at rsupinger@claremontpres.org. Thank you.

Claremont Interfaith Committee on Sustainability

Scott Randles invites all who are interested in environmental issues to visit the website of the recently formed Claremont Interfaith Committee on Sustainability at <http://cics422.ning.com>

Save the Date!

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| November 2 | Daylight Savings Time ends |
| November 15 | Bones West Concert |
| November 30 | Advent Workshop |
| December 7 | Alternative Christmas Market |

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.