

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

EXPERIENCING CHRIST'S LOVE, EXTENDING CHRIST'S HANDS

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER, 2009

STAY AFTER CHURCH!
PROMOTE FPC TO
YOUR NEIGHBORS!!

Downtown Neighborhood

Ice Cream Social

Sunday October 11, 2009

12:30 – 2:30 p.m.



This is a fun, FREE
event for all ages!

Live Music!

Spirited
Jazz
by

Octobop!



Drawings for
Fun Prizes!



Special guest visit by San Jose City Councilman Sam
Liccardo, District 3 (Downtown)



Ice Cream
&
Other
Treats!



ACTIVITIES
FOR KIDS

Bounce House
Games & Crafts

Please bring non-
perishable food items
for donation to
Sacred Heart
Community Services



Ministries Abounding

Ministry, Mission and Small Group News



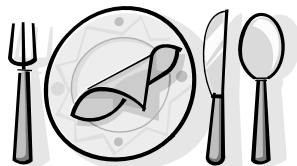
PACT Dinner

Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for Part 2 of the workshop Karen Belote, our PACT organizer, led in September. The theme is "Sharing our Stories" and we learned how to be both better at sharing things important to us, and listening carefully to others when they tell us their stories. If you missed last month's meeting, you can still join us on Oct. 12 - in fact we'd love it! Some of the good folks from First Christian Church joined us at our last meeting, it was good to meet with them and discuss joining forces from time to time; they may join our PACT effort

Commercial St. Inn Dinner

October 18: 5:15 p.m.



FPC is providing the dinner for the women and children at Commercial Street Inn on October 18. If you can help please sign up in the Narthex. The Mission Team is providing the main dish, but we need salads, desserts, and bread. We welcome any musicians servers. We will meet at the church about 5:15 and leave at 5:30 to car pool to the shelter. Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m. and we have to sign in and set up. Contact Jo Fukasawa with any questions.

Peacemaking Offering Taken on October 4



The Peacemaking Offering will be accepted for October 11, with FPC retaining 25% to use for local ministries of peacemaking within the church and its community. The offering was created in 1980 to support the efforts of the Presbyterian Church to live out a deeper commitment to peacemaking as part of our faithfulness to God. It is one of the four special offerings designated by the PC USA's General Assembly. Please remember that this is an extra giving opportunity and does not replace regular giving to support FPC's ongoing expenses.

Food Drive UPDATE...



*Turning the Tables
on Hunger*

Since June (not including Oct. 4), we have collected 600 lbs. of food for hungry people served by Sacred Heart Community Services at our first -Sunday of the month food collections. Thanks so much for your generosity!

Please circle the first Sunday (Next Month: Nov. 1) on your calendar to remind yourself to bring some canned or packaged food to church for this monthly food drive.

Fall/Advent Speaker Series and Soup/Potato Suppers



The Mission Team is coordinating a Fall speaker series on three Wednesday evenings: Oct. 21, Oct. 28, and Nov. 4. The subject will be "At-Risk Youth."

Planned speakers include people from the San Police Gang Task Force, the jail ministries, and the Bill Wilson Drop-In Center. The starting time will be 6:30.

The first and third evenings will be soup suppers, and sign-up sheets will be posted in the Narthex for soups, or desserts.



Ole and Sharon Johnson are bringing Idaho bakers for the popular baked potato supper on Oct 28.

The Mission Team will provide all the fixings for this dinner.

Please bring family and friends to these evenings for fellowship, and information on who is at risk, what help is available, and what we can do.

Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes In November



FPC will be collecting shoe boxes of toys, school supplies, and hygiene items for children in third-world countries again this year.

Flyers with instructions, suggested gift items, and labels (Boy or Girl, Age) will be available in the Narthex. A sample shoe box will be available to view on the

Mission table in the Narthex.

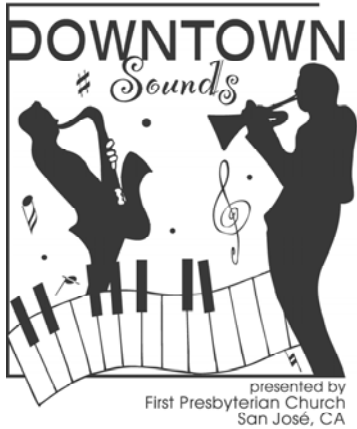
You decide on the ages of the children you are purchasing for, and try to purchase items for two shoe boxes, pack and label them and bring them to church on November 1st or the 8th.

On November 15, after church, the Mission Team will host a Packing Party for all church members to assemble additional boxes with any toys or supplies that are left over. The Mission Team will provide food for all those who bring toys or help pack boxes. (Jo Fukasawa's "mac and cheese"!)

Bring your left-over items and we can hopefully exceed our total of 50 boxes from last year. We only have a limited number of boxes from Samaritan's Purse, so please try to provide your own empty shoe boxes.

This is a wonderful opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with children who otherwise would receive nothing for Christmas. Samaritan's Purse has reached millions of children who otherwise would not know the true meaning of Christ and Christmas.

Jodie Wiepking is chairing this event if you have any questions.



Downtown Sounds on Nov. 4

You don't want to miss a night of fantastic Hawaiian music at our next Downtown Sounds concert, Nov. 4 at 7:30 pm.

A group of ukulele and Hawaiian music enthusiasts, the J-Town Hui Performing Group is led by C.D. Ka'ala Carmack, director. Carmack, a versatile and gifted singer, musician, voice teacher, composer/arranger and educator, is originally from Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Suggested donation is \$10.

MUSIC NEWS



Our church's 160th anniversary is here. October has several inspiring emphasis for singing praises to be in our music team. Our present soloists and our former soloist Janet Miller are sharing all along this Anniversary Month.

We have a growing Praise Instrumental Ensemble. Musik-Kidz -Children and young teens will practice during Sunday School. They will sing and play in the next several weeks.

Some of the General Choir Group are traveling. A Choir group are gathering on Sundays at 9 AM.

If you want to join just to support new praise songs and hymns, you can arrive between 9:30 and 9:45AM on Sundays.

All County Choir Concert Oct. 17, 7:00 PM at Christ the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Sponsored by the Council of Churches of Santa Clara County, each participating choir will sing their specialty and there will be a mass choral piece by all the choirs under the direction of Lost Gatos United Methodist Church's Daniel Hughes.

For more information, to download a flyer, or to inquire about your choir joining the event call 408-297-2660 or go to: council@councilofchurches-scc.org.



Prayers and Praise

LeMaun "Ole" and Sharon Johnson welcomed their second great-grandchild on July 19. He was a big little boy at 9 lbs 10 oz and 23 inches. His name is Elijah LeMaun and all is well.

Jim and Carol Lathrop were very excited to welcome their second grandchild this week - a baby girl!

The church family welcomed back **Susan Hyatt** Oct. 4 from a recurring illness.



Session Notes

Sept. 28 Session Highlights

- Accepted an offer from Presbytery to forgive half of our outstanding loan balance of over \$60,000 by our paying \$30,000 now. This will save us around \$50,000 over what we would have paid out over the next 13 years if we continued paying the \$500 a month that we had originally agreed to.
- Accepted (with regret) the resignation of Helen Rodriguez from session due to health concerns.
- Decided to contact an attorney to see if we should protest the county Department of Environmental Health's decision to quit monitoring the ground water pollution on our land due to an old leak at the Chevron Station.
- Heard a report from the Pastor Nominating Committee that their church information form has been approved and they are now actively seeking a new pastor.

Just FAITH

Our church is hosting an ecumenical JustFaith class which began last Tuesday with eighteen participants representing five different churches. Pat Plant, who is co-facilitator with Rebecca Cole of Sacred Heart Community Service, said "I'm thrilled by the interest in learning more about the intersection of Scripture and social justice. Also, about half of the class when asked why they had signed up stated that they were looking for "community."

You can still join us. The class meets at FPC every Tuesday night starting at 7 p.m. To sign up, contact Pat and 408-279-0220 (wk) or her work email: pat@sanjosephby.org.

October Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Michael Tierney | October 1 |
| Teresa Jordan | October 3 |
| Maribeth Robinson | October 7 |
| Joselyn Peralta-Johnson | October 8 |
| Angela Kamau | October 10 |
| Jennifer Fitzgerald | October 11 |
| Phillip Garcia | October 11 |
| Charlotte Powers | October 12 |
| Olivia Powers | October 18 |
| Joseph Kamau | October 20 |
| Marianne Butziger | October 27 |
| Leslie Malone | October 27 |
| Avery Powers | October 28 |
| Rebeca Inciarte | October 31 |

Happy Birthday!

Is Our Religion the "Titanic"?

by Diana Butler Bass



For three years, I researched vital mainline Protestant congregations. Armed with a grant from the Lilly Endowment, I studied fifty churches to determine if there existed a common pattern of spiritual vibrancy and shared practices that strengthened communal life.

Sifting through thousands of pages of data, my team pieced together both an overall pattern and leading practices in the study group, thus developing a picture of religious change, emerging vitality, and potential futures for mainline Protestantism.

My research team did not directly study leadership in vital congregations—we hoped to make that the topic of a later grant. Early on, I actually tried to avoid questions of leadership, feeling vaguely inadequate to address the topic and having no specific data to share. I worry that leadership is difficult to discuss and prone to "magic bullet" solutions of quick-fix gurus. The questions kept coming, however, and although I had no hard data, I realized that I had observed good leadership in the participating congregations. In *The Practicing Congregation*, the first book published about the project, I identified an emerging style of "narrative leadership" for congregational renewal.

Narrative leadership is a deceptively simple principle: *know your story and live it*. Some people know stories and tell them well but live without intentional connection to those stories; others simply experience quotidian life with no reflection on larger stories of meaning. In vital mainline churches, leaders knew their stories and lived them—thus turning the power of narrative into a source of and resource for change.

Story Shapes Leadership

The stories about American religion shape our expectations of leadership. For example, "the Titanic" storyline dominates how we talk about mainline Protestantism. We think of mainline Protestant denominations as a doomed ocean liner; the ship has hit an iceberg (political conflict, numerical decline, or some other crisis) and is sinking. Denominational officials are accused of "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic." People regularly remark, "We're going down," or "We can't turn this ship around." Once, I heard an Episcopalian refer to her priest as "the chaplain on the Titanic."

If we think of churches as the Titanic, that has serious implications for leadership—our bishops, conference ministers, pastors, and priests are required to rescue us. Throw people in lifeboats. Fix the big hole in the ship. Save whoever—and whatever—can be saved. From this perspective, leadership is an emergency rescue operation, heroic but hopeless. We all know the end of the story. The ship will sink. The best our leaders can do is to save a few—and maybe themselves. No wonder so many pastors are anxious and depressed. Who wants to lead in this scenario?

But what if the Titanic is not the story? A better story—and perhaps more accurate in current circumstances—may be that of the Mayflower. In this story, a boat of pilgrims finds itself in uncharted seas, blown off course by a storm and heading to an unnamed country. Like the Titanic story, there is a sense of urgency, confusion, and fear. But the ship is intact as it sails off course from the intended colony of Virginia. Here, leaders are not trying to patch the hull or load lifeboats. They are not praying for a miracle. Instead, they look for land. They keep calm, providing focus, vision, and direction while they navigate the choppy and unfamiliar seas of the north Atlantic. Once they do reach land, leaders envision a way to structure the new community and take part in building a new life.

In the Titanic story, leaders lead while the ship is sinking. In the Mayflower story, leadership stabilizes a pilgrim community in choppy seas as they head for an unknown world. Leadership in a crisis? Or leadership as an adventure? How a leader leads and the expectations a community has about leadership depend on the stories we tell ourselves.

Leaders Shape Stories

Closely related to this is the capacity of leaders to shape stories. These days, one of the primary capacities of good leadership is to enable people to understand change, interpret chaos, and make sense of a seemingly meaningless world. There are a variety of ways for leaders to make meaning—some religions practice this sort of leadership through creedal conformity, dictates, demands, or intellectual certainty. But another route to meaning-making is through storytelling.

Throughout my research on vital mainline churches, both clergy and congregational leaders were storytellers. They knew their own faith stories, they knew the stories of their congregations, they knew their tradition's stories, and they knew the larger Christian and biblical stories. They exhibited ease and comfort in sharing these stories and invited others into a variety of stories in natural and authentic ways. In the process, they opened paths for other people to learn and tell stories of faith. And they ably moved between personal, congregational, and biblical stories to create worlds of spiritual and theological meaning. They intuited the power of story to rearrange people's lives—using story in much the same way Jesus did—and to open windows to spiritual realities and alternative paths that sometimes escape life's more mundane interpretations.

And, of course, storytelling leaders have the ability to change the story in which they exercise leadership! Scripts can be rewritten. A good leader will be able to move a congregation away from deadening and fear-filled stories, like that of the Titanic, toward life-giving possibilities of faithful adventure.

Diana Butler Bass's research on vital mainline Protestant congregations is featured in her books and are available at www.dianabutlerbass.com.

Pastor's Corner



PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past few months, I have noticed the use of the concept of partnership in many articles regarding church and community. What many authorities on church growth are saying is that we need to change our language and our thinking if we are to authentically grow the church. Implicit in the biblical mandate is a theology of partnership. From Genesis to Revelation a primary thread has to do with partnerships.

The **creation account** established an understanding of male and female, both of whom God calls very good. They are meant to be a partnership in the eyes of God. However the introduction of sin messed it up! Human wisdom between separated from divine wisdom as we ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. We forget that the snake was the symbol of human wisdom. When choices had to be made, the seduction to choose human wisdom over divine wisdom frequently won out.

This choice had the effect of separating us from the presence of God. While God continues to walk with us, we often choose a different path. God wishes us to be reunited (reconciled) with God since human nature implies all sorts of inequalities and oppressions, including male dominance which is not God's intention.

Take for example the often quoted phrase from Genesis 2: "... and a man shall leave his father and his mother and **cleave** unto his wife." This same message is repeated frequently in the new testament as part of the new order the Christ ushered in. (*Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 5:3 1.*) This is the new partnership.

The marital arrangement at the usual age of puberty (13), was for a woman to leave her parents home and live in the home of her new husband and their extended family. She would not be fully accepted into the household until she produced a male offspring.

So from the beginning we see the opposite of human wisdom and male dominance. The word **cleave** is used when a weaker person depends on a stronger one. The son cleaved on his mother until the marriage. Now the young man is to see the wife in a dominant role rather than his mother. I'll bet that produced some strained relationships.

The **New Order** as defined in the New Testament was established by Christ in sharp contrast to the Old Testament understandings. Paul writes that a new partnership is formed when "*anyone who is in Christ, is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new!*" (2 Cor 5:17). Peter says that God is establishing for himself, a new people with new partnerships between rich and poor. (1 Pet 2:9) In the Acts, Luke vividly describes the amazing transformation of partnership between the rich and the poor when the first Christians were formed into the New Israel:

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles:

"All who were believers were (partnered) together and had all things in common regardless of wealth... Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. (Acts 2:43-47)

The obvious image of this New Israel was a partnership between rich and poor, between male and female, between owner and slave and all wealth was held in common trust. Before Pentecost the sign of membership in the community of God's people was circumcision. Afterwards it was baptism. The membership symbol which previously focused on men only was now open to everyone.

Some Christian people still try to envision only men as the chosen ones of God, denying priestly ordination to women. But times are changing. Since the reformation Protestant churches splintered along theological and social lines, gathering people of like mind to work and worship together in the name of the Lord. The richer folks sent some of their excess to the poor but rarely were partners in mission with the poor.

Gradually, we built more prisons than any other nation on earth! It became apparent it was mostly persons of lower income that we incarcerated! The purpose was more than just keeping us safe! Rather it was a segregation of law keepers from law breakers with little regard to the root causes and even less emphasis on rehabilitation. Legislators still tremble when people fear they will be soft on crime despite the nature of the crime.

We are slowly becoming more aware of what a huge role economics plays in our culture. Is it only the wealthy who are deserving of adequate health care or economic security? Can we envision partnerships of rich and poor, slave and free, male and female, strong and weak, all enjoying the assurance of God's presence and blessing! Can we envision the New Israel taught by Christ and emphasized in Revelation?

At FPC, that is our vision as we give new meaning to the words of that wonderful hymn:

*Called as partners in Christ's service,
Called to ministries of grace,
We respond with deep commitment
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.*

Our amazingly diverse congregation, not only culturally but also socio-economically, seeks to be partners with people who act and think differently! This seems to me to be the model of Christ established nearly 2,000 years ago. May we continue to be faithful to that alternate wisdom and lifestyle! May we truly be partners in Christ's service.

- Pastor Bob

