

University Presbyterian Church

University Press

"Where love of God and love of neighbor live at the heart of our life together."

May 2009

Inside this issue:

Worship	2
Website	
Heartprints	3
Outreach	4
UPC Prayer Corner	4
Church Events	5
Christian Ed	6
Member Updates	7
Presbyterian Women Church Women United	8

Returning to Eden? Finding the Silver Lining in the Great Recession

by Pastor Chris Erdman

There's much that hurts about the global descent into what some are now calling "The Great Recession." We can't be naïve about the pain and loss, and sometimes, downright desperation that rides in its wake. No one should wish this on anyone. But many are also recognizing that there is much we can learn; there are lessons that in the long run may help us all.

The cover article of today's TIME magazine puts it this way: "The recession has changed more than just how we live. It's changed what we value and what we expect—even after the economy recovers."

Nancy Gibbs writes, "[W]e're stripping down and starting over . . . [as] most people think the pain will be lasting and the effects permanent." TIME sent out a platoon of reporters and pollsters to every corner of the country and measured—anecdotally and empirically—what's changed in the way we set our priorities and spend our money since the Great Recession began." Gibbs says, "A consumer culture invites us to want more than we can ever have; a culture of thrift invites us to be grateful for whatever we can get. So we pass the time by tending our gardens and patching our safety nets and debating whether, years from now, this season will be remembered for what we lost, or all that we found."

We're doing this not only as individuals and families across America, but also as a congregation here in Fresno. For years, we've lived in relative abundance. The strength of our giving has meant that there was little we didn't do. We grew programs and ministries.

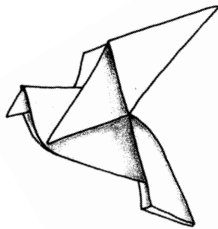
We hired staff. We doubled our budget over the past decade. We made certain assumptions and learned the habits of abundance.

Now we're all being stripped down. We're forced to learn what it means to live leaner, trimmer, more focused lives. And as we do, I think we, as a congregation, must relearn the habits and assumptions of a pre-abundance way of life.

There was a time, early at UPC, when resources weren't as abundant, but when our ministries were flush with eager volunteers—people of all ages rolling up their shirtsleeves and working side by side. Then, in the abundant years, we began to staff to do things for us, and we demanded programs that catered to our consumer appetites.

Now, we've entered a season of thrift as a society that has the potential to teach us to not only be grateful for whatever we can get, but also to give of ourselves in the old ways—that is, to recover a new spirit of face to face engagement with each other over things that matter most, to re-empower the membership of this church, stimulate a pride in the simple things, and re-energize a spirit of volunteerism on all levels.

When this season finally passes, I believe we'll find ourselves healthier in many ways than we were in these recent, abundant years because we'll have learned to focus on what really matters. And in doing so, I imagine we'll find we're closer to Eden in our simplicity than we ever were in our abundance.

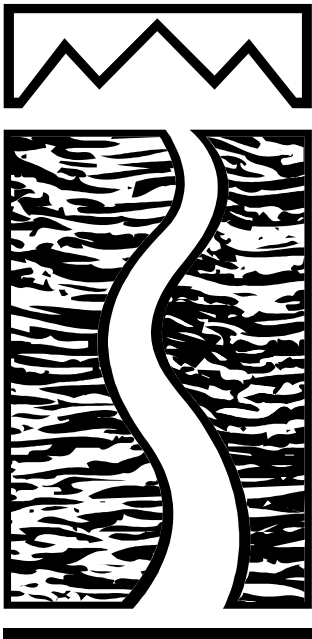


Pentecost Sunday May 31, 2009

Traditional Worship 8:30 am
Contemporary
Worship 11 am
Lao Worship 11 am
Baptisms
*Hallelujah!
Come, Holy Spirit,
fill your church with joy!*

Let the rivers
CLAP
 their hands,
 let the
 mountains
SING
 together
 for joy.

Psalm 98:8



Reaching Today's Youth Through Music and Drama

by John-e Kratt, Director of Son Daze

Back in the 1970's my family lived next door to Mr. & Mrs. Riley. When I was about 14 years old I was contacted by the youth minister of a nearby church. It was the church that the Riley's attended regularly. The youth minister said he had heard (through the Riley's) that I was a guitar player. He invited me to join their contemporary youth choir as their current guitar player was getting ready to go off to college. Well as you would guess, being I was only 14 years old, I was thrilled with the idea!

I showed up for the first practice and saw that this youth choir had at least 25 members. I became acclimated soon and was able to replace the college bound former guitarist. A few months later, as a result of my new involvement in this church, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. In less than a few years this youth choir grew to about 50. Much of the growth was a result of church members like the "Riley's" who reached out to kids my age. Most of these young choir members became Christians and some of them are currently involved in ministry today. Also, there were at least two of them that brought their entire families to the

church. It was a true blessing to witness their parents also accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior!

As most of you know, "SonDaze" is a group of young people, high school through college age, that have shared their music in several services now. We (Pamela Caldwell and I) are also exploring the area of drama in an effort to attract those young people who may not be interested in music. Last year, I felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to form "SonDaze" and I have a vision of this little group growing as did the choir I was involved in when I was young.

Imagine if all of you took just a little time to pray about the growth of "SonDaze". I can easily see the Holy Spirit reminding you of someone you know who would love to sing with them. Think about your neighbors, friends, co-workers, relatives, etc. Pamela and I are ready to accept any young person you send our way. This is not "American Idol" so all they need is a desire to sing. So please pray about it and consider doing what the Riley's did for me. I would not be writing this if not for their efforts.

Third Edition Website Now Available

Last fall, the Session determined that a new website was needed to provide a dynamic tool for ministry. With the assistance of a task force of Melissa Manion, Bob Mitchell and John Kallenberg, a functionality list was developed and a consultant hired. The new site is now available thanks to the work of these folks. The address remains upcfresno.org. Current events, news, educational videos, and sermon audios are available for members, Visitors, and the community. Updates

occur each week. Sermons are usually posted by Monday morning and new events are posted no later than the week before they occur.

Staff is completing a guide for all of those in the church who develop content for the site. In the meantime, if you have news, events, or other content for consideration on the website, contact Melissa Manion. Suggestions for future developments are also welcomed.



Heartprints

by Patrice Sanders

Susie Joy asked me to share about my experience working a prison ministry called Kaivos. Kaivos is Greek for *God's time*. It is a highly structured program whose focus is to make people who are incarcerated feel Christ's love through the service of Christian Kaivos volunteers. During this event, participants are given the opportunity to experience a religious renewal by accepting God's call to a life of Christian witness and service to one another during their stay in the institution and beyond. After the weekend, participants are encouraged to establish strong Christian communities within their institution.

I have a cousin who was in a federal prison in Texas for seven years. She met Jesus in prison, and has a strong relationship with Christ and her church even after being out for eight years. Her story has impressed upon me how important and life changing prison ministry is. After years of listening to touching stories from friends involved with Kaivos, I went to a closing service and was able to hear the residents talk about how life changing their weekend was.

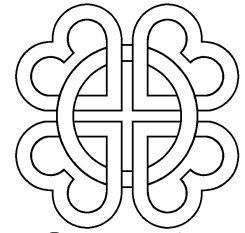
I worked my first weekend in February and was blessed in many ways. I worked on the "cookie team." I must explain, the residents are inundated with every type of store-bought cookie you can imagine, something they don't get normally. This alone draws many residents to attend the weekend, and is

a blessing during the weekend.

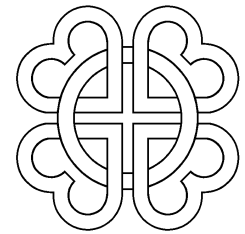
I connected with and befriended a number of residents as we worked together. These were women who had previously been on a Kaivos weekend and were living their Christian walk within their prison. These women were hard-working, and such a pleasure to be with. I was also able to listen to some of the speakers and see how the residents responded to their talks.

It was a wonderful experience for me to witness a change in many of the women during the course of the weekend. Some of the women's body language changed from being stoic and stand-offish to smiling, hugging, and laughing. There was one woman I'll call Diane who stood out to me. She shared that she had spent her life trying to hide herself and blend in. That is why she had covered herself with tattoos. She shared that Kaivos was the first time in her life she has felt loved or valuable. Two days later Diane shared that she met Jesus during the weekend and she would never be the same.

We will continue to meet with this group of women once a month for the next year, as well as attend other weekends. Kaivos rules, however, do not permit contact with the residents outside of Kaivos activities. If anyone would like more information about Kaivos, I would be happy to talk to you.



"...participants are given the opportunity to experience a religious renewal by accepting God's call to a life of Christian witness and service to one another during their stay in the institution and beyond."

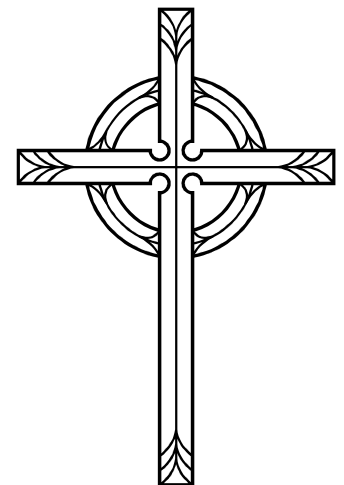


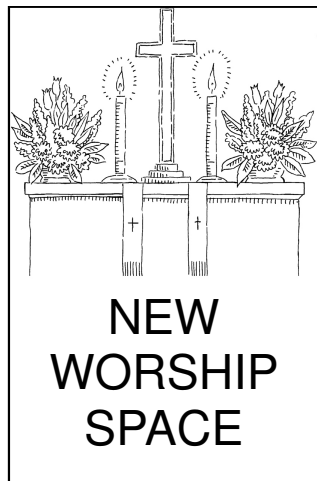
Prayer And Healing Service

Our monthly *Prayer & Healing Service* joins sisters and brothers in Christ, listening for the whisper of our Lord's voice. You are invited to join us on May 7 at 7 pm for a time of praise, prayer, healing, and meditation. Come let the

breath of God wash over you and listen for his loving voice in your life.

This service is held on the first Thursday of every month, and you are encouraged to put it on your calendar.





Southeast Asian Ministry Moves to Room 11!

Last month we had the pleasure of announcing our Lao language worship services upcoming move to **Room 11** – which was previously the Junior High room. Since that announcement there has been a buzz of activity to get that room ready for its first worship service on Sunday, April 19.

We especially want to thank and commend the crew who got together on March 28 to give the room a fresh coat of paint. Members of this crew – under the direction of Dione Lyons and John & Lorna Bosavanh – included Adam Chan, Buncherd Supasavat, Pat Dodds, Vaneta Phathoummaseng, Ms. Muan

Reed, Khamphanh Amnath, Dave Eaton, Souk Phouthivongsay, Thong Douangmala, Tony Bounthapanya, and Somsy Xaiyavong.

The team did a beautiful job of turning this room into a permanent place of worship. We want to extend an invitation to all UPC worshippers to visit this new sanctuary at your earliest opportunity. Or even better – we invite you to visit our 11 o'clock Lao language worship service. This worship service is a true testimony of the joyous presence of our Lord's loving spirit which transcends all languages.



Don't Cook On June 7—Order In

Laos Partners and the Lao Worshipping Fellowship are again offering a healthy, delicious meal to take home and enjoy. Sign up to reserve your meals on May 10, 17, 24 or 31 after worship.

Each meal includes:

- 2 spring rolls with dipping sauce
- BBQ Chicken

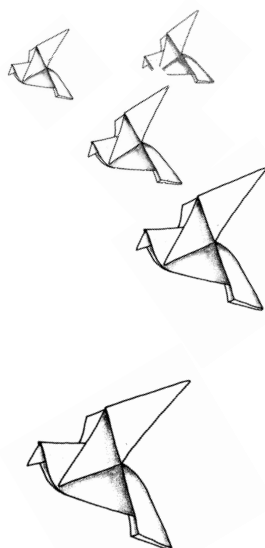
- Sticky Rice with sauce
- Fresh Fruit in Season

The price is \$7 each or \$25 for four meals.

Orders will be ready for pick-up following worship on Sunday, June 7.

UPC Prayer Corner

We pray for those in our congregation and community who face illness, grief, and other challenges. We pray for those who are shut-in and for their caregivers. We pray for those in seminary who are a part of our church family.



Reel Theology Going to the Dogs.

We will gather at 6:30 PM on May 30 to view and discuss *Marley & Me*. It is a PG rated movie. John and Jenny get a Labrador retriever because they are not quite ready to become mom and dad just yet. And the adventure begins. The "world's worst dog" provides John several good columns in his role as a columnist. Children do eventually come

to the marriage. This isn't just a crazy-dog-rules-the-household story. There are struggles as we see the family trying to work through rough patches. A question to ponder: Have you ever accomplished something that surprised you? What did you learn about yourself in the process?



STARS For May

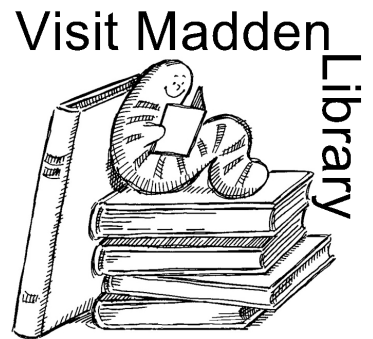
Join the STARS (Seniors That Are Really Special) on Wednesday, May 20, at 1:30 pm in the Great Room. We will view the short video *The California*

Water Story about how California stewards its precious resource—water. Join us for discussion and refreshments too. All are welcome.

Clippers Visit Madden Library

You are invited to join your UPC friends for a guided tour of the new Fresno State Madden Library on Saturday, May 9. Meet in front of the library at 1:30 pm for the tour, which is handicapped accessible. Enter the campus from Barton Ave. Parking is free on Saturday.

Following the tour, Clippers will gather in the Great Room at church and enjoy a variety of delicious flavors of Fresno State ice cream. Feel free to invite a guest. Please be sure to RSVP to Lee and Rosemary Erickson.



Gals' Night

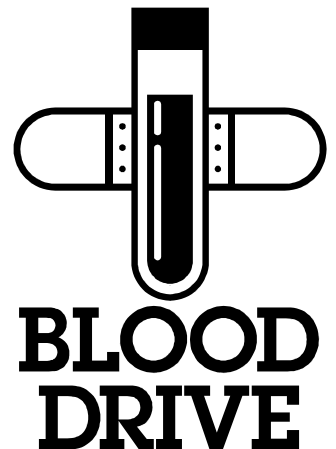
May 28 is the date of our next Gals' Night meeting. Plans have not yet been formalized, but then we aren't ever very

formal. Just plan to come and have fun and fellowship with good friends.

Blood Drive Success

The Deacons sincerely thank all donors. 16 pints of whole blood were collected on April 19, exceeding our goal!! Mark your calendars now; the

Bloodmobile will return to UPC on Sunday, June 28, from 9am-noon.



May Teaching Schedule

May 3: *Scripture: How It Plays in Our Lives as Disciples.* A panel of UPCers lead by elder Doug Lowe will reflect on the role of the Bible in their devotion and decision-making.

May 10: No Class—Mother's Day.

May 17: *Unchanging and Unwavering: The Case of a Doctrine that's Remained Unchanged Over Time.* Dr. Chris Erdman, teaching.

May 24: No Class—Memorial Day Weekend.

May 31: *Reformed and Always Being Reformed: The Case of a Doctrine that Changed Over Time.* Dr. Steve Varvis, teaching.

The Bible and Homosexuality: Congregational Study

by Pastor Chris Erdman

Last fall, UPC's elders asked our planning team to offer the congregation a balanced process for engaging homosexuality from a distinctly Christian perspective so that we can have a congregation of people who are better able to express their convictions than they were before this study started, while also living with grace and respect toward those who disagree.

Exploring this issue in the church may trouble some of us, but gay and lesbian persons are all around us—in our families, among our friends and neighbors, in our work places, and they come to worship, seeking to know and love God. How are we to understand homosexuality and God's will for human life? What role may gay and lesbian persons play in the life of the church? Does their sexual orientation and practice exclude them from full participation in the Body of Christ? What may be required of them that differs from what is required from

heterosexuals? And, what difference is there between the demands of discipleship placed on homosexual or heterosexual persons? These and many other questions require thoughtful and thorough answers by evangelical faith.

In May, Adult Education will host three Sunday morning sessions in our series, *The Bible and Homosexuality*, between services at 9:45 am in the Great Room.

Over the summer, Adult Education will host studies in major texts of the Bible—Genesis 1 and 2, Leviticus 18 and 20, Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, and 1 Timothy 1. In addition, we will host conversations with representatives of homosexual transformation ministries, GLBTQ Christian advocacy groups, a biblical theologian, a Christian psychologist, and UPC families with gay children and family members.

What Our Children Are Up To

by Ashley Tomas

Yard Sale, May 2

Every year, the kids in our ministry work this event to raise money for Calvin Crest camp fees. This day is both fun and a learning experience on hard work! If you would like your child to participate, please contact Linda Stolling for more information (you can call the church's office for her contact information).

Easter Egg Hunt—REVIEW

Our activity with the children on April 11 was a huge hit! The kids painted hard-boiled eggs and enjoyed the main event of the day. And they especially did not go home empty-handed!! A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the parents

and the volunteers who came to help out for our get together. We also cannot forget to thank those who were willing to donate large supplies of eggs, candies, and coloring kits. When we come together outside of our regular Sunday school, it helps to form a community and close friendships within our ministry. We hope to continue this success with many more activities to come!

Sunday School

May will be our last month of regular Sunday school before the summer begins. Look out for more information to follow in the next several weeks.



The University Press



University Presbyterian Church
1776 E. Roberts Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710
559-439-8807
www.upcfresno.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT No. 34
Clovis, California

Return Service Requested

Hours of Worship:

Sunday Morning Worship

8:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Lao Service 11:00 AM

Sunday School 9:45 AM

Pastors:

Rev. Chris Erdman

Rev. Tedd Lyons

Rev. Sharon Stanley

Mailing Label

Presbyterian Women

UPW will discuss water conservation and tour the Clovis Botanical Gardens on May 12. Meet at the church at 9:30 am to carpool, or be at the gardens (945 N. Clovis Ave.) at 10 am. Bring a sack lunch. Beverages (ice tea and water) will be provided. All women of the

church are invited. The tour is fascinating and there is a lot to see.

Reminder: The June 9 meeting will be the installation of officers and our annual potluck salad luncheon starting at 11 am.

The University Press

is the newsletter of University Presbyterian Church.

Church Women United Friendship Day

Building on Our Stories is the theme of the May Friendship Day meeting of Church Women United. The meeting will be Friday, May 1, at the Westside 7th Day Adventist Church, 2750 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (To reach the church, take the Jensen Ave. exit 125 from Hwy 41 south. Turn right on Jensen, go to Martin Luther King, and turn left.)

Registration is at 9:30 am with the celebration at 10 am. The meeting will include the dedication of the "Least Coin" offering and the awarding of Scholarship Awards. The cost of the luncheon is \$7. Those attending are encouraged to bring non-perishable food, discarded eyeglasses, and used postage stamps.

DEADLINE
for the June
Newsletter is
May 15.

