



*Joyfully Sharing God's Boundless Love with All in Our Community  
without Limitation, Exception, or Condition*

## UNIVERSITY PRESS

February 2018

### Lenten Sermon Series: Sinning Like a Christian

*by The Reverend Renn Serna, Senior Pastor*

PRIDE

WRATH

LUST

GLUTTONY

SLOTH

ENVY

GREED

It seems odd to me to be thinking about Lent, a period of time marked by self-reflection and death, while our church is brimming with signs of life everywhere we turn. Can you believe our 11 a.m. service is doing so well they outgrew their worship space and are now worshipping in the full Great Room? Or what about the fact that over 65 people joined our new small groups this past month, all longing to grow closer to God and one another? And, what a joy it was to celebrate Dustin's ordination and to welcome him as our Associate Pastor for 2018! Yes, there is life all around, and it is easy to get swept up in the joy of it all.

And yet, Lent is coming, a time of year when we are forced to slow down, examine ourselves and remember our own mortality. It may seem a little contrived to spend this time every year taking a break from the regular routine of church and focusing on the "hard stuff." But just like the seasons of the year, the rhythms of the church calendar remind us of the cycle of life and death and help reorient us to the Good News of the Gospel. The miracle of the empty tomb would mean nothing without the horror of the cross, and grace would be unneeded were it not for the human tendency towards sin.

And so once again we pause from our ordinary, everyday lives and spend some time reflecting on the REASON Christ came to live and die on our behalf. We ask God to reveal to us our sins, those broken parts of ourselves we wish were different, and we beg for forgiveness. And

we mourn the broken state of this world and long for the day to finally come when Jesus returns and sets all things right.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which falls on Valentine's Day this year (what a beautiful reminder of God's love). We hope that you will join us for our Ash Wednesday service on February 14 at 6 p.m. when we kick off our Lenten sermon series "*Sinning Like a Christian*." Each week during Lent we take a look at one of the seven deadly sins and its accompanying virtue, seeking to understand our own tendency towards sin and discover the better path Jesus came to show us. It is a good way for us to frame our Lenten journey and to prepare us for the ultimate joy of Easter morning!

With much Love, *Pastor Renn*

## Ash Wednesday is For Lovers

*by The Reverend Dustin Maddox, Associate Pastor*

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the 40-day Lenten season of introspective fasting, praying, and giving modeled after Jesus' forty day fast in the wilderness. This year, Ash Wednesday falls on February 14 which is, of course, also Valentine's Day.

Our Ash Wednesday service will be on Wednesday, February 14 at 6 p.m. We hope this early time allows you to come to the service and receive the ashes. Then, if you choose, celebrate Valentine's Day too with either an early or late dinner, or dessert before or after the service.

Perhaps this Divine coincidence serves as a reminder of God's desirous love for us throughout the Lenten season as we prepare ourselves for the ultimate demonstration of that love on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Grace + Peace, Pastor Dustin



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## The Holy Act of Singing Together

*by Cactus Harris, Director of Music & Arts and Resident Organist*



On Sunday, February 18 we will be one of many churches across the United States participating in the Center for Congregational Song's *A Capella Sunday*. The Center for Congregational Song is the resource and programmatic arm of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. Their mission is to "encourage, promote, and enliven congregational singing."

form.

On *A Cappella Sunday*, worshiping communities across the United States commit to singing a cappella (without instruments) on the first Sunday of Lent. Marking the beginning of this important season of penitence and preparation by singing without instrumental accompaniments allows us to offer ourselves to God in the most basic

Other purposes and benefits include:

- Connecting to the history of the church. For thousands of years, a cappella singing was the mainstay of the church's song. By recognizing this and exploring this way of music-making, we are acknowledging and honoring the saints of the past. (John Calvin would be proud!)
- Connecting to many Christian denominations, traditions, and regions of the world that continue to use a cappella music as their primary mode of music-making in corporate worship.
- Offering God a gift different from our usual music-making.

Psalm 96:1 tells us to "*Sing a new song to the Lord*," which we will do on February 18 by singing a cappella in worship.

*In harmony, Cactus*

## Baptism + Confirmation for Youth

In the weeks leading up to Easter, Pastor Dustin is hosting a class for middle and high school students who would like to be baptized if they have not yet been baptized, or to confirm their baptism if they were baptized as infants.

**The four-week Sunday evening class begins March 4 from 6-7:30 p.m. and includes supper.** The class culminates with a recognition and celebration in worship on Easter Sunday!

To sign up, or for more information, email Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org).



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## UPC 101



Are you new to UPC and interested in learning more about what we are all about?

Are you curious about becoming a member or being baptized for the first time?

Then join us for UPC 101 on **Saturday, March 3 from 9-11:30 a.m.** to take a look at the vision and purpose of UPC, as well as provide a quick overview of what it means to be Presbyterian.

To sign up, email Kerry in the church office at [Kerry@upcfresno.org](mailto:Kerry@upcfresno.org). For more information, email Pastor Renn at [renn@upcfresno.org](mailto:renn@upcfresno.org).

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## Lao Partners Embrace a New Focus

*by Charlie Warnes, for the Southeast Asian Ministry*

Our December newsletter article was focused on the seven Living Waters for the World (LWW) clean water systems that we, together with our Lao friends, had installed since 2009. We talked about the local political factors that did not permit installing the eighth system in 2017. Our team in Laos planned to have more discussions with the Lao Evangelical Church about future directions as we continued our 17-year partnership.

One might compare a LWW clean water system with a Model 'T' Ford - a car from the WWI days that due to its simplicity, low cost and reliability, quite literally "put America on the road". LWW systems are similarly quite simple, low cost and reliable. But, like motor vehicles, they need to be maintained and repaired.

Our teams have truly enjoyed working directly with the local Lao people to build and test these LWW systems. Each installation is a four-day process, concurrent with training the community on water utilization and hygiene. Our team begins to train the operators to operate and maintain the system during the second day, so that by the fourth day they are training each other on the procedures.



Despite that training, ongoing sanitation and maintenance continues to be a challenge. LWW has encountered similar challenges with the hundreds of systems they have installed in Latin America, and have resorted to hiring and training staff persons in-country to oversee the operation and maintenance of their systems.

While we cannot justify hiring a full time person to oversee these seven LWW systems in Laos, we have shared our concerns with the leaders of the Lao Evangelical Church. We have pointed out to them that in order for such clean water systems to be sustainable, someone in Laos needs to accept responsibility to oversee and monitor the operations, and call for help when problems arise.

*Until that occurs, we are shifting our future focus.* We will work with LEC on sanitation (hand washing and toilet) facilities, as well as education at elementary schools in rural villages. We will also be supporting LEC's efforts to develop construction-skill apprenticeship programs related to their ongoing church expansion.

We will keep you posted as things develop over the next few months.

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## Men's Retreat is March 2-4: Sign Up Now

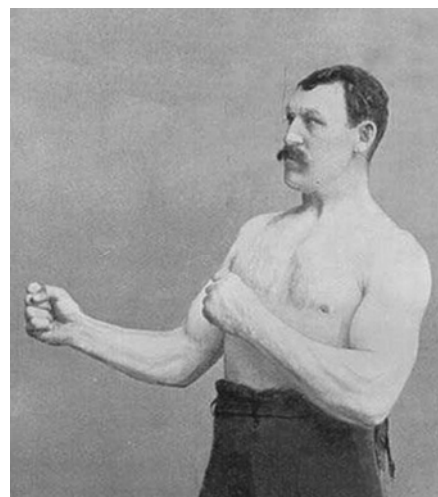
Are you a man? Do you like retreating? Looking for an awesome way to get connected with other guys at UPC?

Whether you're new to the UPC family, or you've been a part of the Men's Retreat for years, we would love for you to join us for the 2018 Men's Retreat on March 2-4 at Calvin Crest in Oakhurst.

This year's retreat focuses on learning from one another about how to courageously confront the chaos in our lives and in the world in a way that helps us bring order to our relationships, jobs, and communities.

The cost is \$155 for a shared Cedar Lodge room, and \$205 for a single room. You can reserve your spot with a \$50 deposit when you register online at [www.upcfresno.org/mensretreat](http://www.upcfresno.org/mensretreat), or on Sunday mornings throughout February.

For more information, email Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org).



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## Opportunity Awaits with Flowers



Young, attractive, lonely flower stand seeks dates for Sunday mornings. Willing to date one person or more than one person at a time. This photo is recent. Won't you sign up to provide flowers? Call Jeanette Hodgson at 974-8880 to arrange a date!

## UPC Groups

### WEEKLY

**Contemplative Prayer:** Come **Mondays at 6:30 p.m.** to the Godly Play Room (Rooms 3-4) for Christ-centered meditation. No previous experience is necessary, just a desire to spend quiet, still time with the Divine. For more information, email Cathy Wingert at [wingy104@aol.com](mailto:wingy104@aol.com).

**Women's Bible Study:** The group meets weekly on **Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.** in the Fireside Room. They have started a new study - *Women of the New Testament*. Join them and learn about the women of our faith. For more information, email Laura Lindegren at [punkin2826@yahoo.com](mailto:punkin2826@yahoo.com), or call her at 299-1838.

**Thursday Evening Bible Study:** The group, led by Ceci Johnson, meets for study **Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.** in the Fireside Room. They continue "wrestling" with the Gospel of Matthew, and invite you to join them. For more information, email Ceci Johnson at [cjartistquilts@gamil.com](mailto:cjartistquilts@gamil.com).

### MONTHLY

**Intercessory Prayer Service:** This is a monthly service where all are invited to come pray for loved ones, members of our congregation, community, and world. Join them on **February 5 at 7 p.m.** For more information, email Pastor Tedd @[teddlyons@gmail.com](mailto:teddlyons@gmail.com), or call/text him at 906-1438.

**Presbyterian Women (PW):** Presbyterian Women meet **Tuesday, February 13 at 9:30 a.m.** in the Great Room. The speaker is Dustin Maddox, talking about "Pub Theology." They share refreshments, hear from Pastor Dustin, and then have a short business meeting. Bring a friend and join the women of UPC! For more information, email Ruth Kallenberg at [rbkallenberg@gmail.com](mailto:rbkallenberg@gmail.com).

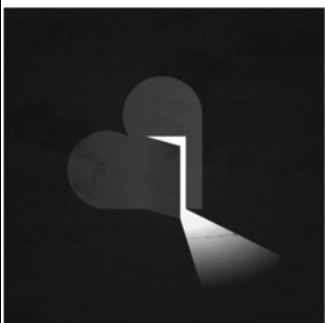
**Pub Theology:** Join the discussion on **Tuesday, February 20 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.** at Sequoia Brewing Company (corner of Champlain and Perrin in the Piazza Del Fiore Center). Add your voice to the discussion of a variety of topics concerning faith, religion, and God. Seating is limited so come early to ensure a spot. They meet monthly on the third Tuesday. Listening and discussion are encouraged; drinking is optional. For more information, email Dustin at [dustin@upcfresno.org](mailto:dustin@upcfresno.org), or text him at 288-0083.

**Clippers:** Clippers celebrate this month with a **Valentine Potluck Dinner, February 9, at 6:00 p.m. in the Great Room.** Bring your Valentine's favorite dish (hot entree, salad, or dessert). Entertainment follows dinner. RSVP to Becky & Roland Bergthold at 347-7256, or Bob & Sue Smith at 325-3695.

**UPC Food Pantry:** The food distribution this month is **Saturday, February 17 at 8 a.m.** It is held the third Saturday of each month. Come and help by texting Dustin at 288-0083 to volunteer. If you would like to donate to the food of the month item for the distribution, **the food item this month is peanut butter and jelly.** Bring your donations to the Narthex on Sunday mornings or drop them at the office during the week.

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## The Pastor is in: Pastor Renn's Office Hours & Contact Info



**Monday:** Sabbath  
**Tuesday:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Office)  
**Wednesday:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Office)  
**Thursday:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Office)  
**Friday:** Sermon preparation (Home)  
**Office Phone:** (559) 439-8812  
**Pastoral Emergency Line:** (559) 387-4250  
**Email:** [renn@upcfresno.org](mailto:renn@upcfresno.org)

## February Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Calendar

<b>February Birthdays</b> 1 Kristin Vencil 2 Jan Goyette Jeanette Hoover Richard Pelisari 5 David Albright 9 Jeanette Hodgson 10 Jennifer Howells 12 Tim Cavagnaro Alison Gaede Susan Quinn 14 Liz Dodds Wanda Vert 15 Nan Barker Terry Lawrence Al Pulcifer Daniel Stolling 17 Bob Smith 18 Beverly Daniels 20 Moira Harada 21 Sally Heitkotter 22 Marilyn Bokemeier Craig Hitechew 24 Ben Douglas Lynette Reid 26 Betty Boos 27 Nicole Wichert	<b>February Birthdays cont.</b> 28 Rachel Fern Rhea Rehark-Griffith 29 Marcus Allen  <b>February Anniversaries</b> 3 Dick & Betty Gist Dan & Judy Scarbery 4 Bob & Carey Berend 16 Stephen & Nicole Wichert 17 Simeon & Elnora Bugay Winston & Laura Fuller 29 Kurt & Dana Rossi  <b>February Calendar</b> 1 Musica Viva 7 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. 5 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. Intercessory Prayer 7 p.m. 6 Deacons 7 p.m. 7 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 8 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. 9 Clippers 6 p.m. 12 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m.	<b>February Calendar cont.</b> 13 Presbyterian Women 9:30 a.m. Session 6 p.m. 14 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. <b>Ash Wednesday Service 6 p.m.</b> 15 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. 17 Food Distribution 8 a.m. 19 Office Closed - <b>Presidents Day</b> Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 20 Pub Theology 6:30 p.m. 21 Women's Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. 22 Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. 26 Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m. 27 Ministry Meetings (times vary) 28 Women's Bible Study 9:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.
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**UNIVERSITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

1776 E. Roberts Avenue | Fresno, CA | 93710 | 559.439.8807 | [www.upcfresno.org](http://www.upcfresno.org)

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**University Presbyterian Church**  
**1776 E. Roberts Avenue**  
**Fresno, CA 93710**  
**(559) 439-8807**

Non-profit Organization  
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Clovis, CA 93612

**Sunday Worship Schedule for January**

9 a.m. Classic Worship | 11 a.m. Contemporary Service  
11 a.m. Lao Language Service | except the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday  
Ash Wednesday Service | February 14 at 6 p.m.

**Pastors**

The Reverend Renn Serna, Senior Pastor  
The Reverend Dustin Maddox, Associate Pastor

**Return Service Requested**

Mailing Label Here

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