

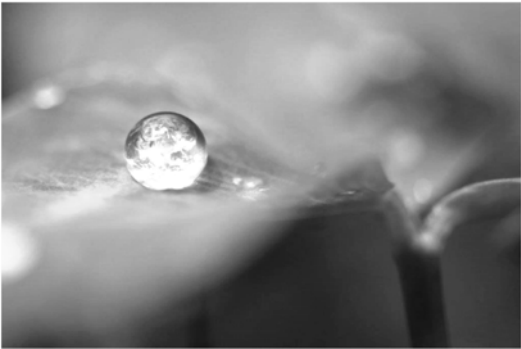


UNIVERSITY PRESS

May 2017

Easter People and Sabbath

by The Reverend Renée Marie Rico, Transitional Pastor



Easter has come -- we have celebrated the in-breaking, life-giving, world-shattering, resurrection of Jesus -- and one might naturally think: Now what? How then, shall we live?

The Easter-tide texts (those used on the Sundays following Easter) can give us clues: the disciples stay with one another, and pray as a community. They break bread in the story of the walk to Emmaus, and have a fish fry where the risen Jesus makes his appearances in the Gospel of John. In Matthew, the disciples travel together to Galilee to meet

with Jesus on a mountain where he tells them to go and make disciples of the entire known world. In short, they begin to create the community Jesus had taught them about in his ministry.

We might, therefore, think the disciples will immediately get busy about doing what Jesus has called them to do. After all, this work of making disciples seems to be pretty important, and as we all know, important people are busy! Instead, they do something counter-cultural -- they stop and just be -- they live into Sabbath time.

This key practice of the Jewish faith, Sabbath, is a powerful antidote to many ills of secular culture -- one of which is our own culture of busyness. *Sabbath is the way of being in time where we remember who we are, remember what we know, and taste the gifts of spirit and eternity, according to Wayne Muller, author of Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest.*

Contemporary rabbis view Sabbath in a way that removes it from the legalistic "rules" perspective that many people grew up with -- which often was more about refraining from fun things than restoring ourselves. The rabbis offer the thought that Sabbath is really about humans refraining from doing anything to the creation because rest is required for our own perspective in understanding our role in the world.

Keeping Sabbath means finding precious time of being rather than doing. Not all of us are able to set aside an entire day, or even an entire afternoon for this (i.e. parents of young children) -- but we can set aside smaller amounts of time. We can find even 10-20 minutes in a day in which we refrain from doing, and instead, practice delighting in the good creation God has made. The contemplative practices we offered during Lent to center on Jesus provide ways to continue to live into deeper friendship and discipleship with God.

Norman Wirzba says this of keeping Sabbath in the Christian tradition: *The extent and depth of*

our Sabbath commitment is the measure of how far we have progressed in our discipleship and friendship with God...The requirement of Sabbath observance invites us to stop. It invites us to rest. It asks us to notice that while we rest the world continues without our help. (Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight, pp 12-13.)

I don't think it's an accident in our own tradition that the resurrection of Jesus comes after a day of Sabbath. In the Gospel of Luke, the disciples and other followers of Jesus spend almost 50 days after Jesus' resurrection in Jerusalem, praying and together in community, before that amazing day of Pentecost, when the gift of the Holy Spirit comes upon a large crowd. If we look at Easter and the days following as a model for our own lives, we begin to realize that new life can come only when we give ourselves the time needed to rest and reflect, to live in this time and on this earth, remembering we are God's children. And also, time to listen for what God calls us to do.

So, let's go deep, it's the best way to start living as an Easter people!

In the Spirit, *Renée*

Women & Faith (Not Just for Women)

Adult Education is pleased to welcome you to a Sunday morning series focusing on women and our Christian faith. The series, led by Pastor Renée, explores such questions as:

- What does it mean in Genesis 1 that both women and men are created in God's image?
- How do we look at the role of women in the Bible?
- Why do Presbyterians ordain women to all leadership positions in the church?
- Which issues get lifted up when women have their voice?

Come and explore how our faith upholds the value of women and men together on the following Sundays in May:

May 7: Women in the New Testament

May 21: Theology of the church and women's roles: Why women's ordination matters

June 4: Christian Ethics from Women's Points of View: What issues are lifted up when women's voices count?



**Jesus with
Martha & Mary**
From the
St. John's Bible

A Look at a Resurrection Hymn

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

Thank You: First I would like to give a HUGE thank you to everyone who contributed to our Holy Week and Easter celebrations. A lot of hard work, extra time, and commitment went into making everything possible. From our Maundy Thursday Supper & Communion service, to all the butterflies that graced the cross Easter morning, it was truly a worshipful week.

A Resurrection Hymn: As a church musician, all the preparations and practicing leading up to Holy Week usually end with the question: "What's life going to be like after Easter Sunday?!" For me, it's clean up. Time to reorganize the choral library, refile all the music strung around the office, throw out the empty Starbucks cups from under the organ bench, and get a fresh start. A rebirth.



Continuing our newsletter hymn series, look with me at a good Easter text that portrays this rebirth and new growth in the resurrection. Now the *Green Blade Rises* is a 20th Century English text, set to a late 15th Century French tune. You might recognize the tune with the text *Sing We Now of Christmas*. The first verse sings:

*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

This imagery of the dying seed and rising plant can be read in John 12:24, a parallel to Christ's death and resurrection. We are in a prime season to see this language literally played out. Many have taken advantage of the "super bloom" attributed to the rains, visually feasting on the new life springing forth from recently barren hills. All this comes after death and reflects the hymns final verse:

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Your touch can call us back to life again;
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

May you enjoy the wonder of new life this Eastertide, *Cactus*

Meet Your Deacon on Deacon Sunday, May 21

by Anne Klapste, Moderator of Deacons

Deacon Sunday is May 21 and the deacons will have tables set up on the patio between the services. Find your deacon and say hello to the person behind those phone calls you may have gotten.

Every UPC member is assigned a deacon who prays for you, brings food when you're sick, and places a rose on the Communion table when you have a new child or grandchild. Deacons also prepare and clean up Communion, assist with funeral receptions, arrange the new member cookies, and assist the Nominating *Committee*. *With your generous financial support, Deacons support individuals with scholarships and emergency assistance.*



Does this all sound like a way you might like to be involved at UPC? If so, let a deacon know and we'll send your name to the Nominating Committee.

We on the Board of Deacons look forward to meeting with you on May 21.

2017 UPC Leadership

Clerk Jane Reid	2017 SESSION	Moderator The Rev. Renée Marie Rico Transitional Pastor
Class of 2017 Doug Lowe <i>Adult Education</i> Lisa Matson <i>Nominating</i> Scott Matson <i>Board of Property & Finance</i> Wayne McMillen <i>Human Resources</i>	Class of 2018 Rita Dei <i>Congregational Care</i> Sol Eufracio <i>Missions</i> Winston Fuller <i>Board of Property & Finance</i> Linda Stolling <i>Children's & Youth</i>	Class of 2019 Dave Eaton <i>Southeast Asia</i> Carolyn Gerheuser <i>Worship & Music</i> Jess Madsen <i>Board of Property & Finance</i> Micah Qualle <i>Spiritual Life</i>
President Scott Matson	BOARD OF PROPERTY & FINANCE	Treasurer Mike Watkins
Class of 2017 Craig Howells (Trustee) Scott Matson (Elder) <i>Trustee Position Open</i>	Class of 2018 Jim Ayars (Trustee) Winston Fuller (Elder) Michael Taylor (Trustee)	Class of 2019 Jesse Madsen (Elder) Amanda Sayers (Trustee) <i>Trustee Position Open</i>
Moderator Anne Klapste	BOARD OF DEACONS	
Class of 2017 Sareta Deal Fran Lazarus Anne Klapste Eleanor Lockhart Susan Quinn Chanphone Rajsavong Diddy Wagner	Class of 2018 Lynn Driscoll Judy Goodman Betty Higdon Tracy Krauter Becky Souza	Class of 2019 Nancy Alley Jan Drenth Laura Lindegren Barbara Schlueter Nancy Weiser

Monthly Food Distribution: How Does It Work?

by Dustin Maddox, Lay Minister & Commissioned Ruling Elder



If you've been around UPC over the last few years, you are probably familiar with our monthly food distribution that takes place every third Saturday of the month. Perhaps you've even donated some peanut butter, tuna, paper bags, or some of your own money to help make it happen. Beyond that, however, maybe you are wondering how it works?

About a week before the distribution, a volunteer places our order with the Community Food Bank, who then delivers the order on the Thursday morning prior to the distribution. A few volunteers help unload boxes of canned goods, bread, meat, and produce into the kitchen and a few other rooms around campus.

When volunteers arrive Saturday morning at 8 a.m., we begin by sorting all of the food and dividing it into 60 equal shares. This process usually takes about an hour, at which time a few additional volunteers make and serve coffee to the clients while spending time in relationship

with them. At 9 a.m., the distribution begins, and volunteers line up to hand out bags of staple foods, bread, produce, and protein to the clients. It's typically a large amount of food, so a few additional volunteers will help people carry their bags to their vehicles.

Over the course of the distribution, we are able to develop relationships with the clients and get to know them by name. Building relationships, of course, is the goal of the food distribution; the food is the means to that end.

There you have it. We would love to have you come and spend time with us on a distribution day. Even if you can't lift heavy bags of food, you can help in many ways including that which is most important -- lifting up the spirit of someone in need by taking the time to hear their story. If you have questions or would like to help, come by on distribution day or email Dustin at dustin@upcfresno.org, or text him at 288-0083.

Bringing Water and More to Laos

by Marilyn Bokemeier and Alison Gaede, for the Lao Partners

Marilyn Bokemeier, was one of an eight-member team for Living Waters for the World and Lao Partners, who went on an 18-day mission to Laos. The others from UPC were Chanthay Phothivongsay (aka Thim), David Eaton, Charlie Warnes, and Pastor John Bosavanh. Completing the team were three from Santa Clarita's First Presbyterian Church of Newhall.

Marilyn and Thim were able to stay in the family home of Thim's sister for much of the trip and all were generously treated to many delicious meals provided by Thim's sister and her family.



The team visited seven previous installations, troubleshooting some problems with the systems and teaching basic health and hygiene as well as appropriate use of the water provided by the system. Marilyn also took along donations of reading glasses of various strengths as the health care there is lacking in even basic eye care. The team also donated T-shirts and inflatable globes, plus donated money to a village school for books and basic school supplies. In John's village, the site of our 2017 installation, Marilyn also enjoyed interacting with the women of the village and even holding an impromptu ESL class.

Marilyn said that the fruits from the seeds planted by previous missions of UPC teams were clearly visible in many ways, especially during the two church services she participated in while there. These were enthusiastic, joyful, energetic worship services attended by men, women and children of all ages.

Four large prints of pictures of the Milky Way photographed at Calvin Crest by David Youngs were presented to the Lao leaders of the Lao Evangelical Church as a thank you for their help and cooperation in the previous installations.

Marilyn enjoyed connecting with the Lao despite language barriers and cultural differences, as well as age differences!

Adding to the UPC Family

On April 2, we added five new members and two retired United Methodist pastors to the UPC family.

Marilyn Bokemeier - Retired Nurse came to UPC from First Presbyterian Church in Fresno. She also went on the 2016 mission to Laos and you can read about her experience in this issue of the University Press.

Shanonn Hemmingson - Human Resource Specialist at Clovis Unified School District comes from The Bridge in Fresno. Shanonn and her wife Amy have three boys.

Julie Townsend - Retired and coming from Harvest Community Church in Madera, Julie is already active in Presbyterian Women.

Stephen & Nicole Wichert - Stephen works as a Risk Management Consultant and Nicole keeps busy at home. They also transferred from First Presbyterian Church in Fresno.

Kim & Denice Leslie - Both are United Methodist pastors so are not technically able to become members; nonetheless, we welcome them into the UPC family none the less. Both have been singing in the choir for a while, and Denice co-leads the Thursday Night Bible class.



From left to right: Kim & Denice Leslie, Stephen & Nicole Wichert, Amy & Shanonn Hemmingson, Marilyn Bokemeier, Pastor Renee, Julie Townsend, and Dustin Maddox

Finances at UPC

A Word About Per Capita: The financial support of the Ministries the Presbytery of the San Joaquin, our Synod, and the national office of PCUSA are supported by each congregation by per capita, which is based on the number of active members (Per Capita) within each congregation. This year, the suggested Per Capita gift is \$45.

Based on our membership, Session committed to paying the Presbyterian \$13,500, which came due on March 31. We paid our share in good faith. Currently (as of the end of March), the membership has paid \$3,440 toward Per Capita.

Any gift, regardless of size, is welcome. You can send your contribution to the UPC office or place a designated contribution in the church offering plate on any Sunday; be sure to put "Per Capita" in the memo line of the check and/or designate on the yellow envelope in your pew. Click [here](#) to give through the UPC website. Click on Online Giving under Quick Links. If you have questions, email Mike Watkins, UPC Treasurer at watkins7082@me.com



UPC Groups

Sunday Night Youth Group: This group for our teens meets Sunday nights at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Room for fun, laughs, and Jesus. For more information, email Dustin at dustin@upcfresno.org, or text him at 288-0083.

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.

Women's Bible Study: The group meets for study and fellowship Wednesdays from 9:30-11 a.m. Their current study is the Sermon on the Mount and all are invited to join in. For more information, email Laura Lindegren at punkin2826@yahoo.com, or call her at 299-1838.

Intercessory Prayer Service: This monthly service, where all are invited to come pray for loved ones, members of our congregation, community, and world, meets Monday, May 1 at 7 p.m. For more information, email Pastor Tedd at teddlyons@gmail.com, or call/text him at 906-1438.

Presbyterian Women (PW): PW meets Tuesday, May 9 at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Room. They are electing officers for 2017/18 and sharing hobbies/interests with one another. All women of UPC are welcome to come! If you have questions, email Ruth Kallenberg at rbkallenberg@gmail.com, or call her at 431-7681.

Pub Theology: Join the discussion this month on Tuesday, May 16 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, or text him at 288-0083.

Meeting at UPC

Sheeper Than Therapy: Enjoy a group of knitters and crocheters whose skills range from beginner to expert. They meet at UPC the first Saturday of the month. Join them Saturday, May 6 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. For information, email Pastor Renée at rrico@aol.com.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Deng Reed
- 3 Hannah Evans
- 4 Tommy Bounthapanya
- 6 Katherine Goyette
- 7 Jim Glass
- 8 Buncherd Supasavat
- 10 Souk Phothivongsay
- Judy Scarbery
- 11 Noupay Sonophom
- 13 Brandi Hoffman-Sherman
- Sandie Woods

MAY BIRTHDAYS cont.

- 14 Ron Souza
- 16 Doug Lowe
- 18 Mark Grisez
- 19 Keegan Biedermann
- Lance Laurendine
- Wayne McMillen
- Dana Rossi
- 20 Betty Gist
- 27 Catherine Varvis-Griffin
- 28 Cathy Douglas
- Eleanor Lockhart
- 30 Carolyn Gerheuser

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 David & Melissa Manion
- 3 Chris & Rita Dei
- Chuck & Linda Wilson
- 6 Wayne & Dorothy Curtis
- Kirk & Jodi Larson
- Rob & Sherry Walling
- 7 Dave & Jennifer Keran
- 22 Mel & Karen Enns
- 25 Tony & Tout
- Bounthapanya
- 26 John & Ta Gabel

MAY CALENDAR

1 Contemplative Prayer
6:30 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer 7 p.m.
2 Deacons 7:30 p.m.
3 Women's Bible Study
9:30 a.m.
After School Mentoring
3:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.
4 Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.
5 Dustin Maddox Graduation
6 Sheeper Than Therapy
8:30 a.m.
Kurt Gearhart Memorial 2 p.m.
7 Youth Group 6:30 p.m.
8 Contemplative Prayer
6:30 p.m.
9 Presbyterian Women
9:30 a.m.
Session 6 p.m.

MAY CALENDAR cont.

10 Women's Bible Study
9:30 a.m.
After School Mentoring
3:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.
11 Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.
13 United Conservatory of
Music Trio Concert 7:30 p.m.
14 Mother's Day
Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Recital
3 p.m.
15 Contemplative Prayer
6:30 p.m.
16 Pub Theology 6:30 p.m.
17 Women's Bible Study
9:30 a.m.
After School Mentoring
3:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.
18 Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.

MAY CALENDAR cont.

20 Food Distribution 8 a.m.
21 Deacon Sunday
Youth Group 6:30 p.m.
22 Contemplative Prayer
6:30 p.m.
23 Ministry Meetings
(date and times vary)
24 Women's Bible Study
9:30 a.m.
After School Mentoring
3:30 p.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.
25 Bell Choir Rehearsal
6:30 p.m.
Thursday Bible Study 7 p.m.
27 United Conservatory of
Music Cello Recital 5 p.m.
28 Youth Group 6:30 p.m.
29 Memorial Day - office
closed
31 Women's Bible Study
9:30 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m.