



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

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Jesus at the Playground

by The Reverend Dustin Maddox, Associate Pastor

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Matthew 20:16



Do you remember lining up to pick teams to play games as a child? Typically, there were two team captains -- usually the best two at whatever game you were playing. They would stand before the line, evaluating which people would give them the best chance at winning, and then take turns making their picks. The most athletic or most popular kids got picked first, then those with less talent or popularity and, finally, there was the last person to be picked. This was a position you did not want to find yourself in. For me at least, being the last person picked to play threw me into an existential crisis of childhood: was I not good enough; popular enough? Did the person choosing not like me?

This sort of thing isn't something we leave behind in childhood. We carry with us into adulthood both the privilege and the insecurity this social dynamic created for us in childhood. On the surface, it's merely choosing teams; but upon further examination, it reveals a worldview: a particular way of seeing and evaluating the world and those who occupy space and time. This type of behavior is reinforced in a myriad of ways as we grow up, as hierarchies of value, competence, and privilege are created and then reinforced in the world around us.

Furthermore, this way of interacting with the world forms "secular salvation stories": a comprehensive meaning-making narrative saving me from meaninglessness through comparison, competence, and control. According to the great spiritual theologian Henri Nouwen, the salvation story of Western culture is shaped by the powerful currents of three 'I am' statements that define our reality: I am what I do; I am what I have; I am what other people say about me. These three questions become the adult version of lining up to choose teams, where we are categorized based on how successfully each of us are able to answer these questions. What it means to live "the good life," therefore, is to do something important that brings you wealth and adulation.

This raises questions: What if I don't have anything? What if I can't do anything? What about the things others say about me that are mean, hurtful, and vitriolic? Who am I when I lose what I have, or I change what I do, or when people aren't talking about me? These questions can be spiritually and psychologically devastating.

Jesus, on the other hand, does not play the game according to the values of the world. Jesus

doesn't even ask these questions. As a matter of fact, Jesus flips this whole thing upside down, defining greatness in the Reign of God by pointing to the least, the lost, the left out, and the lonely. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus redefines "the good life," saying the poor in spirit, the meek, the humble, and those who hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness are blessed, and God is on their side.

Paul, the great interpreter of Jesus, says God uses what is weak in the world, that which flies in the face of conventional wisdom, to shame the wise according to the logic of the world (1 Cor 1:27). Jesus' death is actually his victory, his humility is his glory, his servanthood is his power.

I, for one, need to be constantly reminded of the logic of Jesus because I am quick to measure myself against who other people are, or who other people think I should be, rather than who God has made and called me to be in Jesus. Yet, I think this includes and transcends a mere personal application. I think the logic of Jesus is meant to define the people of Jesus: that is, the church called into existence in order to function as a church under the rubric of the Reign of God. This means young and old, male and female, white and black and brown, liberal and conservative, employed and unemployed and underemployed, rich and poor, clergy and laity, sinner and saint, believer and skeptic are all to be unified around the life of Jesus (Galatians 3:28). If this is true -- and I believe in the core of my being that it is -- then we must re-evaluate our interactions with one another and lovingly scrutinize them for anything that doesn't look like Jesus and that is not characterized by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

I invite each one of us, then, to look around and see whether our social interactions both throughout the week and on Sunday mornings are marked by the logic of the playground, or by the life of Jesus? Some suggestions to expand your social interactions on Sunday mornings in the way of Jesus:

- Might you invite someone out to lunch after worship who you don't know or normally talk to?
- Could you sit down on a bench with someone new?
- Is it possible for you to invest some of your time with a group of people who are younger (if you're older) or older (if you're younger)?

I am confident the more we do this, the more we become like Jesus, and the more University Presbyterian Church bears Christ's love to the world around us.

Because the reality is: Jesus invites everyone to be on his team.

Grace + Peace, Pastor Dustin

Unsung Heroes of the Bible



We hope you have been enjoying the latest sermon series with our look at the Unsung Heroes of the Bible--the lesser known characters, ordinary people God used in extraordinary ways. The series continues through September 2.

These sometimes amusing, sometimes strange, stories of our ancestors in the faith will both comfort and challenge us to trust God can use us in our time and place. A couple UPC's unsung heroes will even be sharing their preaching gifts with us during this series. Come see and hear what ordinary people can do with God's help.

Between services, join Dawn Lawrence in Majesty Theater to talk about insights gained from the lives of these heroes and how we can bring their inspiration into our lives.

Women's Retreat: Made in the Image of God

by the Women's Retreat Planning Committee



The Women's Retreat is September 21-23 at Calvin Crest Camp and Conference Center. *Made in the Image of God* is the theme by which each woman is invited to discover her own unique preferred spiritual connection with God and come away with a mind-body prayer skill for dealing with stress.

Through reflections on three foremothers of our faith: Mary of Nazareth, Miriam of the Wilderness Journey, and Mary of Magdala, this year's facilitator, Denice Leslie, retired United Methodist pastor, encourages each person to find herself in the full reflection of God. Prayer, worship, fellowship, crafts, and

the great outdoors revive and enliven us during our weekend together and send us home renewed by our experiences together.

The group mission project for the Retreat is assembling Homeless Bags. (See the article below to find out how you can help even if you are not going to the Retreat.)

Cost is \$180 for a shared room and \$190 for single occupancy. **CHILDCARE IS PROVIDED.** Scholarships are available so cost does not keep any woman away who wants to attend.

To register, come by the table on the patio between services or contact the office.

We're Celebrating-50 Years!

This next year marks UPC's 50th Anniversary so it is time to celebrate!

Kick-Off Celebration | Sunday, September 9

We're holding special worship services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. and be gather in the evening for an all-church potluck together.

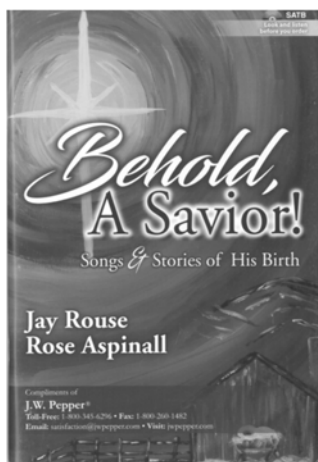


50th Anniversary Planning Committee

We are looking for a few more people to help plan some activities to both honor our past and help us look onward to the future. Individuals are needed to help plan social activities, assemble a written history of our congregation, and celebrate what makes UPC so unique. If you are interested in lending a hand, contact Committee Chair, Lisa Matson at heartlisa@att.net.

Summer Music Happenings

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



Who is ready for Christmas...or at least the cooler weather? I know I am ready for both! This past month, I have been celebrating Christmas in July as I browse the Christmas catalogs sent out by music publishers. I enjoy thumbing through new music available for the upcoming seasons.

While I hope many of you have been enjoying a summer break from the school season and finding times to rest, there has still been a lot of music making at UPC. We have welcomed a variety of musicians in our worship services. It has been a pleasure having the summer choir on occasion and other guest instrumentalists to help lead our worship. We even played host to the United Conservatory of Music's summer music camp, where nearly 20 students of all ages gathered to make music on our campus. As always, I am thankful for our ability to provide a musical space for our greater community.

Something else that happened this summer was needed maintenance on our baby grand piano. Purchased by UPC in 2006, but built in 1998, our beautiful Yamaha C6 baby grand has been in need of a little bit more than a regular tuning. At 20 years old, it was time to do some voicing and regulating. Without getting too detailed, a few of the fixes included making sure all of the wooden moving parts work correctly, all of the keys play evenly, and re-shaping the felt hammers which hit the strings (after 20 years of hammering, they tend to compact, giving a dull character to the sound). Thankfully we were blessed by memorial gifts to the Music Department to cover these repairs. We celebrate the restoration of this beautiful instrument's capabilities.

In harmony, Cactus

Special Called Congregational Meeting | August 19 @ 10:15 a.m.



Join us for a special Called Congregational Meeting for the sole purpose of electing an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. We have been so blessed to have Dustin serve as our Temporary Associate Pastor this past year, and we are excited to begin the official search process to call an Installed Associate Pastor in accordance with the Book of

Order and in partnership with the Presbytery of San Joaquin. Dustin's current contract is in the process of being renewed for 2019, and he is being encouraged to apply for the Installed position as well. Please be in prayer as we continue to discern God's leading together.

The slate will be sent in a member mailing before the meeting.

Homeless Bags: How You Can Help

by Women's Retreat Planning Committee

The congregation is invited to support this year's Women's Retreat mission project of assembling homeless bags with donations of the items on the list below. After the September retreat, the bags will be available in the Narthex of the church and on the table under the window in the Great Room for you to take to hand out to homeless people.

Please place donated items in the bright striped collection boxes provided in both the Narthex and Great Room. Financial donations are also gladly accepted if you want us to shop for you. Make your check out to UPC, mark it for "homeless bags" and put it in the collection plate or bring it to the office. Thank you for helping out.



ITEMS FOR HOMELESS BAGS: Bottled water, bars of soap (unscented preferred, place in zip lock bags), toothbrush/toothpaste, energy bars/granola bars, peanut butter crackers/cheese-cracker cups, fruit cups, foil pack tuna/chicken, pop-can soups, pairs of new socks, small wash clothes, small sized sunscreen, chap stick, small boxes of band aides, small tubes of antibiotic ointment, and maxi pads.

Richard & Betty Braddy Honored



Our very own Richard Braddy (right, in the photo) and his beloved late wife, Betty, were honored by the Presbytery of San Joaquin as the Inaugural Recipients of the Ruling Elder Honor Roll Award for their many years of faithful service to the PC(USA) throughout California. The honor is well deserved and we are privileged to have Richard worshipping and serving at UPC.

Update from the Boards

by The Reverend Renn Serna, Senior Pastor

The past few months have been productive ones for our church leadership boards.

Session participated in a one-day planning retreat in mid-July to talk about what it means to fully live into our call to joyfully share God's boundless love with all in our community without limitation, exception, or condition, and to look at what core values define us as a congregation. We also spent time dreaming about how we want to celebrate our 50th Anniversary and making some concrete plans for the coming year.

The Board of Property and Finance has been busy caring for our beautiful campus and anticipating some of the upcoming maintenance needs. We know, for example, the roof of the sanctuary needs to be replaced in the next two to four years, and the parking lot is in need of refinishing. We are starting to plan for some of the anticipated maintenance needs and think creatively about how to fund these needs in the future. BPF has also been working hard to ensure our transition to the Synod's financial services goes smoothly, and so far, we have been pleased with the process.

The Nominating Committee, who is responsible for putting forth a slate of willing volunteers to serve in leadership in the coming years, is in the middle of their busy season. They have been working hard to discern the gifts of our members and the needs of the church, and help our members find meaningful ways to serve. Please be in prayer for them, and for those being asked to serve, as they discern together God's will for our church. The final slate will be presented to the congregation at our November Congregational Meeting to be voted on by our active members.

Finally, many of our ministry committees are busy planning for the fall. The Women's Ministry Team is hard at work getting ready for the Women's Retreat in September. The Southeast Asian Ministry is preparing for their October fundraiser luncheon. Presbyterian Women have been crafting away in preparation for the Holiday Boutique in November, and Congregational Care is planning for our next ice cream challenge for Sunday, August 12 at 5 p.m. Yum!

Thank you for all of your hard work making this possible. It is such a joy to be a part of the UPC family!

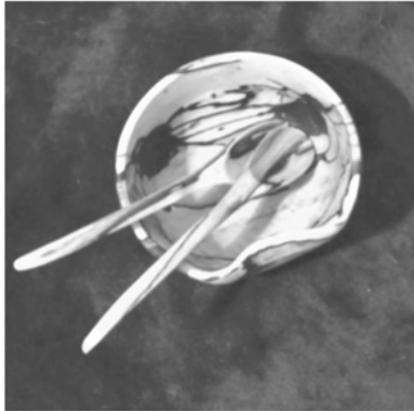
Love, Pastor Renn



Save the Date | Lao Lunch and Raffle Coming October 7

Enjoy an authentic Lao Lunch prepared by our own Lao Congregation. The lunch includes Lao sausage, stir fry vegetables, egg rolls, and gelmarklen (a sauce). We hope you'll plan to come ready to enjoy a homemade meal to support the work of the Southeast Asian Ministry.

There will be a Raffle for items from Laos which will conclude with choosing the lucky winners on October 7. Raffle tickets will be sold on three Sundays: September 9, 16, and 23, and you can view the raffle items then too. Pictured here are the wooden salad bowl and servers and the Pandau quilt being auctioned. A crochet shawl will also go home with a lucky winner.



Financial Transition



It has been a little over a month since we moved our accounting and bookkeeping services to the Synod of the Pacific, and we wanted to let you know things are smoothing out. We have continued to be able to accept donations, pay bills, and care for our staff, and while there are still a few details to work out, we have been very impressed with the service so far. Thank you to those who joined us for our Fireside Chat last month to talk about the transition. If you have any further questions about changes that are being made, please do not hesitate to contact the church office.

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. The Group continues their annual summer book study reading *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* by Martin Laird (found on Amazon). For more information, [click here](#) to email Cathy Wingert.

Women's Bible Study: The group which meets Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. is on their summer break but begins again September 12, studying Isaiah. They welcome you to join them when they begin meeting this fall and since they are starting a new study it is a perfect time to do so. For more information, [click here](#) to email Laura Lindegren, or call her at 299-1838.

Thursday Evening Bible Study: The group is back from their break on August 2. They meet for study Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room. They invite you to join them as they begin studying the Gospel of Luke. For more information, [click here](#) to email Ceci Johnson.

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 August 6 at 7 p.m. For more information, [click here](#) to email Pastor Tedd, or call/text him at 906-1438.

Presbyterian Women (PW): Presbyterian Women do not meet over the summer but kick off their program year with their monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 11 at 9:30 a.m. in the Great Room. Remember, too, the PW Boutique is right around the corner on November 10-11. They welcome your assistance and ideas at their ongoing boutique workshops on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. For more information on PW, the Boutique, or summer Boutique workshops, [click here](#) to email Ruth Kallenberg.

Pub Theology: Join the discussion on Tuesday, August 21 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sequoia Brewing Company, on the 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, [click here](#) to email Dustin, or text him at 288-0083.

UPC Food Pantry: The monthly food distribution will take place on Saturday, August 18 at 8 a.m. 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 for August is canned protein (tuna, chicken, beans etc.).** Bring your donations to the Narthex on Sunday mornings or drop them at the office during the week. Would you like to help stock shelves on Thursday mornings? Text Dustin at 288-0083.

Taizé Contemplative Worship: A Taizé contemplative, musical prayer service is held the third Sunday of the month in the Sanctuary. Worship in the Taizé style this month on August 19 at 6 p.m. For more information, [click here](#) to email Cactus Harris.

Clippers: Clippers do not meet in August. Watch this space for their first fall get-together.



2018
Ice Cream Freeze Off
Sunday, August 12
@ 5 p.m.

Potluck Finger Food
followed by:

Ice Cream Tasting

Categories include:

Chocolate-based

vanilla-based

Fruit

Non-Dairy

Crazy/Unique

Sign up between services,
and feel free to submit several flavors

University Presbyterian Church
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(559) 439-8807

Non-profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT No. 34
Clovis, CA 93612

Sunday Worship Schedule for August

9 a.m. Classic Worship | 11 a.m. Contemporary Service

11 a.m. Lao Language Service | except the 1st Sunday

Pastors

The Reverend Renn Serna, Senior Pastor

The Reverend Dustin Maddox, Associate Pastor

Return Service Requested

Mailing Label Here

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August Birthdays, Anniversaries, & UPC Calendar

August Birthdays

- 1 Bao Bosavanh
- Trish Orr
- 2 Becky Bartsch-Bergthold
- 4 Jo Dull
- Alysia Lyons-Hudson
- 6 Kathleen Smith
- 8 Roland Bergthold
- Kathy Pinto
- 9 May Fengthong
- David Taylor
- Dorothy Wood
- 12 Jonathan Bruce
- Linda Jean Voth
- 13 Jim Quinn
- Sharon Stanley-Rea
- 15 Leonard Deal
- 16 Charles Small
- 20 Phyllis Neal
- Kristi Thwaites
- 21 David Knudson
- 22 Melinda Cunningham
- Jane Reid
- 24 David Manion
- 26 Bill Hoey
- 30 Fran Lazarus

August Anniversaries

- 7 Craig & Jennifer Howells
- 8 Paul & Ursula Masquelier
- 9 Tedd & Dione Lyons
- 15 Bob & Sue Smith
- 16 Todd & Carrie Minturn
- Souk & Thim Phothivongsay
- 21 Charles & Sharon Small
- 23 Ron & Becky Souza
- 25 Ray & Jo Dull
- John & Linda Jean Voth
- August Calendar**
- 1 Youth Summer Program
- 6:30 p.m.
- 2 Thursday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
- 5 Summer Choir Rehearsal
- 10:15 a.m.
- Family Movie Night 5 p.m.
- 6 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m.
- Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m.
- Intercessory Prayer 7 p.m.
- 7 Deacons Meeting 6:30 p.m.
- 8 Summer Youth Program
- 6:30 p.m.
- 9 Thursday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

August Calendar cont.

- 12 Summer Choir Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m.
- Potluck & Ice Cream Freeze Off
- 5 p.m.
- 13 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m.
- Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m.
- 14 Session Meets 6:30 p.m.
- 15 Back to School Pool Party
- 5 p.m.
- 18 Food Distribution
- 8 a.m.
- 19 Congregational Meeting
- 10:15 a.m.
- Summer Choir Rehearsal
- 10:15 a.m.
- Taize Service 6 p.m.
- 20 Contemplative Prayer
- 6:30 p.m.
- 21 Pub Theology 6:30 p.m.
- 23 Thursday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
- 27 Boutique Work Day 9:30 a.m.
- Contemplative Prayer 6:30 p.m.
- 28 Ministry Meeting
- (times vary)
- 30 Thursday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.