

## MIDWEEK MESSAGE

March 26, 2014

Words to Consider: *“As dry flour cannot be united into a lump of dough, or a loaf, but needs water, so we who are many cannot be made one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes from heaven.”*

Irenaeus

## THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



Revolution of Love – Our Lenten Journey

- ❖ **WOMEN'S BRUNCH** will be **Thursday, March 27 at 10 AM** at Hobe's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. All women of our church community are invited. Please join us.
- ❖ **CHURCH CHOIR** on **Thursday, March 27 at 7:30 PM** in the Parlor.

iSing

girlUp | UNITED NATIONS



**You are Invited!** On **Thursday, March 27, 7:30 PM** in the Fellowship Hall our **iSing Silicon Valley Girlchoir** 7-12 graders will raise their voices for Girl Up, a United Nations sponsored charity that supports the education of adolescent girls in disadvantaged countries. The iSing girls are in charge of planning and carrying off this event, singing solos, and baking delicious desserts to serve that night. Go girls!

- ❖ **SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 10:00 AM Worship & Sunday School:** *“Not from this Well,”* Pastor Rick preaching. **11:30 AM: Adult Spiritual Formation:** Revolution of Love, Part 1. We continue to consider our hunger emphasis for Lent.
- ❖ **BIBLE STUDY, Tuesday, April 1, 10:30 AM,** at the Terraces of Los Altos at Janet Maxwell’s apartment. The address is 373 Pine Lane, #2106, Los Altos. Let Pastor Rick know if you need transportation.
- ❖ **MEN’S BREAKFAST, Wednesday, April 2 – 8:30 AM,** at **Palo Alto Breakfast House,** 2706 Middlefield, Palo Alto. All the men from our Church family are welcome.

### UPCOMING AND ONGOING EVENTS



**SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING FOR MARCH.** This is the time of year that we take our **America for Christ** Offering. The theme this year is *“Seek Justice”* based on Isaiah 1:17 which “is a biblical reminder that Jesus’ public ministry was all about advocacy, engagement and compassion for people in need.” The America for Christ Offering supports the work of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies thus giving us the opportunity to participate in the Lord’s work of seeking justice for those in our churches and communities.

The America for Christ Offering 2014 supports our churches, neighborhood action programs, advocacy, training, and opportunities for adults and youth to participate in home mission through Volunteer Ministries. Our donations work to help transform lives across the United States and Puerto Rico. Please give generously. To date we have received **\$538** toward our goal of **\$850**.

### THE TRIAL OF ONE BORN BLIND



### Happy 100th Birthday, Norman Borlaug

"Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world," —Norman Borlaug (March 25, 1914 – September 12, 2009)

Dr. Norman Borlaug—scientist, father of the Green Revolution, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient— would've been 100 years old today.

Borlaug's work transformed modern agriculture and fed billions of people in the process. His development of high-yield, disease-resistant varieties of wheat and other crops doubled the world's food production, prevented famine across the globe, and showed the world that ending hunger is within our reach.

In honor of Borlaug's great achievements, there will be celebrations of his life around the world today, including the unveiling of a Borlaug statue in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. The state of Iowa, Borlaug's birthplace, commissioned a 7-ft. bronze statue in his likeness to be displayed in the National Statuary Hall Collection.

Borlaug had special ties to Bread for the World, and served as an early board member of the organization. "No single person has contributed more to relieving world hunger than our friend, the late Norman Borlaug," said Bread for the World President David Beckmann, in 2009. "Norman was truly the man who fed the world, saving up to a billion people from hunger and starvation."

The World Food Prize, which Borlaug founded, is collecting pledges from people around the world, who have vowed to continue Borlaug's work, in ways both big and small. Some have said they will reduce their personal food waste, others have said they will work with small-scale farmers.

"Nothing could pay greater homage to the life's work of Norman Borlaug and his Green Revolution than to eradicate hunger around the world," said Beckmann, who received the World Food Prize in 2010.

While the number of hungry people has dropped significantly over the past two decades, 842 million people continue to struggle with hunger every day. So, advocacy on any scale, whether calling your member of Congress and asking him or her to protect domestic nutrition programs, or sending handwritten letters in support of U.S. food aid reform, is an important, worthy tribute to Borlaug's legacy.

Photo: Norman Borlaug in 1964, scoring wheat plants for rust resistance in wheat breeding plots near Ciudad Obregón, Sonora, northern Mexico. (The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center/CIMMYT)



## JOYS AND CONCERNS

### Joys:

- ✚ Birthday joys: Liza Spiridon (April 1)
- ✚ Chuck Syverson for a good visit and safe travel home; they will return in May; for the work of Pastor Rick and God's blessings for the future of our congregation
- ✚ Sachiko Berry in celebration of Earl Knechtel's birthday; she delivered our card to him

### Concerns – New:

- ✚ Pastor Rick for the family and friends of three Baptist leaders who died recently – Jane Wright, the wife of J. Bryant Wright who pastored FBC San Carlos for many years; Dick Ice, former President of ABHOW; and Rick Mitchell, long-time member of Shellridge
- ✚ For Thelma Parodi who is at home with a fractured leg
- ✚ For Doug Lee traveling mercies on a 3 week trip
- ✚ Carolyn Shepard for the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and all the good work they do for just and equitable living, especially their ministry with people with disabilities at the same time she celebrates our sensitivity to disability challenges
- ✚ For the difficult situations in CAR, Syria and the Ukraine
- ✚ For Oleta whose surgery is now scheduled for April 10
- ✚ For all those affected by the crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370
- ✚ For the communities devastated by the landslide in Washington state

### Ongoing:

- ✚ For Bob Towner at Manor Care in Sunnyvale and for Lucille
- ✚ Laura Garcia for Janice with health concerns
- ✚ For Ruth Clark, Earl and Virginia Knechtel, Ruth Owen, Carl Schilling
- ✚ For Ruriko Uda's congregation, Izumi Parktown Church, in Sendai , Japan
- ✚ For Ramesh Kumar and the ministry of Balasore Technical School in India
- ✚ For our sister church in Corinto, Nicaragua
- ✚ For refugees and all victims of war and disaster everywhere
- ✚ For the work of EHP and the Opportunity Center with the homeless and hungry
- ✚ For the well-being of our church: wisdom and guidance for our leaders and its future
- ✚ For the economies of which we are a part (global, national, state, local)
- ✚ For the care of the earth
- ✚ For the peoples of the world striving for freedom and dignity
- ✚ For peace in a war-torn world, food for the hungry, homes for the homeless, justice for the abused and oppressed, and hope for the future
- ✚ For those affected by indiscriminate acts of violence and for the adoption of measures to heal our communities of all the many ways these make us less safe and less free



SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2014

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**"Not from this Well"**  
**Pastor Rick Preaching**

Lectionary reading for the Week: Exodus 7:1-17; Psalm 95; **JOHN 4:5-42**; Romans 5:1-11. (Focus scripture for this week is in bold.)

Jesus' longest-recorded conversation with anyone is the one he has with the Samaritan woman. On many counts it seems extraordinary that it took place at all: a man and a woman in public; a Jew and a Samaritan; a transient and a citizen; one offering living water and another caught in the ceaseless rounds of drawing water at the well. But God's will was at work. John often gives the reader a clue that something very important is about to happen. For example, before feeding the multitudes, John says Jesus knew what he was about to do (6:6), and prior to healing the blind man Jesus says that blindness provides the occasion for the works of God to be manifested (9:3). In this case, Jesus "had to pass through Samaria" (4:4) -- a need seemingly unrelated to geography or time; it is of divine origin. In other words, in what follows God will be revealed.

The conversation begins with Jesus' request for a drink of water. However, through the ensuing exchanges the transient Jew offers more than did Jacob, the patriarch with whose name the well was associated. In fact, Jesus' knowledge of the woman convinces her that he is a prophet from Jerusalem and prompts her to defend her own tradition of worship on Mt. Gerizim. To her surprise, Jesus does not debate her, he declares that true worship of God is not geographically defined but is defined by God's own nature, which is spirit and truth. In other words, God transcends sex, race, tradition, place and liturgy. If this traveler from Jerusalem is greater than Jacob, is a prophet and yet more than a prophet, the woman has but one category left: Messiah. In her mind, a God whose nature it is to embrace all people in all places is a Messiah.

There is some question as to Jesus' response to her talk of a Messiah. The Greek text reads: "I who speak to you am" (v. 26). Should "he" be supplied ("I am he") or is Jesus, by saying "I am, identifying himself with God? Whatever the proper rendering, the woman runs, not with the answer but only the question, to the city and gives the call to faith, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"

If any wish to be fascinated by this woman, let them be so now. She is a witness, but not a likely witness and not even a thorough witness. "A man who told me all that I ever did" is not exactly a recitation of the Apostles Creed. She is not even a convinced witness: "Can this be the Christ?" is literally "This cannot be the Christ, can it?" Even so, her witness is enough: it is invitational (come and see), not judgmental; it is within the range permitted by her experience; it is honest with its own uncertainty; it is for everyone who will hear. How refreshing. Her witness avoids triumphalism, hawking someone else's conclusions, packaged answers to unasked questions, thinly veiled ultimatums and threats of hell, and assumptions of certainty on theological matters. She does convey,

however, her willingness to let her hearers arrive at their own affirmations about Jesus, and they do: "This is indeed the Savior of the world." John immortalizes her by giving to her witness a name which is the very term with which he began the Gospel. The Samaritan woman, the Greek text reads, spoke "the Word." (Fred B. Craddock, "The Witness at the Well," *The Christian Century*, 3-7-1990, religion-online.org).

Prayer: *Enduring Presence, goal and guide, you go before and await our coming. Only our thirst compels us beyond complaint to conversation, beyond rejection to relationship. Pour your love into our hearts, that, refreshed and renewed, we may invite others to the living water given to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### A NOTE FROM PASTOR RICK

This Sunday we will resume our consideration of hunger as a Lenten concern. If you have had some experiences of dealing with hunger and the hungry over the past few weeks, please be ready to share those in Adult Spiritual Formation on Sunday. Above you will find a tribute to a remarkable man named Norman Borlaug who devoted his life to issues of hunger. I am grateful to Hugh Satterlee who first introduced me to the work of this remarkable man. We may not be able to accomplish what he did in a lifetime but we can surely do our part. By the way, if you notice a strange odor around the campus, we engaged in a ritual of "burning bread" at last Friday's potluck. If you're wondering, ask Hugh. It relates to our hunger emphasis.

In worship we will spend time immersed in another of those remarkable stories from the gospel in which Jesus encounters an unlikely character and proceeds to unfold the gospel before them. This week it is "The Woman at the Well." A Samaritan woman in conversation with a Jewish rabbi – unheard of! And yet the encounter breaks barriers and saves lives. Perhaps we might have some of that "living water" that transforms life.

See you Sunday at 10 AM for worship and Sunday School. Bring someone along to share the Lenten Journey with you and stay for Adult Spiritual Formation.

God grant us more light, more love, more life as we journey together. *Pastor Rick*



**MORE LIGHT...MORE LOVE...MORE LIFE**