

NEWSLETTER

News of Presbyterians in San Benito, Santa Clara
Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties
Vol 24, No2
March, 2004

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From the Interim Executive Presbyter

Not long ago I participated in an ecumenical event where one of the protestants asked the Catholic priest "What's the difference between a homily and a sermon?" The priest replied, "A homily interprets the scripture and it used to be that if the bishop told you to preach on a particular topic that was a sermon." That reminded me of an article that appeared many years ago in Modern Liturgy Magazine. It was entitled Preaching: Characteristics of a Good Homily. The author was a Jesuit priest The Rev. Michael E. Moynahan. I think he has some very provocative and helpful things to say about preaching—both for those who proclaim the Word of God and for those who gather to be fed by the Word of God. Following are some excerpts from his article.

"The homilist should always ask "Do I believe in what I'm saying?" Your words should ring true to your experience. Therefore, if you ever hope to ask the people of God to make room in their lives for the Word of God, you must be willing to struggle constantly and make a place in your life for it...to wrestle with the Word of God, experience the awkwardness it brings as well as the forgiveness, nourishment and healing. If I, as homilist, have experienced the Word of God as good news in my life, I cannot keep it in. I simply have to communicate it.

Please avoid heresy. Some people's enthusiasm and propensity for unbridled spontaneity has spawned some of the most bizarre heresies ever to hit the church. Don't be afraid to do a little study by way of preparation for your homily both exegetically and dogmatically.

A homilist should not be in the answer business. Don't just try to give solutions or crank out clichés. Be willing to share the questions that the Word of God poses for you. Answers don't hang around too long. Questions can haunt you forever and good ones can lead you beyond the world you know to new ones as yet undiscovered.

We always have to reflect on what we do. How does one evaluate preaching? Take account of what effect your preaching has on the community. Do people just come up and give you positive strokes after the liturgy and walk away forgetting completely about the Word of God? Or do you find your congregations making room in their lives for God's Word? Do they take the good news seriously? Do they give the gospel expression in their lives? Do you see more loving service in your community? Are people's needs being ministered to more often by all the community? These are some of the signs that should gradually become present. If they are, you are mysteriously somehow allowing the Word of God to do what it is supposed to do. Keep it up!"

Blessings, Jane

THE PILGRIMS OF IBILLIN

The Pilgrims of Ibillin is a group which supports and promotes the peacemaking work of Father Elias Chacour, an Arab, Christian, and Palestinian Melkite Catholic Priest and educator. Father Chacour has built schools (the Mar Elias Educational Institution: Kindergarten through College) in Ibillin, Israel (in the Galilee) and at these schools, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish students can study and grow up together and learn to live as brothers instead of enemies. Father Chacour believes that peace will only come in Israel when people of all three faiths learn to live together and realize they have much in common.

Father Chacour will be speaking April 18th at 7:30 pm at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. Mark your calendar!

FROM THE MODERATOR

Lent is a time for personal reflection and spiritual preparation. Part of that personal reflection and spiritual preparation can be the practice of a particular discipline. Such a discipline can include more time spent in prayer, meditation, Bible study and daily reading. As part of your Lenten discipline, I would like to suggest that you read the children's book *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth* by Douglas Wood. This is a simple yet eloquent story of a world where truth is shattered and the people fight over the broken pieces, which results in separation and disharmony. Read it to find how the people's broken truth is mended and how healing begins to take place. Then reflect on a world where differences are overcome and we see ourselves as one people, prepared to share

God's love with those around us.

My prayer for you is that the 40 wilderness days of Lent will be nourishing and fruitful as you prepare for the springtime of our faith, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithfully,

Claudia

A NEW PASTOR IN OUR PRESBYTERY

The presbytery welcomes Karla Norton who has been called to serve as pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church of Santa Cruz. Karla attended San Francisco Theological Seminary and earned her M.Div. Both she and her husband Wayne grew up and met in the Santa Cruz area 30 years ago. Their daughter, Casey, is a freshman at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. "We are very excited about the opportunity to serve the Lord in our hometown", says Karla.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Our congratulations to The Rev. Dr. Paul Masquelier, (the past Executive Presbyter of San José Presbytery) who on February 13, was elected to serve as the next Vice Chair of the General Assembly Council (GAC). He will serve with the Rev. Nancy C. Kahaian, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Michigan City, IN, who was elected chair of the GAC at that same meeting. Their one year terms will begin at the close of the GAC meeting on June 24. Paul is serving in his second term on the GAC, serving in the class of 2006.

DEATH OF THE REV. KENNETH STAFFORD

Long time minister member of the San José Presbytery Ken Stafford died on February 13th. In the years he was part of the San José Presbytery he served at 1st Presbyterian Church, Santa Clara; Bonny Doon Presbyterian Church, Santa Cruz, and Calvin Presbyterian Church in San José. Ken also served on the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona for many years. He is survived by his wife Gertrude and two children.

CALENDAR

SPRING GATHERING OF PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Wednesday, March 17th—9:30 am to Noon

First Presbyterian Church of Hollister

Learn more about domestic violence and celebrate the opening of

Emmaus House with Shower of Gifts

Contacts: Carol Holsinger (650) 326-3146

Leona Reif (408) 683-2521

STATED MEETING OF PRESBYTERY

Saturday April 3, 9:00 am through lunchtime.

Taiwanese American Presbyterian Church

12850 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga

Docket and Map to be posted on www.sanjosepby.org

PRESBYTERY OF SAN JOSE PASTORS RETREAT

Monday April 26 (begins with dinner) - Thursday, Apr 29 (through lunch). San Damiano Retreat Center in Danville, CA, about 45 minutes east of SF, hour and half north of San Jose. The Rev. Dr. Libby Vincent will be the resource person . Registration form will sent to all pastors.

A RETREAT DAY FOR WOMEN IN THE PRESBYTERY

Saturday, May 1—9:00 am to 2:30 pm

Woodhaven Retreat Center

Willow Glen United Methodist Church

1420 Newport Ave, San José

Registration fee: \$30.00 if received by April 12th, else \$35.00

Lunch included. Retreat limited to 50 participants so register early! Registration and

Questions: Claudia Hamm (408) 356-6665

OUR VISION

Called by God as a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) the Presbytery of San José exists to serve and be a resource for the health and growth of the Presbyterian congregations within our four counties.

Our Vision is:

To support our congregations in reaching out to all people in the name of Jesus Christ;
To challenge a diverse community to hold fast to the foundations of our faith;
To build a diverse community unified by the unique gifts of the Holy Spirit for the great work of the church.

We call upon God's grace and help for the fulfillment of this vision.

**SERVING YOU
THROUGH THE PRESBYTERY
OF SAN JOSÉ**

[Elder Jane Odell](#), Interim Executive Presbyter
[The Rev. Joseph \(Joey\) Lee](#), Associate Executive Presbyter for Program
[Beverly R. Raynes](#), Administrative Assistant to Executive Presbyter
[Jim Tennyson](#), Program Support Staff
[Diane Case](#), Staff Accountant
[Bill Palmer](#), Refugee Ministry Coordinator (408) 395 0916
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