

A Place of worship, nurture and service for God's people of all ages

February 2012

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February Birthdays

Kathleen Leonard	2/7
Alder Shibley	2/8
Joe Engler	2/9
Don MacKinnon	2/12
Susan Horton	2/15
Gary Guttridge	2/21
Bill Varitz	2/28



Happy
Anniversary!

February Anniversaries

Deb & Jim Odell	2/22
Karen & Joe Engler	2/22



Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:15 AM Hymn Sing
10:30 Worship
11:15 Fellowship
Deadline for next newsletter:
February 20

February Church Events

- February 11:** joint session and deacon planning retreat at Whispering Pines in Estacada, 9 to 3
- February 12:** Christian Education meeting immediately following worship
- February 19:** Transfiguration Sunday (celebrating the Lord's Supper during worship), Feast of Fools immediately following worship (potluck and silly talent show at the Grange); see story page 4
- February 22:** Ash Wednesday service with imposition of ashes, 7:00 p.m.; see story page 4
- February 24:** Eastminster Friday volunteers
- February 25:** Leadership Fair, First Presbyterian Church, Portland
- February 26:** Eastminster Sunday volunteers
- February 29:** Knit Nite, 4:30 to whenever

Pastor's Perspective

Sister Stevie, an 80-year-old Dominican sister, was known around Madison, Wisconsin as "the Catholic rabbi." She was my first Hebrew teacher, and I was her last student.

Although Sister Stevie taught me a great deal about Hebrew and the theology of language, the most important thing she taught me was about grace. We met in her office each week to go over my lessons, talking through any necessary corrections before covering new ground. At the end of every session, I'd find myself looking at my exercise sheet, noticing where I'd made mistakes and mentally tallying my errors. Invariably I was interrupted by Sister Stevie singing out, "Eighteen right!"

That's grace, I think. Where I see what I've been doing wrong—tiny errors, the occasions of my learning—Sister Stevie sees all that I'm doing right.

Shame or Grace?

Sister Stevie came to mind as I read an article in Alban Institute's online weekly, entitled "Shame-Less and Grace-Full." Author Karen McClintock tells of her childhood ballet lessons, in which she learned not "grace" but "shame." Instead of leading her students as "grace-fully" as her art, her teacher's mean-spirited teaching imparted shame. They weren't doing well enough, weren't properly executing steps or conveying the right feelings.

McClintock believes her dance experience is like the "doctrine of shame" so often taught in the church. Rather than creating communities of grace and joy, we often focus on sin and our failure to achieve perfection in living into our baptismal promise to "try to be like Jesus." We focus on "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" and forget the message of the immeasurable riches of God's grace.

It's a strange mindset for a religion that starts out saying we are created "in the image and likeness of God," and that God declares that creation—us—"very good."

Opting for Grace

We could stand to take a page out of Sister Stevie's book and acknowledge what we've done "right," not just where we've failed. It's a subtle shift, but McClintock helps with a story:

"In worship one morning, members of the choir, dressed in their beautiful robes, processed into the chancel area, shuffled into place so

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that everyone could see the director, and after hearing their pitch, began to sing. The women in the front row started singing the melody and the men in the back row came in, but they were obviously not in sync. As they plowed ahead for a few bars, their faces became flushed and distorted, their shoulders drooped, and their breathing grew shallow. The choir director waved her hands to stop the pianist and looked up at them. The choir members all held their breaths like children about to be scolded. What would she say? This could have been a moment for shame. She might have sighed and said, ‘Let’s try again,’ exposing her frustration and their failure. Instead she said, ‘I want to start over, because I have heard you sing this song *beautifully!*’ They stood up taller, they breathed more deeply, and when they began again, it went off without a hitch. They were singing from a place of grace. They were led by a grace-based leader.”

McClintock ends her story about being a grace-based leader (and person of faith) by saying, “You can become one too.” Friends, this is what makes the “good news” such good news. Whether we are official church leaders (pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, musicians) or just “ordinary rank and file,” we don’t have to “get it right” in order to model and experience grace. Sister Stevie’s attitude is a good one. “Eighteen right!” is more likely to open our eyes to grace than is “Two wrong.”

See you in church.



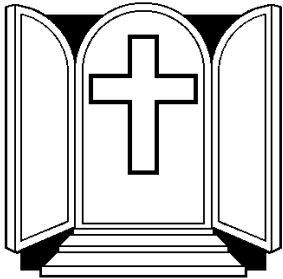
Lectionary Readings

February 5 (SINGLE-MINDED PURPOSE): Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23

February 12 (FOCUS AND PRIORITIES): 2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

February 19 (Transfiguration Sunday; communion): Mark 9:2-9; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Kings 2:1-19

February 26 (First Sunday of Lent): Mark 11:12-26; Psalm 25:1-10; Genesis 9:8-17



Springwater's new front entrance door opens our welcome to all

This project is an extension of efforts to make the front entrance to our church accessible to all, including those with physical disabilities. The new steps, handrails, and ramp comprised the first stage of this project with half of the funds being given by the Presbytery's *Opening Doors Task Force on Disabilities*. 50% of the funding for new door was paid for in the same manner.

Neither of these projects would have been possible without the generous contributions from Marge and Bill Varitz. Their on-going generosity has enabled these projects as well as many other efforts, most recently being the purchase of our new pews.

Bill and Marge's history with Springwater is a long and rich one and we are blessed to count them among our friends. They are living examples of Matthew 6:19-21, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*"

Many thanks, Marge and Bill!



February Church Events

What is all this foolishness about?

Sunday, February 19 will be "Feast of Fools". This is Springwater's tradition of getting silly before the time of Lent. Start thinking of any silly songs or sayings you would like to perform. This is a time to just be silly and enjoy each other's company after sharing a potluck meal. Look for a sign-up in the coming weeks.

Ash Wednesday – February 22

After getting all of our silliness out, we will have an "Ash Wednesday" service at 7:00pm on Feb 22. This service will include the imposition of ashes and a short reflection time.

I hope to see all of you at these services as we prepare for the Lent season which ultimately leads up to the glory of Easter Sunday.

Where has all the music gone? Choir will begin practicing again in late February.





At Springwater's annual congregational meeting on January 15th, elder Peter Sturman, chair of the Christian Education Committee, was asked how he is able to confidently ask church members to volunteer their time to teaching, leading and attending Christian Ed classes and events. He replied by reading from this essay by Richard Rohr, published in the guide, *Preparing for Christmas*.

Breaking Open the Word

Breaking open the word of God cannot depend on theologians or people who have studied professionally. If that would be true, then 99% of humanity will never have access to God's Word. Today Christians are gathering in small groups to share the Word of God.

These faith sharing groups are directed not by a professional teacher or an expert, by rather what we call a facilitator or animator – one who holds the group together and knows what questions to ask to keep people searching and praying. The groups read a Gospel text, sometimes three times, and then they ask questions: What threatens them in the text? What makes them excited about that text? What is really challenging in that text? What do they think Jesus was really talking about? What was the world situation when Jesus told that particular story? Are there any comparable situations today to which this text might apply?

Whatever gave us the idea that one little select group of similarly educated people would best understand what God was to all people? The Word of God is being given back to someone other than those who are employees of the religious system. What we are finding is that the Word of God with a vitality, a truth and often a freedom that is exciting, much more challenging and often making us wonder if we have ever understood it before. Just try it. This will not lessen the authority of the church or the Scriptures, but only increase it because we will have spiritual adults in our midst. Spiritual adults do not overreact or think dualistically, but they listen and learn and grow.



How Cuba Changed My Life

Don't go to Cuba unless you want your life to be turned upside down. Mine certainly has been changed. My outlook on what is important and how life needs to be lived, continues to grow and change as I remember the days of the trip, the work we did and the people I met.

Cascades Presbytery has been involved in the Cuban Partnership for over a decade and many of the original participants have continued to go on every trip they could. They have formed a deep relationship with the leaders of the Presbyterian Church at Camajuani. The relationship is one of deep mutual respect and love. Just to see the looks on their faces when we arrived was to understand that we were colleagues and friends and that we all had an equal and common goal. We did not go as benefactors who had money to give and therefore power. We went to maintain a long standing relationship of sharing our love for Christ and sharing our resources of experience and understanding.

So, how has my life changed?

- I will never take a steaming hot shower again without remembering that Cubans take mostly cold showers with almost no water pressure. Getting a good rinse depends on having a bucket available.
- I will never eat a meal again without remembering the flies that accompanied every bit of food that we ate. I learned to close my eyes to the flies that were ever present.
- Need to buy something? In Cuba you walk to the store. Even if you have a car, you might not have gasoline or tires. Most cars are relics from the US that were built 40 or 50 years ago. Parts are not available. Our group rented several different buses. They were dented, they needed paint, they had problems with engines and they were a real adventure to ride in. The drivers often stopped and let people get on and ride because that was the only way they could get to the store or the doctor's office. These pick-up riders always tried to pay, but the driver wouldn't let them because they didn't have money anyway.

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- Home for a Cuban family is very small and crowded. In Camajuani, we visited people in their homes, we were welcomed with open arms, hugs and kisses and food. At first, I didn't want to accept their offers of food, coffee or juice. They were so poor that it seemed wrong to eat their food. But it was so important to them to be hospitable, that I eventually realized it was a gift to them to let them show us their joy that we had come to see them and talk to them. I have learned that hospitality comes from the heart, not the pocketbook.
- Getting into my own bed when I got home was heavenly. It was a far cry from sleeping in a Cuban bed. The trick to sleeping in Cuba is to be so tired that you are asleep before you hit the bed. Only then can you sleep with the bed-boards sticking up into your back.

There is so much to say and I know that each day will bring new memories to mind and new understanding. I hope I can convey the feelings to all who are interested. Some of us who were in Cuba will be at Presbytery and perhaps we can help you to get excited like we are.

Maybe you can go next time.

Kathy Scott





Springwater Presbyterian Church

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Economics 101 and Love

Things are amiss. There is a high rate of unemployment in our country. The wages of workers have stagnated, more and more people are losing their homes through foreclosure, and there is a vast government debt. Economic inequality in America is higher now than at any other period within a hundred years. Reactions to these pressures range from the T Party to the Occupy Movement.

There are ways to meet these challenges. Foremost is prayer. Matthew 25:35 is clear. "For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in."

There are three primary avenues to implement the results of our prayers and meet these inequalities.

First, Congress could enact legislation that would apply added benefits to lower the inequalities. The recent history of this contentious Congress demonstrates that this is a slim chance.

Second, banks and other financial institutions could make more money available to meet the inequality needs. However, even though the federal government recapitalized the financial industry in 2008, the banks are, even now, cautious lenders, so that even though the interest rates are low, credit is relatively scarce.

Third, people can help. If everybody took some of what they have and gave it to people who have less, the results would be earthshaking. This would mean that they would give up some of their stuff, and give up some of their time, because they care. That is the meaning of love.

*Springwater
Currents*

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