



CONGREGATIONAL TIMES

Newsletter of EGCCUCC



Volume 1, Issue 7

August 2014

"What I See..." by Pastor James

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write in a book what you see..." (Revelation 1:10-11)

A Ministry of Encouragement

As I scanned the posts from my Facebook friends today, I saw one from Heather. She's been at her new church for less than a year now, and is settling in there nicely. Her post shared her joy in the simple act of someone bringing her a cup of hot chocolate. It may have cost this person a couple dollars and ten minutes, but it surely made Heather's day, and I'm sure she was able to turn that thoughtful gift into ten blessings she could do for others. As I think about this, I'm convinced that we underestimate the power of a thoughtful gift or word of encouragement to those who have experienced failure after failure, as well as to those we consider very successful.

There is no shortage of failures among God's people and our brothers and sisters today. Certainly, those who strive to lead any group will find they are failing at one thing or another, and they simply hope for more successes to offset those failures. We think of Moses and

Aaron, Saul and David; all of them had their times of trial in their work. There is another biblical character who is not as well-known, but who can teach us an important lesson. Throughout the book of Acts, a man named Barnabas pops in and out of the picture as a companion and friend of Paul. Barnabas is one of the first Christian teachers in Antioch and to the gentiles. We see in Acts 4 that the fledgling Christian community in Jerusalem was struggling mightily; out of money, out of ideas, and out of energy. They were desperate until Barnabas returned from Cypress where he had sold his home, and he brought all of the proceeds to Jerusalem to support the work of these early believers. He certainly lived up to his name, which translates to "son of encouragement".

Later, in Acts 11, we see how Barnabas recruited Saul of Tarsus – an outcast because of his persecution of Christians – to lead the churches in Asia Minor and eventually let Saul (Paul) take over the leadership of these communities. On their second missionary journey, Barnabas and Paul discussed bringing a young disciple, John Mark, who had deserted them earlier. Paul didn't

(continued on Page 2)

In this issue:

- *"What I See..."* by Pastor James, Page 1
- *Moderator's Corner*, Page 3
- *Revitalization: Attendance Growth*, Page 4
- *Upcoming Events*, Page 5



Council Happenings

- A proposal has been received from a preschool owner who is interested in opening another school in the Elk Grove area. A team has been appointed to meet with her to negotiate the terms of an agreement for the use of our facility. She would like to open the school in January 2015.
- A \$600 loan was taken from the Memorial Fund to cover the June operating expenses. Even with the loan, the General Fund had a loss of \$72 for the month, and a YTD loss of \$2,800. The 2014 budget was made with the expectation that we would have a preschool by June of this year. If the income and expenses continue this way, we will only have enough money for another 3.3 months. Deep cuts were made during the budgeting process, so there is little else that can be done now. The council discussed several approaches to dealing with the problem, including the possibility of decreasing Pastor James to part time.
- A Stewardship committee has been formed and will hold their first meeting on 7/19/2014. The chair of the committee will become a member of the council.
- The council approved the purchase of four tables for the Fellowship Hall using money that was recently donated specifically for this purpose.
- Judy Bello was appointed to the Board of Deacons.



Restaurant Fundraisers Raise \$677!

Hasn't it been fun to meet with your friends and family at local restaurants once a month while also participating in a fundraising event for our church? I know that I have found it a great way to invite friends from outside the church to join in the fundraising, too! So here's an update on the extra money that has been generated by the last eight

events – a total of \$677.30! That's an average of \$85 each time we do it! And that's \$85 that would never have come into our offering plates any other way. So pat yourselves on the back, and make plans to enjoy more restaurant fundraiser evenings with your friends and church family!

Parsonage Water-Wise Landscape Conversion

The un-greening of the Parsonage front lawn is progressing, and we have removed more plants which will be replanted once the total mulch has been put in place. We will be using a solarization technique on part of the lawn with black

plastic, but limiting the area, as it is pretty unattractive, while the weeds are being burned out. This project is about 25% complete. Stay tuned; we will have some encouraging photos in next month's newsletter.

"What I See..."

(continued from Page 1)

want any part of this man he considered a quitter, while Barnabas insisted they include him. So Barnabas took Mark with him, and they sailed to Cyprus where they established the Christian Church of Cyprus.

Encouragement is SO important! While in seminary, one woman in our home church would give Mary and me an occasional financial gift. It was always very private, timely, and quite generous, and often included a card that read "Wolf be gone!" Her gifts meant so much more than just the ability to pay for food or books. It was also a life-giving affirmation of her faith in us and in the God we serve together. I'll always be grateful to Ms. Elly for her encouragement, as I likely would never have made it through seminary without it!

Who is in your life that might need and appreciate some encouragement? Probably every single person! The invitation is for

us to pray for all of our friends, neighbors, and relatives, and seek God's will for meaningful encouragement. It may be a friendly phone call or a "Wolf be gone!" check. It might be a hug and a cup of hot chocolate. It might simply be an honest word of thanks and sharing how that person makes your life better.

Once again, it is Paul who wrote this to the Romans (15:5-7): *May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

Let us become a congregation of powerful encouragement!

Blessed be,

Pastor James

Moderator's Corner by Dick Ober

The Future is Not Behind Us

The biggest obstacle to the future is the past.

Idolizing the past is a block to embracing the future.

It is said that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat history.

Also

those who idolize the past are doomed to keep *trying* to repeat history.

"In the fifties we did it 'this' way and the church was full of people. If we could just do that again"

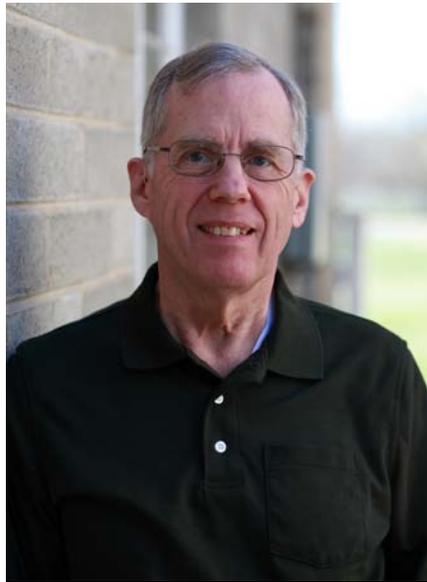
Well, in the fifties you could do it "this" way, or "that" way, or "any" way, and the church was full of people. That was then.

This is now. Now you can't just open the doors and watch the people stream in. Now You can't just do it "any" old way. That is, you can't do it any "old" way.

So here we're learning some new ways. It's not always easy, but we're doing it. We really are.

Where this church has come from is good. It was a good place to be in the past. Where this church is going is good. It will be a good place to be in the future. Right now we are in a time of transition and that's a good place too.

What we are creating now, a future generation will look back on and say, "Those were the good years." Unless they're smart enough not to idolize the past.



Help Wanted

The Christian Education Team is still looking for someone who will commit to leading a Sunday School lesson once each month. It will take place during the sermon portion of the service. This is very similar to our previous "story time," but instead of a story, a lesson is provided to the leader to read to the children present, and if there is extra time, there are easy activities to keep the little ones engaged. The total time commitment is about 25 minutes, and requires very little preparation work. Could you be the one to foster a loving environment for our kids? If so, please speak to Steven Hurley.

Volunteer Spotlight

This month, we turn the spotlight on all of the wonderfully dedicated members who faithfully provide, prepare, serve, and clean up our weekly after-church Fellowship Hour! What would it be like to finish worship and walk over to the Fellowship Hall to find nothing to eat or drink? The great generosity, accomplished planning, and delicious cooking that these servants give us is truly

wonderful! Let's make a point not to take their service for granted. Thank them personally next time you see them! Thank you to (in alphabetical order) Linda Addlesperger, Cindy Celey-Butlin, Roxanne Fisk, RoseMary Fowler, Marlene Inman, Mary R. Kosko, Anni Maynard, Mary Kay Rose, Barbara Russell, Angie Schubert, Lucy Smoot, and Mary Wenger.



Women's Fall Retreat

Last fall, we hosted the Disciples/UCC Women's one-day retreat. Leota Lampshire was the organizer, and Rev. Dr. Paula Pocielcha led the day. We had interesting break-out sessions, a lovely lunch, and a lively time. This fall, the retreat will be held at the Loomis Basin Christian Church on Saturday, October 4, 2014. The same team will be organizing and leading the day. The theme is "Spirit Sisters Living Soulfully." Like last year's "Spa for the Soul," this retreat promises a day where we can reconnect with our spirits and draw strength from a community of sisters. Ask Mary Richardson Kosko about how to sign up!



Roadwork Ahead!

The Elk Grove Water District is installing a brand-new 8-inch water main right down Melrose Avenue. The work will be done during construction hours (early morning to mid-afternoon), Monday through Friday starting July 21st, and could last for 2-3 weeks. We're told that if you come to the church during the week, you will still be able to get through, although you may experience a brief delay.

They are asking that we NOT park on the street, but we have plenty of parking in our lot which will also have a few cars from Dr. Gjerde's dental office. This should not be a problem at all for those who come to church in the evenings or on the weekends.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. We look forward to this upgrade to our water service!

Revitalization: Attendance Growth

One key factor to our revitalization efforts is to increase the number of people who attend church on a weekly basis. We have an average of 35 people who attend each week, and our goal is to increase that number to 50 people per week within the next 18 months!

How will that be possible? We got new a-frame signs for Elk Grove Blvd and Elk Grove Florin Roads. We advertised our church in the Elk Grove Citizen the last 4 months. We've made small changes to the worship service, based on congregant's suggestions to make it more dynamic and appealing to a wider range of people. The Pastor is personally inviting first time visitors to have coffee with him within days of their visit so he can better introduce our church to them. We have it on our 2015 to-do list to have a booth at some local festivals like the Harvest Festival or the Dickens Street Faire.

Is that going to be enough? No it won't. One of the things we learned during one of our Revitalization seminars is that the #1 way to increase attendance is for current members to invite people to church. When is the last time you

reached out to someone to invite them into our faith community? Maybe it's a neighbor who is lonely, or the grocery clerk you see each week. Do you know a former member who has stopped attending church? Maybe that is someone you could reach out to. One of the things we all like about our church is that "everyone is so friendly" ...let's share that friendliness and joy with as many people as possible. Did you know that we have church business cards you can take to give out to people you ask? If you need some, ask Barbara in the church office. Why not challenge yourself to bring someone with you to church in the next 60 days? An easy way to start is to bring friends to some of our social events so that they can see how friendly we are outside of "worship."

Coming Soon – In August, the Revitalization Task Force will be putting up a new bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to keep everyone informed about the goals of our revitalization efforts and the things that are being done to reach them.



Supper Club

This month's Supper Club celebrates Hot August Nights at the home of Celia Scott (8617 Brodie Court, Elk Grove, 95624) on Friday, August 22nd at 6 p.m. A pasta dinner will be provided, including Italian pastas, green salad, and garlic bread, with iced tea and lemonade and dessert. Celia has a swimming pool, so bring your suit and take a dip to cool off. Mark your calendar for our Hot August Nights Supper Club!

RSVP Required - \$15 per person - See Steven Hurley to Sign up!



Back to School Backpacks for Marshallese Kids

The Men's Breakfast group is currently sponsoring a service project to create backpacks for the kids in our sister Marshallese congregation. The drop off box for donations will be located in the Sanctuary until August 10th. Please help by donating items such as

compositions books, loose leaf paper, pencils, crayons, folders, erasers, glue sticks, and more! Small monetary donations may also be given to Co-Moderator Roger Tinsman. Please see the flyer for more information!



Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars for the following August events.

Friday, August 1 st	Family Outing to River Cats Game at Raley Field
Sunday, August 3 rd & 17 th	Communion Sundays
Saturday, August 9 th	Scrapbooking fundraiser, all day from 10 a.m.
Sunday, August 10 th	Potluck Fellowship Hour after church Marshallese Backpack Drive donations due
Tuesday, August 12 th	Church Council, 7 p.m.
Saturday, August 16 th	Men's Breakfast, 8 a.m. All Church Work Morning, 9 a.m. to noon
Monday, August 18 th	Restaurant Fundraiser at <i>El Jardin</i> , 4 to 9 p.m.
Friday, August 22 nd	Supper Club – Hot Summer Nights at Celia's Pool (see article, page 4)

Save
the
Date

August Birthdays

August 7th – Pamela White, Jaclyn Celey-Butlin; August 9th – Matthew Knaak;
August 18th – Randy Guttridge, Betsy Knapp; August 21st – Jason Fisk, RoseMary Fowler;
August 23rd – Marlene Inman; August 28th – Laura Bemis; August 31st – Dianna Nicholson



August Anniversaries

August 1st – Jim and Linda Addlesperger; August 12th – Cliff and Mary Wenger, Angie and Dan Schubert;
August 14th – Dick and Mary Lou Ober; August 26th – Rob and Debbie Champion



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
9624 MELROSE AVENUE
ELK GROVE, CA 95624

God is still speaking,

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9624 Melrose Avenue, Elk Grove, CA 95624

www.elkgroveucc.org

Office phone: (916) 685-4825 and e-mail: egccucc@yahoo.com

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Tuesday-Friday (please call ahead, just in case)

Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Wednesday Prayer Circle, Knitting Ministry: 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.