



Sunday Celebration Notes from Jerry Stinson

Celebrating God's Love Every Sunday at 10 am.

This week there will be special music by Carlos Carlos, and we will have a chance to honor and say goodbye to Sheep's Kin director Nic Chaffee during the welcome time at the beginning of the service. Nic has directed our high school band since 2003 and has done a great job. Sheep's Kin has not only been part of our Sunday morning services, but the young musicians have played at church dances, annual meetings and other special occasions. The number of high school youth in the band has diminished in recent years, and Nic's position was one of those eliminated in response to our deficit.

My sermon will look at the experiences of the slaves freed by Moses who then found themselves wandering in the wilderness. I will relate that biblical story to the experiences of Alix Kates Shulman as she dealt with love in adversity. I will talk about embracing life fully, even with all of its limitations. The sermon's title actually comes from a surprising source: the tough-minded philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

SERMON: *Amor Fati*

The Rev. Jerry Stinson, preaching

READING: Exodus 15:20-25; 16:1-4

LITURGIST: Mr. Doug Emslie

Next week, on Mother's Day, Jerry Stinson's sermon will be about "The Church, Keeper of Myths, Including the Conventional Family."

In Sunday School This Week

Theme: Enfolded by Love **Scripture Focus:** John 10:11-18

In Adult Education This Week: Christianity in Jeopardy!

Sundays at 8:30 am in the Klar Rooms, upstairs in Pilgrim Hall

Have you ever considered how much trivia is in the Bible? Come to the Adult Education class on Sunday, May 3 and test your Bible IQ (instead of just doing it on Facebook). Just like the television game show, there will be categories such as "Is There a Doctor in the House?" "What's My Line?" "The Number 3" and

Music on Sunday

For this first Sunday of May, the Sanctuary Choir will sing "Music and Song." The music is by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) and is excerpted from the Mass in B-flat Major (*Theressienmesse*) which the choir performed at the Mozart Festival in January and at Cal Heights Methodist in April. This movement is *Gratias agimus tibi* and features solo quartet and choir. Heather Chambers has created a new text, not a translation, which she has set to the music of Haydn. The choir gets to sing all of the beautiful solo passages, as well as Haydn's choral sections. We are so blessed to have such wonderful creative people like Heather in our music program. See you in church.

Dr. Leland Vail, Minister of Music

many more. Questions will range from easy to hard, come from the Old and New Testament, and cover the subjects of people, places and events. Whether you're a Bible scholar or a biblical novice, the material will be as entertaining as it is informative! Join in the fun and say, "I'll take the Bible for \$200, Alex!"

First Church Café Open This Sunday

By Libby Tigner

Our new first Sunday of the month adventure continues! The First Church Café is open for your dining pleasure this Sunday, May 3, immediately following our Sunday service. Follow the crowd downstairs to the dining room, where you'll find an array of delightful quiches waiting for you. This month the lunch is being prepared by Brad Lara-Gagne of Bootstrap Catering.

The cost for lunch is \$8, and a special buffet table for children 10 and under is available for \$4. Correct change is greatly appreciated. Following lunch, from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m., the Christian Education, Diaconate, Outreach, Parish Life, and Stewardship and Finance Board and the Communications Committee will meet. Child care is provided through 1:30 p.m.

School Age Outing May 3

By Wally Hoeger

Mark your calendars for May 3. We will be making a splash during our pool play time at the Alpert Jewish Community Center after church. The cost of admission is \$6, and all ages are welcome to attend the event. If you are interested in attending this event, please contact Wally at 552-436-2256 ext, 226 or email whoeger@firstchurchlb.org



We Did It - Thanks!

By Janet Rhodes

Over 100 dozen Easter Eggs were donated to the Drop-In Center. The Easter bowl was overflowing with beautifully decorated eggs. The guests were awed by the gorgeous lily cross, the wonderful food, the homemade cookies and the eggs. The smile on their faces as they picked not one, not two, but three eggs just for themselves was wonderful. As a matter of fact, there were enough eggs to put in goody bags the guests could take with them. Some kids wanted "lots" so they could have an Easter egg hunt in the park. Thank you to everyone for being so generous. You helped make Easter very special for the poorest of the poor.

www.firstchurchlb.org

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Reiki Healing Circle

By Tina Datsko

As spring enlivens us with its manifestations of new growth, consider spending a peaceful afternoon sharing loving intentions. On Saturday, May 2 there will be a Reiki healing circle in Sacred Space from 2 to 5 p.m. Reiki, which means "spiritually directed universal life force energy," is a spiritual practice of asking for and receiving energy to heal ourselves and others. During the Reiki circle, there will be time for introducing ourselves, sending Reiki to loved ones, and giving and receiving Reiki. If you are planning to come or have questions, please contact Tina Datsko at 562-421-2826 or tmdatsko@verizon.net.



Senior Minister's Blog

Jerry Stinson's blog article this week will be about his unease with President Obama's position on Afghanistan. He will offer a different approach to the issues of terrorism and that nation.

Go to the blog and not only read the article, but add your comment as well: jerrysjusticejournal.blogspot.com.

How Crafty Are You?

By Cathy Chambers

Plans are underway for a craft fair to be held this fall.

Details still need to be ironed out, but the idea proposed is to sell handmade products with the funds raised going to help church members or hourly employees who are feeling the pinch of this economic climate. With the oversight of the Congregational Care Committee and upon the recommendation of the ministers, funding might be used to help with tuition or retraining costs, to pay for online job hunting workshops in our computer lab, or for emergencies.

In order to gauge the "craftiness" of our congregation, I'd like to hear from you if you're interested in participating. All ages are welcome. Please find me (Cathy Chambers) after church on Sunday, or contact me by email (cathcham@otis.edu).

Parents' Night Is Moving to Saturday This Month

By Wally Hoeger

Our May Parents' Night Out will be moving from the first Friday to the first Saturday. We did this so that we could have our PNO party at the same time the grown-ups are having their Dos de Mayo party. The time will be from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and include dinner. There will be lots of fun games and crafts, including a return of box city. Please RSVP by calling 562-436-2256 ext, 226 or emailing whoeger@firstchurchlb.org.

Don't Forget the Dos De Mayo Festival!

By Debbie Byrne

Our Dos De Mayo event is being held this Saturday, May 2 at 6 p.m.. It's a potluck, so bring a dish to share along with your own place setting and serving utensils, preferably non-disposable to help in our effort to be "green." We have a speed mixer and Mexican Train dominoes planned for after dinner, so it should be a lot of fun. You don't need a ticket and the event is free, so just show up.

Parents' Night Out will be held at the same time, so childcare will be provided. Please RSVP to Wally Hoeger (whoeger@firstchurchlb.org) for Parents' Night Out.

From the Board of Outreach

SSI Has Been Cut

By Ben Rockwell

The Board of Outreach voted on April 21 to place this letter in The Pilgrim. A sample letter of support such as that requested in this letter is available at the Outreach table at the coffee hour starting on Sunday, April 26.

Our state legislature and governor have finally gone and done it. They have cut half a month's income from the lowest-income persons in the state, those with disabilities and seniors living on SSI payments. What that means is no Christmas for those individuals, or no money to pay the co-pays for their necessary medications, or no telephone, or no TV, or no more new cloths, or no more eating out with friends, and no entertainment--other than playing solitaire until the cards wear out.

The legislators took their own pay increases, then turned around and stole food and medications — even Christmas — from our poorest seniors and persons with disabilities. Is this the great compassionate country that takes care of our citizens who are reaching the last years of their “productive” lives? We must rectify the injustice done here. These citizens have been living on 60% of the purchasing power of those who were on SSI in 1973. Now 50% of a month's income per year has been taken away.

Before the elections, all the legislators tried to tell us they were compassionate and caring. Where did all that compassion and caring go? What are we going to do to fight this injustice?

And where do we go from here? Has it come to a Nazi state, in which seniors and persons with disabilities are the first to suffer, looked on as simply worthless? Rather than suffering alone, undefended and facing slow and painful death, shall we rise up and fight these injustices?

We need to write and call the legislators and Governor Arnold “The Terminator” Schwarzenegger. Tell them these state cuts to SSI are unconscionable. We shall not see our citizens suffer at the hands of the rich out-of-control legislators and state department heads.

Please help our poorest and most vulnerable citizens to have some quality of life.

Torture Awareness

The Board of Outreach voted on April 21 to place the following information in The Pilgrim:

As most of us know, the torture issue has risen to the very center of media attention. Speaking for us as a member congregation of NRCAT (the National Religious Campaign Against Torture), the Board of Outreach is recommending two things for the congregation to consider:

1) That members of the congregation examine and sign the NRCAT petition supporting a Commission of Inquiry into the details of the Bush Administration's use of “enhanced interrogation techniques” since 9/11. Copies of this petition will be available starting April 26 at the Outreach table during the coffee hour. It is also accessible online at www.nrcat.org.

2) That during this difficult time of national re-evaluation of this issue we once again install our “Torture is a Moral Issue” banner on the bell tower during the months of May and June. (The Church Council will be asked to affirm this proposal at their April 28 meeting. June has already been declared “National Torture Awareness Month” by NRCAT.)

Thanks

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the Diaconate for including gluten-free wafers for communion in early April. It is a much appreciated gesture. And heartfelt thanks also to Karen Cannon for making a special salad for me at the lunch served after church the same Sunday.

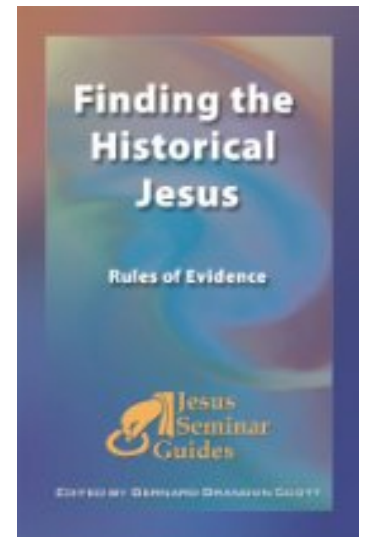
In addition to thanks, I'm writing this is for education, illumination and awareness. I want to comment on a very real need amongst us. Recently, I was diagnosed with mild to severe food allergies. Unfortunately, my list includes several basic, widely used items, so I have become aware of the need to educate and raise awareness.

I'm still learning a new way of eating and relationship to food. I have a new respect for those who eat a vegetarian or vegan diet, for those who must eat a restricted sugar diet for whatever reason, or for anything outside the norm. When a church meal is potluck, I can and will bring something I can eat. When a church meal is catered, I appeal to those providing to be aware of food allergies and other food restrictions and when possible, offer options or at the very least to list ingredients. I have been amazed to learn how many of us are al-

Theological Study Group Meets May 12, 7 p.m.

The Theological Study Group will meet Tuesday, May 12 at 7 p.m. to discuss *Finding the Historical Jesus: Rules of Evidence*, edited by Bernard Brandon Scott.

How does one begin the search for the historical Jesus? What are the rules or criteria for sorting through the evidence? These are the most important questions in the quest of the historical Jesus, and their answers are not obvious. In *Finding the Historical Jesus*, six veterans of the Jesus Seminar help readers negotiate this thicket. Robert Miller develops criteria for differentiating between history and belief. Robert Funk examines the oral character of the Jesus tradition. Stephen Patterson takes readers through the issues involved with the Gospel of Thomas, while Robert Fortna looks at the significance of the Gospel of John, and Joseph Tyson explores the dating of ancient texts. The volume concludes with a survey of the history of the quest by Lane McGaughey, who shows how the criteria have emerged and shifted over the years.



Free Mother's Day Opera Concert from Justin Rudd/CAT

RSVP now to reserve a seat at the free Mother's Day opera performance in Belmont Shore at Bay Shore Church. The concert will be held on Sunday, May 10 at 3 p.m. Only 450 seats are available for this 90-minute performance, followed by a complimentary reception to meet the artists. To RSVP, send an email with your first and last name and the number of guests in your party to Justin@JustinRudd.com with the words "Opera RSVP" in the subject line. You will receive a confirmation. More information is available at www.justinrudd.com/opera.html.

lergic to something.

This is one more area of learning how to live well in community. My eyes have certainly been opened!

Dottie Wine



The Pilgrim
241 Cedar Avenue
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TO:

“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”
[Grace Allen]

Parish Concerns

Your thoughts and prayers are requested for Earl Albertson (David Cartwright’s mother’s partner); Nic Amstutz (Ronda Holman’s nephew); John Baney; Jack Harrington (Jan Harrington’s husband); Doris Leeper (Jim Deaton’s friend); Laura Phipps (Joe Ernst’s cousin); Ruth (Jerry Cannon’s sister); Barric Paddon (Jim Snelling’s cousin); Michele and Dante Wilson.

To put someone on this list, put a note on the Parish Concerns board on the Third Street landing or contact Ruth Warkentin in the church office.

Online Calendar

Don’t miss out! Check the online church calendar at www.firstchurchlb.org/calendar.html for details about all church events. You can use the online calendar to email invitations to friends to church events and to set up emailed reminders to yourself. Just click on any event to see information about it.

You’ve got a date ...

Saturday, May 2

6 p.m. Dos de Mayo Potluck, Speed Mixer & Mexican Train dominoes; Parents’ Night Out

Sunday, May 3

11:30 a.m. First Church Café
12:15 p.m. Meetings: Christian Education, Diaconate, Outreach, Parish Life, Stewardship & Finance, Communications

Tuesday, May 5

7 p.m. Caregivers Support Group; Drop-In Center Committee

Wednesday, May 6

7 p.m. Worship & Arts Ministry Team (offsite)

Thursday, May 7

6:45 p.m. Our Whole Lives

Saturday, May 9

11 a.m. Golf Tournament

Afghanistan: Obama’s Iraq?

Sunday, May 3, 1-6 p.m.

USC, Mark Taper Hall of Humanities
3501 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles

Featuring Sonali Kolhatkar and Tom Hayden

With additional US troops on their way to Afghanistan, it’s again time to speak out and to act, while preparing to carry out a long-term struggle to dismantle the war system. This conference, sponsored by Interfaith Communities for Justice and Peace, will address multiple dimensions of the expanding war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Suggested donation: \$25 (no one turned away). Register online: www.icujp.com or call 213-626-2265.

Becoming a Member of First Church

Whether you have been attending for a few weeks, a few months or several years, we would like you to consider becoming a member of First Church. When you are ready to take that step, please call or email Rev. Jerry Stinson at 562-436-2256, ext 230 or revjstinson@verizon.net.