



FROM
THE
PASTOR



June is often a month of endings and new beginnings. Students graduate or are promoted from school, ending one season of life and beginning another. June is a month of weddings, ending a season of singleness and beginning a season of marriage. And so it is with Harvest. This month, we complete our sermon series on the Fruit of the Spirit, and I trust we have a deeper appreciation and desire for God's Spirit to produce this fruit within us.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Later this month, we will once again read through the Psalms together. The Psalms are the Prayer Book of the Bible. Look for the reading schedule soon. I was moved last year by the great variety of Psalms, about the vast breadth of human experiences described so poignantly in the Psalms. They help me pray, and I hope they will help you as well. See the article beginning on page 4.

We had such a great time at the Last Sunday Potluck last month that we will continue the new tradition this month. It is an opportunity to eat together and fellowship together after church, and to get to know one another. The food, as usual, is fabulous! With lots of chocolate for dessert! Join us in the Chapel on June 28 right after the worship service concludes.

After your input and much prayer and discussion, the session decided to end the twice a month communion service, and instead return to the once a month, first Sunday of the month pattern.

Several months ago, we were approached by a Spanish-speaking congregation to use our facility. We agreed, with several conditions, one of which was their obtaining Liability Insurance. After meeting in the CE room for six weeks, they were unable to obtain the insurance, so we were forced to rescind their room usage.

However, we were approached by a second Spanish-speaking congregation. They had been meeting in Riverbank, and the building they were using was being sold. We met with them, prayed with their leaders, checked references, and upon the receipt of their proof of insurance, we extended the offer for them to meet in our facility. They will be meeting in the Chapel for worship on Sundays from 2:00-5:00 p.m., on Tuesday evenings for prayer, and Thursday evenings for music practice. They will begin worshipping here on June 7. Let us pray from fruit from both ministries, and God be glorified.

We are excited about their presence. Many people in Ceres speak Spanish, and we are not equipped to reach them with the gospel. This congregation is equipped to do so. In addition, they are ready, willing and eager to work with us in joint ministry, like VBS and work days around the church. The church's name is Iglesia Cristiana Emanuel. We look forward to new partnership in ministry with them.

VBS is approaching, and it is our desire to reach children in the neighborhood with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The dates are July 6-10, and the theme is “The Wacky World of Water”, quite appropriate in this season of drought. We need your help, even if only for a few hours or one day during the week. Please contact Cyndy Cawley (clover_creations@hotmail.com) or Beth Stochl (bstochl23@gmail.com)



Finally, with the drought, the session has decided not to water the front lawn at Harvest. Even with the thousands of gallons we use during the summer, the grass is barely less brown than normal. So we are watering once a week for a few minutes, to keep whatever dust down. We are doing our part to conserve water, and we are reminded to pray for rain (and snow).

Let's continue to seek God together, and see when He can do in and through us.

And let us bear the fruit of the Spirit. SDG

Pastor Jim

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jim'.

Some upcoming events:

June 7—Communion Sunday

June 17— Session Meeting

June 21—Father's Day

June 28—Last Sunday Potluck, right after Worship in the Chapel

What's Happening at Harvest?

We are still looking for a bookkeeper. Kathy Ramos, Office Manager at Geneva Presbyterian Church in Modesto, has been helping us. She is writing checks, and helping to simplify our accounting. Do you know anyone who would be interested in doing this about four hours a week? It is a paid position, and training will be provided.

JUNE 2015

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	2	3	4 9:30 a.m.— Alpha Circle 5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice 6:30 p.m.— Choir Practice	5 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's	6
7 10:30 a.m.— Communion	8 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	9	10	11 5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice 6:30 p.m.— Choir Practice	12 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's 1:00 p.m.— Deacons Meeting	13
14 10:30 a.m.— Worship	15 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	16	17 Session Meeting 6:00 p.m.	18 5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice 6:30 p.m.— Choir Practice	19 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's 6:00 p.m.— Mariners	20
21 10:30 a.m.— Worship  Fathers Day	22 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	23	24	25 5:30 p.m.— Praise Practice	26 10:00 a.m.— Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's	27
28 10:30 a.m.— Worship 11:45 a.m.— Last Sunday Potluck	29 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	30				

Praying the Psalms

1. The Psalms teach us to pray through imitation and response. Real prayer is always an answer to God's revelation. The Psalms are both prayer and revelations about God — the perfect ideal soil for learning prayer.
2. The Psalms take us deep into our own hearts 1,000 times faster than we would ever go if left to ourselves. ... Religious/moral people tend to want to deny the rawness and reality of their own feelings, especially the darkness of them. The secular world has almost made an idol of emotional self-expression. But the Psalmists neither “stuff” their feelings nor “ventilate” them. They pray them — they take them into the presence of God until they change or understand them.
3. Most importantly, the Psalms force us to deal with God as he is, not as we wish he was. “Left to ourselves, we will pray to some god who speaks what we like hearing, or to the part of God we manage to understand. But what is critical is that we speak to the God who speaks to us, and to everything he speaks to us... the Psalms train us in that conversation” (from Eugene Peterson's Answering God).

Additional Note: The Imprecatory Psalms can be confusing with their cries for vengeance upon Israel's or the psalmist's enemies. Basically, realize that calls for justice are absolutely right, and remind us how important God's holiness and justice are. But secondly, recognize that the Psalmists did not have the justice of God completely satisfied in Christ. Thus we pray for our enemies, not wish them ill. Yet we as Christians can pray these Psalms as longings for social justice and hatred against the “power and principalities” behind the world. —from Dr Tim Keller's January 2006 MCM teaching notes, © 2006, used with permission).

Suggestions

1. Try to understand a Psalm before praying it. A commentary is particularly helpful to understand the context of the Psalm. What was the Psalmist going through when he wrote this particular Psalm? The Psalms also point to Christ. Where might this psalm fit into his life? (see example below).
2. Linger over a Psalm. Is there a particular verse that is particularly relevant to your life right now? Chew on it. Read it aloud over and over, with a different emphasis on each word. Why is this word chosen or important here? What difference would this make in my life if I believed this with all my heart? If I applied this to my life? Pray for yourself and others from it.
3. Use the Psalms to praise God for different aspects of his character.
4. Use an order to guide you.

Trying it out

Try out the above suggestions. (If you want to experiment, Psalm 131 is short.) Take small steps. 15-20 minutes a day would be a great starting point. Don't rush. Don't worry about doing this perfectly, just start! Invite the Holy Spirit into these times and let his grace and truth shape your prayer and heart. Stay at it for three weeks — research shows that it takes about three weeks to build a habit. Be alert to what differences might be happening in your relationship with the Lord and your life as a result. (If helpful, go for a leisurely block of time on a Sunday! Or discuss/pray a Psalm in community.)

Psalm 131

My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.
But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother,
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

Commentary #1: *New Bible Commentary, 21st edition, p 575.*

Psalm 131. Rest

In Psalm 130 the exhortation to hope arose from what is true of the Lord; in 131:3 it arises from what the psalmist has found to be personally true. He has taken a lowly place (1) his inner being (2) is at rest — like a child grown past the instinctive demands and fretfulness of infancy and now content, as a toddler, simply to be with mother. What kind of an original journey out of self-confident pride into humility and rest first prompted this beautiful psalm? We do not know, but its call to hope in the Lord links it with 130 and makes it the testimony of a sinner forgiven: humbled by the mercy of God, at peace within because at peace above.

Commentary #2: *Notes on the Psalms, G Campbell Morgan, p 260.*

Psalm 131: Jehovah the Satisfaction of the Pilgrim

This is a brief psalm, but it very full of beauty, as it sets forth the contentment of a restless soul in the will of God. It follows the last as an advance of experience, and as a sequence. Its peculiar note is not that of a natural contentment, but of a satisfaction won in spite of all contrary tendencies. The thought of weaning is the dominant one.

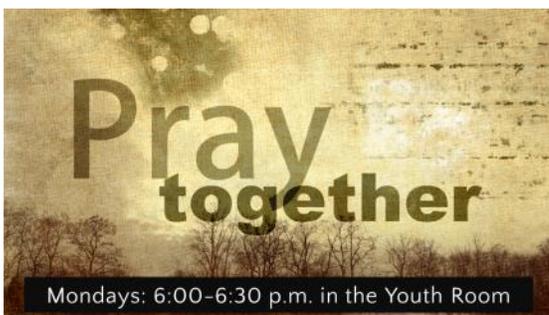
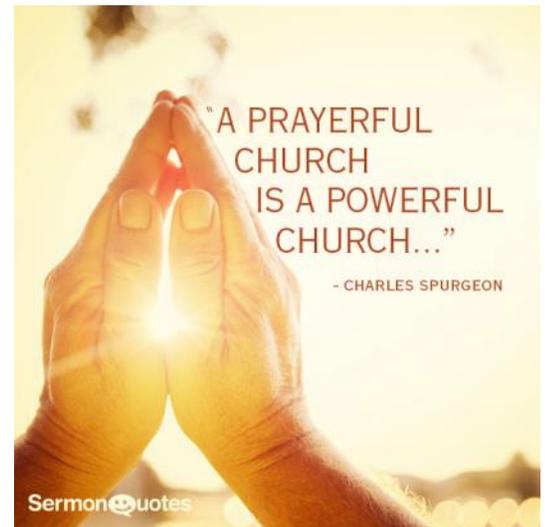
That for which a child craves it at last becomes content without. So the soul of the singer, which once was ambitious and restlessly attempted to walk in ways for which it was not fitted, is with him in quietness and contentment. The secret of victory over

feverish ambition is divulged in the psalmist's appeal to Israel to hope in the Lord. That, interpreted in the light of the previous psalm, means that in the gracious sense of his forgiving love is the secret of a content which puts an end to all false ambition. Redemption truly apprehended, is more than forgiveness. It is restoration to the quiet peace of being in harmony with all the forces of nature, because governed by the will of God. http://www.redeemer.com/learn/resources_by_topic/prayer/prayer_and_fasting/praying_the_psalms/

From *Learning to Pray in the Name of Jesus* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

The Holy Scripture is the Word of God to us. But prayers are the words of men. How do prayers then get into the Bible? Let us make no mistake about it, the Bible is the Word of God even in the Psalms. Then are these prayers to God also God's own word? That seems rather difficult to understand. We grasp it only when we remember that we can learn true prayer only from Jesus Christ, from the word of the Son of God, who lives with us men, to God the Father, who lives in eternity.

Jesus Christ has brought every need, every joy, every gratitude, every hope of men before God. In his mouth the word of man becomes the Word of God, and if we pray his prayer with him, the Word of God becomes once again the word of man. All prayers of the Bible are such prayers which we pray together with Jesus Christ, in which he accompanies us, and through which he brings us into the presence of God. Otherwise there are no true prayers, for only in and with Jesus Christ can we truly pray.



If we want to read and to pray the prayers of the Bible and especially the Psalms, therefore, we must not ask first what they have to do with us, but what they have to do with Jesus Christ. We must ask how we can understand the Psalms as God's Word, and then we shall be able to pray them. It does not depend, therefore, on whether the Psalms express adequately that which we feel at a given moment

in our heart. *If we are to pray aright, perhaps it is quite necessary that we pray contrary to our own heart. Not what we want to pray is important, but what God wants us to pray. If we were dependent entirely on ourselves, we would probably pray only the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer. But God wants it otherwise. The richness of the Word of God ought to determine our prayer, not the poverty of our heart.* (Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, and Eberhard Bethge. *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1970)



4—Dorothy Nelson
 15—Warren Cawley
 16—Bill Sperry
 26—Jane McElrath

8—Leon & Karen Edwards
 9—Art & Donna McRae
 16—Marlin & Marilyn Sena
 17—Devon & Michele James
 20—Larry & Cheryl Lew

If your birthday or anniversary has not been listed, please call the office and let us know.

Regular Prayer List

Assisted Living:

Mildred Vine— *Paramount Court*
 Donna McRae— *Golden Age Home Care, (memory care)*
 Mabel Cronan— *The Stratford Place*

Health Issues:

Virginia Irons
 Roger Morrow
 Dorothy Nelson
 Bill Sperry
 Margaret Kuglin (eye)
 Patti Arbizu (knee)
 Cyndy Cawley (ankle)
 Alice Visser (English Oaks)



Stockton Presbytery Prayer List for June 2015

June 7—First Presbyterian; Columbia
 Pastor Janet Russell
 Tino Ballesteros

June 14—Community Presbyterian; Gustine
 Pastor Mark Hollingsworth
 Sam Casiano, HR

June 21—Grace Presbyterian; Lodi
 Pastor David Hill
 E. Russell Chandler, HR

June 28 —Manteca Presbyterian
 Pastor Karl Hauser
 Bill David



Ceres School's Prayer List for June 2015

June 7—Virginia Parks Elementary
 Principal: Jennifer Backman

June 14—Walter White Elementary
 Principal: Dan Pangrazio

June 21—Westport Elementary
 Principal: Tami Garcia

June 28 —Whitmore Charter High
 Principal: Lynnette Chirrick
 Asst. Principal: Mary Gonzales



Mission Statement ~ With God in control, the mission of the Harvest Presbyterian Church is to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture the faith of our church family.

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