

The Evangel, February 2011
Newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church
Lake City, Colorado
March 1, 2011



Condolences

Our prayers and thoughts and sympathies remain with the family of “Mayor Bob” Hall who passed away earlier this month. Please keep Bob’s wife, Margo, and Bob’s children R.E., and his family Rebecca, Miranda and Ian; and Danielle, and her family Jeff, and Zoe in your prayers during this time of their loss.

Lent

The season of Lent will begin soon, a 40-day period of repentance and preparation for our annual remembrance of the passion and death of our Savior, and our joyous celebration of his resurrection.

Ash Wednesday, at the beginning of the Season of Lent

We will observe Ash Wednesday with a special Service of Worship on Wednesday, March 9th at 5:30 pm. We will join with our brothers and sisters in the faith at Saint James Episcopal Church for this service. Everyone is invited to this special event. This service calls us to penitence, prayer, meditation, and preparation for both the Season of Lent and the Season of Easter. It is one of the most ancient services of the Church and is a very moving, meaningful, and inspirational Worship Service. We will observe The Imposition of the Ashes as a part of this Service. Please plan to attend this special Ash Wednesday service in the Sanctuary of Saint James Episcopal Church as we begin our journey to Jerusalem.

First Sunday in Lent, March 13th

Our journey to Jerusalem continues on this special Sunday at our 9:30 church service.

Pastor’s Bible Study

A Lenten Study for Adults: *Hard to Dance with the Devil on Your Back* will be led by Pastor Rick. Everyone is welcome! This Lenten Study will begin on Sunday, March 13th following the time of Sunday Worship and Fellowship.

What is this all about? In every culture and place and time, persons of faith, of all ages, have summoned trials and tribulations to find the endurance and strength to “dance.” They have danced with the weight of the world upon their shoulders, sustained by God and others dancing near them.

Hard To Dance With The Devil On Your Back (yes, we will be taking a look at the old Shaker song that the title so well alludes to) is a Lent Study that looks at the transcendent struggle in the lives of believers, while helping us to enter the continually crumbling world surrounding Jesus and the disciples in the days preceding Easter.

This is a timely study during a time when many people feel the “devil on their shoulders” with the crushing weight of debt, a time of international tension, of concern for the future, of concern for their 401K’s and stock portfolios, a time of health issues, and terrorism’s potential, a time when so many people feel they have lost their way, this is

the time for a word such as *Hard To Dance With The Devil On Your Back* offers.

Come join us following Church and Fellowship beginning on the 13th of March. It's part of the journey to Jerusalem.

The Season of Lent and Holy Week Worship Opportunities

Watch for additional details on these Worship Services, some of them at Community Presbyterian Church, while others we will worship with our Christian brothers and sisters from the other Churches in town.

Ash Wednesday, March 9th, 5:30 pm, Saint James Episcopal Church

Holy Thursday/Maundy Thursday, April 21st

Good Friday, April 22nd

The Great Vigil of Easter (The First Service of Easter), Saturday, April 23rd

The Resurrection of the Lord Sunday (Easter), Sunday, April 24th

Ever Wonder...."

Where the Easter bunny comes from? Spring cleaning? "The Stripping of the Church"? Pancakes? The Easter Lilly? Why 40 Days of Lent? Which English King developed the concept of Easter Eggs? Ever wonder where some of the sights and sounds of The Season of Lent come from? What does the word "Easter" actually mean? Wonder why we do some of the things we do during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. In reality, there are Christian connotations relating to many of our sights and sounds and activities of these Holy Seasons. Where did they come from? Where did they go? What do they mean? Stay tuned as we go through these days and seasons for some interesting information that you may not have known. Inquiring minds want to know....

Reading Through the Bible

This exciting project led by Karen Roose continues each week. Please see or call Karen for more information.

Tuesday Book Study

The Tuesday Book Study group is reading *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard. This group is led by John Roose and meets on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm in Darley Hall. Everyone is welcome! See John for more information.

Community Men's Prayer Breakfast

All of the men of Lake City are invited to a weekly Thursday morning prayer breakfast. The men gather for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and Bible study at 6:30 every Thursday morning. All men are welcome...bring an appetite for good food and spiritual growth!

Youth Programs Report

The youth of Lake City continue to meet at CPC several times each week for Bible study, refreshments and crafts. Epic, under the leadership of Brannon Brown, meets on Sunday evenings in the Church Annex at 7:00 pm. KLUB, led by Amy Humphreys, continues to meet at Darley Hall each Wednesday after school. Both groups are experiencing great turn-outs. We are very grateful for the support and hard workers

involved with these programs.

Community Choir Rehearsal

Rehearsals have resumed on Mondays and Thursdays at 7:00 pm in Darley Hall under the leadership of Milt Pullen.

Holy Land and Egypt

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to walk down the Via Dolorosa (“The Street of Tears”) where Jesus walked on His way from the Roman praetorian to the Cross? These are The Stations of the Cross.

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to stand at the very place of the birth of Jesus in The Church of The Holy Nativity? Or inside the tomb where Jesus lay.

Have you ever seen the sun rise on a bright morning over the City of God, the Holy City of Jerusalem? Have you ever taken The Sacrament of Holy Communion in The Upper Room where Jesus instituted what we now call “Communion” or “The Lord’s Supper?”

Can you go to the actual location of The Sermon on the Mount? Yes, you can. You may enter the Church of the Beatitudes and you can sit on the mountain Jesus did and watch the sea below.

Can you see the rock upon which tradition tells us Jesus prayed on The Night of the Betrayal? Yes, you can. It is among the olive trees, some of which date to the time of Jesus, in The Garden of the Agony (Gethsemane).

Imagine the feeling of being inside one of the pyramids or standing before the Spinx, each over 2,500 years old by the time Jesus was born.

Worship in the Church in downtown Cairo established where The Holy Family, Jesus, Joseph, and Mary fled to in their flight from Israel to avoid “The Slaughter of the Innocents” when Herod decreed that any male child under the age of two was to be killed.

Remember the last scene of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* where Harrison Ford and Sean Connery are riding out of the ancient City of Petra, a “city as old again as time.” You can either ride into Petra on horseback or walk a short walk into the mists of history.

Stand on Mount Nebo where Moses was allowed to look into, but not enter The Promised Land. On a clear day, you can see Jerusalem off in the distance.

All of this and much, much, more are waiting for you. Experience the hustle and bustle of the street vendors in the Walled City of Old Jerusalem. Walk the streets of the Christian Quarter, the Jewish Quarter, and the Muslim Quarter of Old Jerusalem.

Enter the Mosque on Temple Mount built over the spot where Abraham was ready to sacrifice Isaac (or where Abraham was ready to sacrifice Ishmael as per the Muslim message.) This Mosque is also the site where Mohammed took his “Night Flight” to heaven. Jerusalem is the third holiest site in the world for the Islamic faith, third only to Medina and Mecca.

Stand before The Wailing Wall, all that is left of The Temple Jesus spoke of, and went inside of, before the Romans razed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. And - wonder what is underneath The Wailing Wall. The Ark of the Covenant? Maybe. No one knows for sure. Mysteries abound around every corner in Jerusalem.

Take a camel ride through the desert. (Those are not too nice beasts, practical, but ornery, my camel took off across the desert on his own with me on top bouncing up and down and beginning to pray HARD! and the Egyptian guide running after us yelling things to the camel that I am pretty sure were not too nice!)

“Go to Tel Aviv to play, go to Jerusalem to pray” as the tour guides will tell you.

The experience of a lifeline along with some of the most wonderful food you will ever eat. Falafel, chick peas, hummus, koshurri, schwarma, much, much more....no, not baked, stewed, roast or fried camel. No camel!! Tour guides are well acquainted with Western tummies and expectations regarding hotels and accomodations and food. (Seriously you will eat what you are used to eating unless you want to get adventuresome and try the local food along with something called McDonald's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken and other culinary delights of such nature.)

Women! In Cairo you will be visiting a perfume shoppe and if you have ever seen a place where perfume is in more abundance than you can ever imagine, this is your place. For all, there is a visit to Khan-El-Kahlili, a largest open air shopping market in Cairo across from the Islamic Al Hazar University, the oldest university in the world.

If you would be interested in a late 2011, early 2012 pilgrimage to the Holy Lands and Egypt and/or Jordan please see Pastor Rick of Faye. This is your opportunity to follow the footsteps of Jesus. Rick and Faye are currently working with some travel agencies who specialize in travel to the Holy Lands.

I (Rick) can tell you, I have been to the Holy Lands twice and never once felt either afraid or threatened. The Egyptians are some of the most wonderful people I have ever met in any of my travels and I would get on a plane and go there today if I could. Arab hospitality is alive and well in both Egypt and Jordan as has been my experience. Yes, even when our tour group walked the streets of Gaza City along the Gaza Strip, we were welcomed and warmly received. Remember how much the Bible talks about the absolute, total and complete importance of hospitality? Well, I can tell you from experience, it is all true both then and now.

Come with us! More details will follow.

“Yella! Yella! Yella!” (spoken with great enthusiasm; Arabic for (loosely translated) “Come on, hurry up, let's go!”)

Shalom! Salaam! (“Peace and goodwill” in both Hebrew and Arabic.)

Pastor Rick's Message

The time is almost here again. It is almost time for us to begin our annual sojourn to Jerusalem yet once again. And as it always true, it seems that each year when we travel to Jerusalem during Lent we go again almost as if for the first time. The stories may be familiar, but they never lose their power and their drive. They never lose their freshness, their intensity, or their horror. It is no secret through history the brutality that

man is capable of and the events of Holy Week – though six weeks or so distant – prove that once again.

On this journey to Jerusalem we will encounter a variety of emotions, a variety of feelings and we will bring out emotions and our feelings and our experiences to the table. New insights will be gained, new experiences will come our way, and our life with Jesus will, hopefully, become stronger and deeper.

The way to Jerusalem leads us first to The Season of Lent. Lent is a season of penitence, of prayer, of meditation, of spending renewed time with God, and a season of giving up something. What will we give up this year? Through the years I have known people who have given up everything from coffee, to chocolate, to TV, to attending social functions, whatever. The point is that Lent calls us to a deeper relationship with God as well as to a physical check-up of how we are progressing in our Christian walk. This, is a time for resolutions and to look at the things we feel we are doing well, and the things we feel we may need some improvement on. It is not a time to beat ourselves over the head with guilt, rather, it is a self-reflection time of meditation where the Holy Spirit will open the Holy Spirit to each of us and reveal the nearness of God.

This holy season of Lent calls us to examine ourselves. The worship service will have some additional elements within it that reminds us that Lent us upon us. There will be a service of candles and readings each week as we approach Holy Week.

The Season of Lent is one of the oldest and most ancient seasons of the life of the Church. It begins on Ash Wednesday, and concludes with the advent (coming) of Holy Week. Look for additional information as we progress along the road to Jerusalem. Lent reminds us of our own mortality, yet Lent reminds us also that we belong to God. God is with us! God is for us! God loves us with an unconditional love! God is ever-present with us and God longs for a closer walk with each of us. Lent is the time to examine our walk. Lent may also be challenging in that we may well have to face some things we would rather not face. Meditation, prayer, Bible study, and reflections may well bring to our attention some things that need to be remedied in our lives. Self-examination may be hard, but it also brings the rewards of renewal, refreshment, forgiveness, and a new way of seeing, and doing, and believing.

Yes, The Season of Lent is all this. It may sound hard, but it is not. Simply, find some additional time to be with God. Walk amidst the beauty of God's creation. Sit down at your picnic table probably for the first time since last fall. Take a drive around the beautiful San Juan Mountain area. Simply sit and watch the cotton candy clouds roll by against a blue Colorado sky. Contemplate the beauty of the night which has a thousand eyes commonly called "stars". Feel the rustle of the wind against your face and listen to the noise of the wind blowing through the pines. These are all places to experience God during the Season of Lent. Find your special place, we all have them and then make the special place a place where you can and will encounter God. Come to church, be with friends who are on the same journey and the same road as you. Learn from them, grow with them, experience their life with yours.

God calls us to be a community of believers. To be with each other and for each other. To grow in Christian fellowship and love.

Lent is a time to experience again that there is a God who loves and cherishes each one of you and wishes us only the best. However, Lent is also a time to remind us that we are not to take our Christian walk lightly. To follow God in this time and in this world is not always an easy task. Yet, by the renewal of Lent, by the presence of God, by the forgiveness and new vistas that Lent offers, we can rise above ourselves and above the world and experience that which God has for us.

Take the journey to Jerusalem yet once again. Through the blood, the sweat, the tears, the Agony in the Garden. Through the words of faith, yet the actions of denial, stand beneath the cross of Jesus as the women did. Experience the ashes of Ash Wednesday as we examine our own mortality. Feel the tension and the anticipation of Holy Thursday. (What does the word "Maundy" mean and here does it come from?) Be present with the horror of Good Friday. (Why is Good Friday called "Good Friday", you will find out along the journey.) On Holy Saturday, feel the aloneness, the grief, the loss of a loved one named Jesus upon whom so many hopes and dreams were invested and who now lies dead in a solemn, cold tomb. Feel the anguish of the disciples as they hide in fear they would be next. And then...and then...walk with the women to the tomb as a new day breaks over Jerusalem...walk with the women and experience their wonder, their amazement, their terror, their questions, their emotions in a tailspin as they see an empty tomb and see that the One who was in the tomb has now gone from the tomb back into the highways and the byways of the world. All of this is The Season of Lent, Holy Week, and The Resurrection of the Lord Sunday. All of this is God's gift to each one of us. Can you take the journey? Will you take the journey. The journey is one of life, of hopes, of dreams, of aspirations, of promises coming true, of new life, of forgiveness, of renewal, of refreshment, of a new sense of doing and being with God...and the journey does not end at the cross, rather, the journey ends in life and life eternal.

God is not the God of the dead. God is the God of the living. God is the God of Easter! Death does not have the final word. God has the final word. And the final word is life and life eternal! That is what The Season of Lent, Holy Week, and The Resurrection of the Lord Sunday is all about! Thank God for the journey.

Now, let's move out...destination, Jerusalem, the Holy City, the City of God, the City that killed the prophets, but the City that also saw the greatest prophet of all rise from the dead to go back into the world that He lived and died and will come again for.

Thought For The Month

Praying is no easy matter. It demands a relationship in which you allow someone other than yourself to enter into the very center of your person, to see there what you would rather leave in darkness, and to touch there what you would rather leave untouched.

Henri J.M. Nouwen

**God's most profound blessings
on your Lenten season and preparations!**