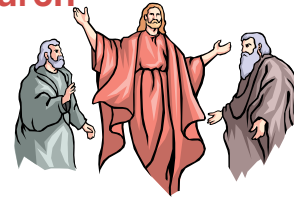


**The Evangel  
of Community Presbyterian Church  
Lake City, Colorado  
Summer 2011**



† Centered in Christ

† Cultivated in Community

† Called to Care

You are cordially invited  
to attend the  
Installation of  
The Reverend M. Richard Underwood  
to the position of  
Minister of The Word and Sacrament  
at the  
Community Presbyterian Church  
Fifth and Gunnison Avenue  
Lake City, CO 81235  
on  
Sunday, August 28, 2011  
4:00 PM

**Pastor's Installation**

We are excited about Pastor Rick's installation. Please plan to join us! A light dinner following the installation will be served in Darley Hall.

**135 Years of Worship at CPC**

We were delighted to celebrate 135 years of service to God on June 18. Our church is blessed with a rich history and a great time was enjoyed by all.

**Wednesday Grill and Bible Study**

Wednesday Grill and Bible Study continues with dinner each Wednesday at 6:00 pm in Darley Hall, consisting of grilled burgers and potluck dishes. Bible study begins at 7:00 PM. Participants are enjoying a study of the Book of Mark. Everyone is welcome!

**Gold Hill Barbeque**

Community Presbyterian Church's annual barbeque on Gold Hill at Vickers Ranch was held on Sunday, July 24. The weather cooperated and it was a beautiful evening.

### **Vacation Bible School 2011**

Held from Monday-Friday, July 11-15, Community Presbyterian's 2011 VBS was a great success. The theme this year was "PandaMania". Dorothy Schmidt served as VBS Director with wonderful volunteer helpers. About 24 children attended this meaningful event. It was great fun! Thank you Dorothy and all your volunteers!!

### **2012 Stewardship Campaign: Giving with a Willing Heart**

We have just ended another year's Stewardship Campaign with about \$51,000 collected so far. Contributions are still arriving and are greatly appreciated. Thanks for everyone's generosity.

*"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."* - Romans 12:4-8

### **Hawaiian Luau and Ice Cream Social**

Our third-annual Hawaiian Luau was held August 14 to mark the end of our Stewardship Campaign. It began at 5:30 at the San Juan Estates Picnic Pavilion. This year, we combined the Luau with our annual Ice Cream Social. Everyone enjoyed great food and delicious home-made ice cream. Thank you to Helen Thompson and her volunteers!

### **What is This All About? Where Did This Come From?**

Pastor Rick has been leading a class following worship that explores the shape of our church, the role of Liturgy in the life of the congregation, and our Christian Worship style.

### **Gospel Concert**

The Lake City Community Gospel Concert is scheduled for September 3 at 7 PM in the CPC Sanctuary. It is directed by Claire Jessee and is always inspirational. Please plan to attend.

### **Darley Hall is a Hot Spot!**

Wireless access is available in Darley Hall whenever there is not some event happening there. Summer residents and visitors are welcome to bring their laptops and connect!

### **Pastor's Letter**

There is an old Chinese saying. Some call it a saying. Some call it a curse. Some call it a blessing. I suppose the definition reveals the position in life you are in at the present moment. The saying is simply, yet profoundly: "May you live in interesting times." We do, indeed, live in interesting times. Interesting times, indeed.

Within the past few months we have borne witness to what historians are calling the "Arab Spring." Think those two words through. "Arab", of course, would mean those living in the Arab world. "Spring" has strong connotations of re-birth, new life, a new beginning, the end of the old and the beginning of the new, the cold winter is past and the warm breezes of spring flow. There are more connotations to the word "spring,": spring is a time of refreshment, of looking forward, of beginning to plan ahead. And, yes, spring does have strong connotations with the Christian Season of Easter, with the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I have found it interesting that though the word "spring" is not in reality a theological term, it is often used with a strong theological

sense lying close behind it. Therefore, I have found the use of the word “spring” incorporated with the word “Arab” to have theological implications.

It is indeed an Arab Spring. In some cases the old has passed away and a newness is being born. In some cases the old is hanging only, only, only through the power of the military and weapons of destruction. The regimes have lost their legitimacy and their right to rule. Throughout the ages of history it is clear, over and over, that when the people take to the streets it is only a matter of time before the government falls. No government can rule without the consent of the people. Now to be sure, this may not happen overnight. It may take some time. It may take even longer. It may, even, take years. However, rest assured that history will not be denied: the legitimacy of the government is determined by the people. President Obama said well from Martha’s Vineyard on Sunday, August 21st, that the hand of freedom is stronger than the iron fist. The iron fist may terrorize, it may demoralize, it may wound, it may kill. It may well seem that the iron fist will prevail. It may seem that there is no end. That is not true.

There is a power of evil in the world. To deny that is to deny reality. This power of evil is strong. This power of evil prevails throughout the entire earth. This power of evil has reigned terror in the Middle East for centuries. How strange is it that the Holy Land of three faiths – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism – have been stained with blood through the years? How strange is it that the city Jesus cried over (Jerusalem) is the center-point for three faiths in the midst of strife, terror and blood? What does Jesus say and think about what has become of the land of His birth, His life, His teachings, and His death, and Resurrection? The mind says that a land that is Holy is sacred and pure and unblemished and adored. The eyes say, “Oh really!”

There is good news. There always is. Jesus has won the victory. When Jesus stepped outside the then empty tomb on that first Easter morning, death was defeated once and for all. By the power of the Resurrection, God had totally and completely vindicated Jesus and everything Jesus said and did during His earthly ministry. In short, Jesus won totally and completely. Satan was defeated. Now to be sure the end game is still being played out on earth. We are past Eden, destined not to return, “East Of Eden” as one of my favorite authors, John Steinbeck, so wonderfully phrased it. Yes, we are East of Eden but we are not yet to Revelation 21 and 22 when the New Heavens, the New Jerusalem, and the New Earth appear. That is our heading, that is our destination, that is the direction in which we are tacking, to use a nautical term. So, if we are past Eden and not yet at Revelation, where are we? We are “here”. In the midst of the days of our lives. “Here” is today. We are the Church Militant, carrying on the strife between good and evil, standing against oppression, injustice, totalitarianism, unjust and illegitimate authority, and evil. The struggle is long, the struggle is hard, the struggle is sometimes deadly, but the ultimate victory has been declared by Jesus Christ. We win!

God is in the action in the Middle East today. God is on the frontlines. Is that a startling statement? It should not be if it is. Read the Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the 12 Minor Prophets (Micah, Amos, Hosea, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Jonah). They are not minor because of anything they said; rather, they are “minor” because they are shorter in length than the “Major Prophets (Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel). In those Books, God is doing a lot of tearing down and rebuilding. There is a lot of destruction before construction. The Bible is full of empires being torn down. Those nations in the Bible who place their faith in their authority, their power, their military or their economy to the exclusion of God are

doomed. It may be well be man that proposes, however, it is definitely God that disposes. Remember a certain Tower called Babel? Not to only in the Old Testament do we see the power of God at work to bring down nations, we also see it in the New Testament. The entire New Testament is written within the province of the Roman Empire. Jesus Christ was the victim of a state imposed capital punishment orchestrated by the State of Rome in coalition with certain (not all and not the Jewish people) Jewish religious representatives. The entire Book of Revelation deals with the persecution of the Saints under the rule of The Emperor Nero. Where is the Roman Empire now? Nero? Nero used to illuminate the streets of Rome at night with the bodies of burning Christians. Where is Nero now? Diocletian? Caligula? Man proposes, God disposes. Which brings us back to our point. Good triumphs over evil. Freedom triumphs over oppression. Death is not the last word. The last word is "life". The struggle may be long and hard, but goodness and justice will prevail.

Hear these words: *Mary said, "With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant. Look! From now on everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone from one generation to the other who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations. He has pulled the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy. Just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever. (Luke 1:46-55).*

This is called "The Magnificat". It is Mary's song of praise. It also makes governments tremble. It is one of the main reasons (along with many, many other Bible verses in both the Old and the New Testaments that have been used since time immemorial to foster dissent and to bring down governments. There can be no doubt that the God portrayed in the Bible has a preferential option for the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, and those who are victims of injustice. The Bible is clear: if one would wish to be on God's side, one had best be on the side of the poor and the marginalized and the oppressed. New Testament, Old Testament, makes no difference, the final results are the same. From the Children of Israel being freed from their Egyptian captivity to the overthrow of current modern-day tyrants in the Middle East, God is on the side of those oppressed. God has heard their cry, now as then. God has responded, now and then. God has taken the initiative, now and then. One may say (rightly) "why did it take God so long?" Good question. Valid question. A good and valid question to which I have no answer. All I can say is to quote Isaiah when God says God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and God's ways are not our ways. We humans want results and we want them fast. That is our nature. However, that is not always God's way for reasons I cannot explain. God is God and I am not. God is God and the world is not. What is clear that God has acted, is acting, and will act again. One of the cornerstones of Reformed theology is that God is active in history and that God intervenes in history.

We are seeing this in the Arab Spring. Listen to the words of one of the greatest moral voices of our time: Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Church of England:  
*This is God's world! For goodness sakes, this is God's world! The apartheid government was very powerful, but we said to them, Watch it! If you flout the laws of this universe, you're going to bite the dust. Hitler was powerful. Mussolini was powerful.*

*Stalin was powerful. Idi Amin was powerful! Pinochet was powerful. The apartheid government was powerful. Milosevic was powerful.*

*But this is God's world. A lie, injustice, oppression – those will never prevail in the world of this God. That is what we told our people. And we used to say, Those ones, they have already lost. We may not be around...those who are powerful have to remember the litmus test that God gives to the powerful: What is your treatment of the poor, the hungry? What is your treatment of the vulnerable, the voiceless? And on the basis of that, God passes God's judgment (page 108-109).*

Hear again from The Reverend Tutu:

*Always, without exception, those who use power for their own self-advancement, their self-glorification and self-enrichment at the cost of God's favorites, comes a cropper. They may strut the world's stage as if they were the cock of the walk, but always, all will bite the dust. Stalin, Hitler, Franco, Amin, et. al, where are they now? The perpetrators of the injustice of apartheid seemed to be invincible at the height of their power. Today hardly anyone admits to having supported apartheid. And so we appeal to those who have power in the world, in the Middle East, in Zimbabwe: remember who God's favorites are and that if you act against them you will one day bit the dust, and indeed do so comprehensively (page 209).*

To this list we may well now add Mubarak, Gadhafi. Assad's time may be close at hand. The struggle there is not over, but the victory is assured. Tunisia has made major gains in democracy, largely in peace. So has Morocco. Iran and Iraq are historical problems dating back many, many years both in the Bible as well as for the British and the Americans. The struggle continues. Jordan has made major strides peacefully. Bahrain is a work in progress, the struggle has been intense but reform has arrived. Saudi Arabia? A question for the future. Would anyone have foreseen or anticipated the way the map of the Middle East looks today one year ago? I think not. No government in the world predicted any of this either could or would happen. It did. It continues. It shall continue.

So what are we to do. We are to pray for those who seek peace. Blessed are the peacemakers. We are to support those victims of injustice, evil, oppression, tyranny. We are to find ourselves on God's sides, rather than on the side of the world. We are to find ourselves on God's side, rather than on the side of the evil, tyranny, oppression, and injustice. We are to pray and to stand fast. Here in America we have had our own past: British oppression at the birth of the nation, the nation torn apart by Civil War (most historians now say that we have had at least three Civil Wars in the US: the American Revolution, The Civil War, and The War of 1812. An increasing number are adding the Civil Rights Movement into that category, the oppression of the Native Americans, Civil Rights struggles, riots in major American cities, riots on American college campus, sit's-in (which began in my hometown of Greensboro, NC at Woolworth's Five and Dime Store), freedom marches, the woman's right to vote, slavery, freedom riders, sweatshops, child labor and more. We may in our own past realize the hope and dreams of those who now face the struggle in the ancient, sacred, and Holy lands of the Middle East. God's will will be done. Regardless of the desires of tyrants and dictators, past, present or future.

And let us also remember in our prayers to pray for stability. So often in history when the oppressed gain their freedom, it is payback time and a bloodbath erupts. We pray

that this would not happen in the sacred lands of the Middle East. So far, it has not happened in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt. One prays that it does not happen in Tripoli or other parts of Libya. The world feared precisely a bloodbath in South Africa. However, due to Tutu, Nelson Mandela and others, that this not happen. God was in the very midst of that not happening. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee was established and the bloodbath was averted. The nations in the Middle East would do well to look to The Truth and Reconciliation Committee (which was based on Biblical principles) as a solution to their problems.

It is necessary that we also pray for what comes after. What happens next? What is the next chapter? Who will gain power? Who will form a government? Who can form a government? How quickly. Those are all important items and those are all important prayer items for each of us.

We do indeed live in interesting times. It has been fascinating to me over the past months to talk with some of my Egyptian friends in Massachusetts as to their ideas and perceptions of their homeland. They are in favor of freedom. They are in favor of the Arab Spring. They favor the new beginning which has come to the land. To listen and to hear and to learn and to travel and move among from those of another culture is the best way I know to avert misunderstanding, hatred, evil, prejudice, bigotry. When dialogue breaks down, violence breaks out. Where there is no hope, the only hope is to resort to violence.

When one begins to realize that despite differences the world is the same, we want a better one for our children, ourselves, we want peace, security, we all carry pictures of our families without regard to race, creed, or color, we want a better tomorrow, we want freedom, we want food to eat, and clothes to wear. These statements make no claim to race or country. They make claims to our common humanity. I recently heard the story of American soldiers who went into a home in Germany during World War II. What did they see? A picture of Jesus on the wall of the German home. It made an impression on them. How could it not? Abraham Lincoln noted that both North and South prayed to the same God, read the same Bible, and killed each other in the name of that God. As I travel abroad, I have been embraced by Arab and Jew. My life has been enriched. When one sits at a table and talks, one gets up from the table in friendship and common humanity. I have seen and heard their desire for peace. I have seen and heard that their desires in life are the very same as mine as for my family. So often it is government that gets in the way of peace. Power. Prestige. Money. How sad.

Let us pray for the Arab Spring. God has intervened in history yet once again. The struggle is not over. Let us mourn for those who have been killed by their governments. The religion may be different (or it may not in all cases; there is a strong Christian community in the Middle East that the world consistently ignores). But a mother has lost her son, a father has lost his daughter, children have lost their parents. Why? Because they stood up for the essential desire of all humanity: Freedom from tyranny and oppression and evil.

The Arab Spring has come. My Arab friends are rejoicing and we should rejoice with them. I invite you to look closely at the picture of Jesus on the wall outside the Church Office. You will see Jesus wearing a robe comprised of the flags of the various nations of the world. The picture has a message for all of us.

And...when you finish picture gazing take a look at the wood carvings on the office door which I purchased in the Middle East.

“Salaam” is Arabic. “Shalom” is Hebrew. Both are similar. Both mean exactly the same things when translated into English: “Peace.” “Happiness.” “Health.”

So be it for all of us.

I have read the last chapter of the Bible. I know who wins. God wins. Evil falls. Injustice falls. Oppression falls. Good wins. God wins. Thanks be to God!

***The LORD bless you and keep you;  
The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;  
The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. -Numbers 6:24-26***