

The Evangel
Newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church
Lake City, Colorado
January 2011



Pastor Rick's Lincoln Study

Pastor Rick led a fascinating two-night presentation and discussion on Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address on January 25th and 26th. We're now looking forward to additional presentations, book studies, and bible studies.

New Session Elders Elected

On January 30, 2011, a Congregational Meeting was held to elect two new elders to replace Jay Farrar and Lori Winblood who have completed their three-year terms. We are very excited to announce that John Bonner and Diane Campbell will be joining the Session which also consists of Mary Farrar, Lynn Hudgeons, John Roose, and Durell Thompson. Thank you for your hard work Lori and Jay and welcome Diane and John!!!!

Ecumenical Prayer Meeting for Lake City

On February 10, the stirring experience of praying with other Christians in Lake City was held at Grace Fellowship. Future prayer meetings are being planned.

KLUB Kids and Epic Youth!

The Wednesday afternoon KLUB program has resumed for the winter/spring school semester. Each Wednesday snacks, stories, games, crafts, and singing are enjoyed by Lake City children. Amy Humphreys is the KLUB director.

Epic is also holding weekly get-togethers on Sunday evenings under the leadership of Brannon Brown. We are thrilled with the wonderful attendance of both of these vital groups. Many, many thanks Amy and Brannon!! Please hold all these precious kids and the leaders in your prayers!

Community Men's Prayer Breakfast

All of the men of Lake City are invited to a weekly Thursday morning prayer breakfast at 6:30. Representatives from all of the Lake City churches normally gather for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and informal Bible study.

Worship Update

We have been blessed with a new winter pianist, Becca Compston, who is doing a wonderful job. Becca lives and works at Camp Redcloud. We are delighted to have her with us! Welcome Becca!

Pastor Rick's Message

As so many millions of others around the world have been watching, the ancient though modern country of Egypt has been dominating the news. Egypt plays a vital role in the Bible. In the New Testament, Egypt is the land of slavery for the Children of Egypt. In the New Testament, however, Egypt is the land of freedom

and safety for the Holy Family as they flee King Herod's "Slaughter of the Innocents". Slavery, freedom, death, life: Egypt in the Bible. Today one may take tours in Egypt following nothing but the footsteps of Jesus. The Coptic Christian Church is one of the oldest Christian traditions in the world, taking their birth from the Flight of the Holy Family and the teachings of Saint Mark. One may worship today in a Coptic Christian Church built over the site where the Holy Family settled in what is now downtown Cairo. Likewise, there are more Presbyterians in Egypt than in the United States with a very close alliance to our own PCUSA. I have been blessed to visit Egypt twice and have always been received warmly and in a most friendly manner. Faye and I have several Egyptian friends in our recent home in Massachusetts. Standing in front of the Sphinx, which stood some 2,500 years before the birth of Jesus is a feeling beyond description. Entering the Pyramids is a similar emotion words cannot describe. And, shopping in the open air markets of Khan-el-Kahili is an experience never to be forgotten. I hope to return to Egypt soon and take some of you with us. Your life, as mine was, will never be the same. Of that, I can assure you.

We live today at the doorstep of an unfolding and changing history. We have heard of and seen examples of Christians and Muslims standing together - side by side - protecting each other's places of Worship and protecting their homes and property. There is so much that God is doing in Egypt, both that which we can see and that which we cannot see. That is, so very much, how God works.

It is always fascinating to watch history taking place before your eyes. That is one of the many things drawing people to Tahrir Square. This is a living and breathing situation where history is literally being made before our eyes. It is also true, historically speaking, that when the people take to the street, things are about to change. America is a prime example of that, both before and during The American Revolution as well as at various other times through our history. Democracy, hard to achieve and easy to lose, is a powerful desire. Likewise, freedom of the press is often the first target of governments when the people began to take to the streets. That we have seen in Egypt as well. Freedom of the press is also hard to achieve and easy to lose. What we may take for granted is not taken for granted at all in so many lands of the world. This is a good reminder and example for the world.

The letter that follows comes from *The Presbyterian Layman Online*, February 9, 2011. It reflects the first hand view of a person on the ground in the midst of history unfolding. From Ramez Atallah, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt:

"Dear Concerned and precious friends,

I'm sure you are following the news and aware of the trouble, riots, and tensions in Egypt and several other countries in this part of the world. I will not try to analyze the situation, which is changing by the hour. What might be started one day may be obsolete the next! But we want you to know that we are very appreciative of your love, concern and your continued prayers for this country.

The Bible's Society staff is all safe, and our properties are intact and unharmed. Despite the general turmoil, uncertainty, fear, anger, and the many other emotions and realities of our situation, we as Christians are in no way being targeted or threatened.

After the absence of the police from the streets of Cairo, the burning of many police stations and escape of thousands of prisoners, some have taken advantage of the chaos to loot and steal. Neighbors are coming together, both Christians and Muslims, as together they protect their neighborhoods and property on overnight shifts (due to the lack of police security). Each evening as curfew nears, barrels and bags and bins are positioned into barricades and all cars are stopped and people questioned by men armed with sticks and clubs and guns and knives. This however has provided most people with a real feeling of security and goodwill! But that was yesterday. This could possibly take a turn for the worse as civilians take the law into their own hands.

Expatriates are being evacuated. Banks and stock market are closed. Prices have begun to rise. Food, medical and other supplies are dwindling since most factories and businesses are closed after last week's wave of vandalism and the daily curfew from 3 p.m. to 8 a.m. Even as I write there have been bloody confrontations between Egyptian civilians in the main traffic circle downtown.

Please pray:

**Pray that the situation comes under control very promptly and urgently. There are massive losses every minute. The official number of people wounded today, many of them seriously, exceed 600 people, with at least 8 dead. Financial losses of the last eight days were announced by the official TV channel to be about 200 billion Egyptian pounds (36 billion US dollars).*

**Pray for the poor and destitute, the ones who suffer most at this time.*

**Pray that Christians in Egypt (both locals and expats) will not be tempted to "run" when things get bad. Libby Little, whose husband Tom was murdered in Afghanistan last summer, said that during that terrible war they and their daughters were known as "the ones who stayed!" Lucien Accad, the former head of the Bible Society in Lebanon stayed with his family during that dangerous civil war even though they all had Swiss passports and could have left. While many foreigners are forced to leave by company policies, we pray that the shrinking population of the Middle East will not be even further diminished by these current events.*

**Pray for the Bible Society of Egypt to think of creative and appropriate ways to bring God's Word to the people during these difficult times (after all, much of the Scripture was written in contexts of danger). The staff is working from their homes on printed and audio materials to produce as soon as we get back to the office. The Book Fair, which was scheduled for Jan. 29 - Feb. 8 has been postponed indefinitely. Book tables (an extension of the Book Fair offers) and Bible Sundays in all churches have been cancelled. As this will have a tremendously negative impact on our Bible distribution and income from sales*

and fundraising, as this is our peak sales season. Please pray with us as we consider how to close this income gap.

**Pray for wisdom for the political and army leaders to know how to control the situation without resorting to brutal means.*

**Pray for the future leadership of the country. These are deep concerns over who will rule Egypt next. The door will be open to all political and religious ideologies, extremists and fundamentalists included.*

**Finally, please pray for me to quickly recuperate from a sudden heart problem (arrhythmia) which I succumbed to last Wednesday, causing me to spend 8 days in CCU. Yesterday was my first day home.*

Thanks for your prayers, that's what we need most!

*Love to you all, on behalf of the Bible Society of Egypt staff
Ramez Atallah, General Secretary
The Bible Society of Egypt."*

As I close, let me tell you that Monday, February 7th, 2011, the Palestinians "made a formal bid to have the no-longer-no-little town of Bethlehem, added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites." *We are very proud to announce that we have submitted in the nomination files of Bethlehem: birth place of Jesus - Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, to the World Heritage Centre,"* tourism minister Khulud Daibes told reporters. Bethlehem mayor, Victor Batarseh, said "Where Jesus Christ was born is one of the most important cultural places in the world. It is from here that the message of peace and light was brought to the world by the Prince of Peace." Working with the Palestinian tourism ministry, Louise Haxthausen, head of UNESCO's Ramallah office states: "Who can question that the Nativity Church is a World Heritage Site." It is a possibility that this, like so many other things in the land, may become mired down in the political situation of the land.

The Church of the Nativity, built over the stable where Mary gave birth to Jesus when she and Joseph could find no room in the Inn, was built in the Fourth Century by the Roman Emperor Constantine. It is expected that over 2,000,000 people will visit Bethlehem this year. Bethlehem is a town of 27,000. According to Bible scholars, Bethlehem was a very small village when Jesus was born.

The Greek Orthodox, as well as the Catholic and Armenian Churches who are Custodians of the Shrine are also in support of the UNESCO bid. (Information on the UNESCO bid is from "Palestinians want Bethlehem on UN heritage list", Douglas Dicks, 08 Feb 2011, PCUSA Middle East contact and worker.)

Let us watch and wait and pray as God continues to intervene in the ancient sacred lands that are sacred and holy to three of five major religious traditions of the world. God is at work and we have our part to play as we stand in solidarity with God's work on earth.

God's blessings to all of you in 2011!