

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST in SIMI VALLEY
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost - October 3, 2004
World Wide Communion Sunday – Neighbors in Need
Anne G. Cohen

2 Timothy 1:1-7

For Our Reflection:

I awoke to the confusion of a new day,
The scraps of dreams, memories of yesterday, and new cravings creeping into awareness,
The sun spilling its light over all but the shadows and a cacophony of sound
From outside and in.

What to make order of? What to let go?
And who makes the choice?

I think I will go down to the river and just watch it flow,
It's been a long time since I have done something really important.

-David Sluyter, Fetzer Institute, Michigan
Prayers for a Thousand Years p.65

A Postcard from Camp

Much of what we call the Christian scriptures are letters, epistles, postcards from the past. Some were written as circular pastoral letters to many churches around the Mediterranean Sea. Some were written as if to one person or one church. All of them admonish, exhort, preach and teach. They give us a glimpse into the workings of the early Church, the aspirations of the writers, the moral codes and expectations for the early Christian communities.

These letters inspire, communicate frustrations and joys. They are not blueprints for life – or for the hierarchy of the church organization – although they have been used that way for centuries. These epistles are windows into the beliefs and lives of a few of the early members of this body we call Church. And if we look hard enough, we can see God at work there.

In that tradition, I offer you a window into life at Pilgrim Pines and the transformative power of God at work in the San Bernardino Mountains.

“A Postcard from Camp: Epistle to the East Ventura County Regional United Church of Christ”

Dear Ones,

If there is any one thing I could send to you from camp, it would be the sound of the wind in the trees on Vesper Point on a quiet afternoon. There is a sound that comes ahead of the wind itself – like a distant waterfall, like quiet thunder. And it spreads into the trees themselves – becoming a thousand whispers,
a million particles of shadow and light,
the rustling of Autumn oak leaves,
the quivering of pine needles,
the silence of a few drifting feathers.

The wind, so light on the skin, tears clouds apart – and they evaporated into a clear blue sky. We forget, sometimes, the rarity of clear blue skies, the sweet taste of creek water, the pain that pierces the lungs when we breathe clean, dry oxygen deep into our bodies. I had forgotten entirely the clarity

of light from long dead stars, the closeness of our Milky Way, the sound of coyotes crying, the lack of mechanical noise.

Perhaps this postcard will help us all remember these things – and the Source of All Things.

The rules of life are a little different up here at camp. There are eight churches here for this Family Camp Weekend – but we do everything together – as if we are one big Church. We share kitchen chores and look after the safety of each other's children. We are reminded of our responsibility to respect wildlife, to clean up our own messes, to help others clean up theirs.

We are expected to show up to each meal on time, say grace, serve each other and make sure all 200 of us gets enough to eat. Once food is on the table, it cannot be saved. So if we want seconds, we ask politely at other tables if they have food to spare. The kitchen is a last resort – and the food waste is minimal – a miracle on the order of the feeding of the five thousand.

When important communications are being passed along, we signal for quiet with the American Sign Language handsign for "I Love You." Respect for people of all ages is a virtue of high value.

Everyone here is given choices and allowed to create their own experience – good or not so good. We have the opportunity to create beautiful Peace Tiles for a camp enhancement project – or we can make beaded lanyards for our loved ones. We might be challenged by a ropes course, drawn to the skills of archery, stimulated by topical discussions, led on a hike of the canyon and lured by stories of romance and adventure.

Things move more slowly here – so we are more likely to notice deer between the trees, bear scat near the dumpsters, fifteen children of all sizes skipping through a stone labyrinth under a spreading oak tree. The rhythm of meals and group activities take on more significance. The time for reading, meditation, wind watching - stretches out on all sides. We are more likely to listen without judgment, to dance without shame, to praise without qualifying.

This is a place where we are encouraged to imagine what God is dreaming
– and then explore how our dreams might intertwine with God's.

This is a place where we might rekindle the gifts of God within us
– – the gifts of gentleness, power, love, self-discipline, mutual respect.

This place is a gift from generations of faithful people
– – from World War II until the present moment
– – people who saw God here and passed that Vision on to us.

This place is our inheritance.

It is a place where it is a blessing – rather than a curse – to inherit the wind...

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
World Wide Communion Sunday – Neighbors in Need

October 3, 2004

10:00 a.m.

The cross marks (+) in the order of service are an invitation for those in the congregation who are able to stand to do so.

The New Century Hymnal or “Hymnal” has a black cover; prayers are in the back.

The Chapel Songbook or “CSB” is a blue, looseleaf notebook.

When the bell rings you are invited to engage in reflection and quiet listening.

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WE GATHER FOR PRAYER AND CELEBRATION

Music for Reflection – A Time for Centering

Welcome and Perspective on the Day

Please give the minister your announcements in writing before the service.

Musical Call to Worship

+ **Call to Worship** (unison)

I pray for deep listening in the new century – listening alone – listening together – listening to others – listening to oneself – listening to the earth – listening to the universe – listening to the abundance that is – awakening to and feeling sound and silence as all there is – helping to create an atmosphere of opening for all to be heard, with the understanding that listening is healing. Deep listening in all its variations is infinite. Deep listening is love.

+ **Opening Hymn**

Simple Gifts

CSB # 51

+ **Our Common Prayer** (unison)

**Creator God who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the kingdom and the power
And the glory forever. Amen.**

Time for Silent Reflection (you may be seated)

One: My soul waits in silence.

All: **God is my rock and my fortress. I will be at peace.**

Silent Reflection

The Assurance of Good News (unison)

God is Good – All the Time!

Sung Response “Hallelujah... God be praised!” (CSB #5 Refrain)

WE TEACH, REFLECT AND PROCLAIM

Conversation with Our Children

A Message from Youth Roundtable

Reading from the Christian Epistles 2 Timothy 1:1-7

Sermon A Postcard From Camp

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S INVITATION

Intercessions, Celebrations and Encouragements

Our Joys and Concerns

Call to Prayer *Be still and know that I am God*

Hymnal # 743

Time for Silence and Offering of Prayer

We Offer Our Gifts So That Our Lives May Be Our Prayer

Offertory

Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Take time to listen to the birds, the waves, the wind.

Take time to breathe in the air, the earth, the ocean.

**Take time to be still, to be silent, to allow God to fill you up
with deep peace and love. Amen.**

+ **Sending Hymn**

Sent Forth by God’s Blessing

Hymnal # 76 v.2

+ **Commissioning** (unison)

Creator of the Universe

Increase in us kindness.

**Make us people who care and who take care,
who venerate the truth and recognize each other.**

Draw us with an irresistible beauty.

+ **Sung Response** (You are welcome to form a circle)

Hymnal # 236

Halle, halle, halle – lu – ja, Halle, halle, halle – lu – ja,

Halle, halle, halle – lu – ja, Halleluja, halleluja.

+ **Postlude**

WORSHIP NOTES

Call to Worship is by Pauline Oliveros, Composer, New York, Prayers for a Thousand Years p.55

Prayer of Dedication is by Mairead Maguire, Recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Community of the Peace People, Ireland, Ibid. p.67

Commissioning is by Rabia Terri Harris, Coordinator of the Muslim Peace Fellowship, New York, Ibid. p.76

Youth Roundtable (Southern California Nevada Conference - U.C.C.)

The Roundtable is the youth organization for the Southern California Nevada Conference U.C.C. Their webpage is an easy way to be part of the Youth Ministries network in our Conference. It is also a great place for youth to visit and share their thoughts, ideas and creativity.

<http://www.scncucc.org/youth/roundtable.html>

Youth Roundtable

Information 2004-2005

Proposed 2004-2005 Roundtable Calendar of Events

Oct. 2-3, 2004	Roundtable Meeting Location Simi Valley UCC
Nov. 5-6, 2004	FUNtastic Festi-Fall, (9th-12th grades) at an Eastern Association Church
Nov. 20-21, 2004	Roundtable Meeting Location TBD
Jan. 14-17, 2005	Jr. High JANboree, (6th-8th grades) (confirmed date) Pilgrim Pines Camp
Feb. 18-21, 2005	FEB Camp, (9th-12th grades) (confirmed date) Pilgrim Pines Camp
Mar. 5-6, 2005	Roundtable Meeting Location TBD
Apr. 9, 2005	Youth Uniting in Mission, (Jr. & Sr. High) at a Central Association Church
May 2, 2005	Roundtable Nomination Forms due for 2005-2006
May 14-15, 2005	Roundtable Meeting TBD
June 17-18, 2005	Annual Gathering Las Vegas, NV
July 1-5, 2005	General Synod Atlanta, GA
July 31-Aug. 6, 2005	Pilgrim Pines Summer Camp CYMC (week #4)