



The Shepherd's Call

June 2016

Vintage

Casting the Ancient Anew

Jesus of Palestine

I had the distinct privilege of traveling to the Holy Land a few years ago with the Knights Templar. It was an opportunity that gave me a great insight into the space in which Jesus had lived and carried out his ministry. One of the profound experiences that I had while on this trip was the desire by the government to treat these holy and historic sights as something akin to Religious Disneyland — it became obvious early on that while we clergy considered these sights holy, to many of the people at the gates, we were simply bags of money to exploit.

I share that because a meme came across my Facebook feed this week that goes as follows: "When the Greeks got the Gospel, they turned it into a philosophy; when the Romans got it, they turned it into a government; when the Europeans got it, they turned it into a culture; and when the Americans got it, they turned it into a business." — Richard C. Halverson

Now what does all of that have to do with anything? Recently, while attending a bit of General Conference in Portland, I was in worship when Bishop Ivan Abrahams gave a message entitled "Jesus of Palestine" or "Jesus of Constantine". The distinction between the two views of Jesus is a distinction that I have been personally wrestling with for many years. The church, as we know it, has Jesus as its focus, but it is viewed through a Constantinian lens.

Something happened to the church when we became the official religion of Rome, something that I believe the Holy Spirit is still

encouraging us to let go of. This was certainly the perspective of Bishop Abrahams.

Here is my take away from his message: When Jesus talks about the "little ones" being allowed to come to him, this teaching is being offered to his fellow Jewish people living in Palestine under Roman occupation. In this culture, Jesus also called the "little ones" as "sheep".

The Jesus born in Palestine under Roman occupation understood, said Abrahams, that the "little ones" mean those people marginalized, the poor, and outcast: "When Jesus used the example of the little children with the metaphor of the sheep, he wanted to demonstrate that anyone who wanted to be great, must be prepared to be 'the least'. Sheep were important in the economic, cultural, social, and religious life of the Jewish people."



Index

- 1 Pastor's Words
- 3 Birthdays, Upcoming Events, Joys & Concerns, Church Financial Report
- 4 A Stewardship Moment
- 5 Preschool News, Church Garden Updates
- 6 Other News/Updates
- 7 June 2016 Calendar

In his message, Bishop Abrahams contrasted the concern of Jesus in the gospels with the Jesus of Constantine. He said that the Roman Emperor made Christianity the official religion, and then used force to repress heretics. Constantine, institutionalized the church by creedalized the Christian faith, so this domesticated the Jesus of Palestine to identify with a particular culture. Sadly, the church, seduced by the politically powerful, endorsed the status quo.

“History is littered with examples of the Church identifying with the Jesus of Constantine seeking to build its own empires,” he said.

The theme of General Conference this year is the same theme that was used for our annual conference in Redlands: “Therefore Go!”

Bishop Abrahams then used this theme to further explain the difference between the Jesus of Palestine and the Jesus of Constantine:



To go in the name of Jesus of Constantine means placing profit before people. The logic of the empire is that ‘the ninety-nine’ are more important than the expendable one.

To go in the name of Jesus of Constantine often means preaching Christ without the cross. Peddling a brand of Christianity does not afflict the comfortable, neither comforts the afflicted.

To go in the name of Jesus of Constantine often means ‘blessing’ wars which criminalize and demonize the “least of these”. An argument is always presented that the poor need to pull themselves up by their own boot strings. This is very cruel because most of the world’s poor don’t have shoes — this point hit home to me in particular.



Then Bishop Abrahams shifted gears:

Going in the name of Jesus of Palestine means giving up “privatized, individualized empty-calorie spirituality that will never satisfy our spiritual hunger”.

To go in the name of Jesus of Palestine requires that we live at the nexus of power and powerlessness. We must critically engage the empire and speak truth to power even to governments that promote justice, peace, and security. The gospel radically challenges us to rediscover what it means to be a counterculture in a world that seeks to own us and make us conform to its ways.

To go in the name of Jesus of Palestine is to claim Christ’s victory over sin and death. We must refuse to succumb to the finality of history but to live in the hope, confidence, and assurance that the dragon of the empire will ultimately be defeated (Rev 12:8). We boldly declare that the Resurrection is God’s insurrection to injustice, death, and destruction.

REVELATION 12:8
“but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.”

I find myself drawn to the work of moving the church away from Constantine in an attempt to return, through the Experience of the Holy Spirit to the path of discipleship that Jesus taught his first followers. Here in the US, we have indeed turned Christianity into a business but it doesn’t have to stay that way!

Blessings,
Pastor Johan Dodge



Upcoming Events

BIRTHDAYS

- 1st – Julie Munroe
- 5th – Autumn van der Linden
- 19th – Nick Gray
- 21st – Jane Butler
- 22nd – Laura Keller
- 24th – Eric Sterkenberg
- 28th – Joseph Leone-Bray



Saturday,
July 9th,
9am – 12pm

MEETINGS

- 21st – Charge Conference, 7pm



Church Financial Report – April 2016

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Pledge	\$3190.00	\$5619.74
Non Pledge	\$820.00	\$2500.00
Loose Plate	\$150.00	\$250.00
Apportionment	\$0.00	\$208.37
Viet. Contribution	\$1000.00	\$1000.00
<u>Total</u>	\$5160.00	\$9578.11
Viet. Offering	\$7120.00	



→ July 8th – “Inside Out”,
 Live Band
 → Aug 12th – “Grease”,
 Car Show
 @7PM
 * * *
 Save these dates!!



JOYS & CONCERNS

Prayers for Bill Baker who is recovering from heart surgery • Prayers for healing for Randy Miller • Prayers for Bev Dietrich for safe trip home • Prayers for Bill Wilson on the death of his wife Ginny • Prayers for Tom Cabelus who got diagnosed with throat cancer • Prayers for healing for Boyd’s Family cousin Mike from hip surgery • Prayers for healing for Scott Pulver • Prayers for our church and preschool/school age program staff, the hungry in our midst, our national and local leaders and those who serve our country, the Armed Forces and their families, and disaster victims worldwide.

A Stewardship Moment



A Christian Steward Acts...

1 John 3:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

I received my spring copy of “Country” magazine a few months ago. As I took the plastic wrap off and turned the magazine over to do a quick flip through, the picture on the back of the magazine caught my eye. There was a big eared rabbit staring back at me. Above the picture were words that were sent in by Deb Landrum. Deb says her father-in-law used to tell her “Your actions speak so loud I can’t hear a word you say,” such true words. I immediately thought, “Now there’s a Stewardship Moment article just waiting to be written.”

When I first began writing these “Stewardship Moments”, I mostly wrote about finances. That is what I understood Stewardship to be, finances. Boy have I learned since that time. In praying for God’s guidance, inspiration, and words for these articles, in doing research on Bible verses, through mentoring of others, and growing in Christian faith, I have learned that stewardship is far more than finances. Yes, finance is important. It is important to support the ministries of this church; but stewardship is so much more. Stewardship actually involves everything you do.

Stewardship is an active word and is defined as the conducting, supervising, or managing of something. You cannot watch over and care for something by just sitting and ignoring. Stewardship involves your commitment and participation. It involves your attitude and actions, as well as, how you live your life. However, it also involves love.

At the very heart of stewardship is LOVE. Love is nurtured in our heart, in our spirit. Stewardship begins with prayer, not for ourselves, but for others and for the world. Stewardship continues through loving action in caring and nurturing others. Stewardship lives through a daily walk

with God in Jesus Christ that shows us opportunity after opportunity for ministry. Love is nurtured in caring for the Earth and for each other.

Love does speak loudly. If you are proclaiming love of others, but your actions show an uncaring attitude, what are others going to hear? Love? Hate? Indifference? Actions that communicate love, caring, and compassion are the messages others will hear.

Who knows what results your actions, your love, will have in someone’s life? There very well may be results that you never see. Maybe, because you volunteered your time, your financial support, your love, a family is able to eat and have a warm, safe place to sleep. Maybe a child is encouraged to stay out of the gang and finish school. Maybe that child goes on to find a cure for a terrible disease.

Maybe that person you invite or that ministry you support, may touch someone’s heart. That person’s life just may be changed for the better. They may go on to become a pastor, or a missionary in a faraway country that touches unknown numbers of people that would never had heard the gospel. Then in turn, those people’s lives are changed. They come to know the love and grace of God.

In the end, your actions do make a difference. You, and you alone, must decide what kind of steward you want to be. You, and you alone, must decide what kind of difference you want to make. You, and you alone, must decide how you will reflect the love of God.

In His Service,

Nannette Bjelland

Stewardship Nugget

Stewardship is “what I do after I say I believe.”

-Clarence Stoughton

Preschool News



Hello, everyone!! Can't believe that 2015-2016 school year is almost over!! We have been so blessed with so many donations and we have created so many different changes in our environment by repurposing several materials. A special thanks to Terry Priester and Scott Pulver for all of the volunteer hours to help us create a great and safe environment for our children!!

Our fruit trees and garden are growing well, and so far, we have 4 roosters and 8 hens! (We need help to find new homes for 3 roosters.) Our bunnies' family is multiplying very quickly; therefore, we are planning on finding new adopting loving homes for our baby bunnies.



We are asking for a minimum of \$10 donation per bunny, please tell your friends!

The staff continues to work very hard to create a safe, loving, nurturing environment for the children, so they can continue growing spiritually, academically, emotionally, etc.

The staff has also continued to pull together along with the support from the church members and the school is on sound ground.

Registration for the summer is still open and since the new school year is just around the corner, we are also taking applications for the next school year already!



Please help our school by keeping us in your prayers, telling a friend, liking us on Facebook, and/or rating our school on Yelp. Thanks for all the support this past year.

We really appreciate it.

Applications are available online!
To register, please visit our website
www.preschool.gswumc.com

Garden Updates

We have been working so hard to maintain our garden in good shape. I'm so happy and feel so blessed for all of the help that I have been getting from our volunteers. Matt, Morgan, and a very special thanks to Victoria for all of the extra work she has been putting in our garden. She is even making some time to help Ms. Ana at the preschool garden. We appreciate all of their hard work.

Since the construction company has moved out, we are planning on expanding the garden...some cash donations would be greatly appreciated, so that we can buy some fruit trees, soil, seeds, fertilizer, etc. If you have any questions, please contact Scott Pulver.

Thank you so much for all of your support and don't forget to come and check the garden and leave your prayer requests!

- Scott Pulver



Church Work Day

The second Saturday of the month is set as the work day for the church. We know that everyone isn't available every month but if you would plan to come for an hour or so, on the months you are available, it would be a big help in keeping our church looking good. We meet from 9am to 12pm.

Some of the things needing attention include:

- Washing fingerprints off the walls with those little white wall cleaner sponges
- Cleaning the wood tops of the pews where everyone takes a hold of them when they stand up
- Cleaning the refrigerators and stove in the kitchen
- Dusting the narthex (area where you come into the church)
- Cutting back plants in the landscaping
- Helping Scott in the vegetable garden
- Cleaning leaves away from the back door area
- Planning new plants in the landscaping

Most of these jobs aren't hard to do and can be done by most people. Please think of what you can help with and plan to attend the next second Saturday. If you get too tired or it gets too hot, it's ok to quit before the job is finished.

It is very helpful if you plan what you want to work on and bring the supplies and/or equipment you need to do the job.



Coffee Sunday

Bill and Lin Somsak would like to thank all who have offered their help and donations of cookies and coffee for our Sunday a.m. coffee time after worship. We also greatly appreciate all those who can stay and help clean up, put away table and chairs and vacuum. If you can offer help occasionally, please let them know.

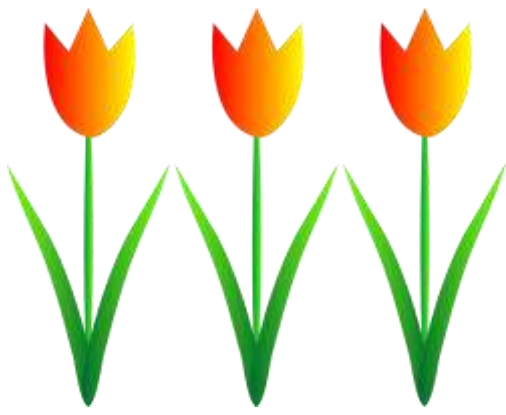


Plant of the Month

This is the first of a series of articles highlighting one of the plants in our drought tolerant landscaping.

This month we start with the plant that has caught more people's fancy than any other in the landscaping, *Calyophus hartwegii* or Trailing buttercups or Hartweg's sundrops. If you want to buy some for your garden, take the Latin name with you to the nursery. That is the name that the nursery will use.

Trailing buttercups are the plants near the driveways and along the front of the church with all the bright yellow flowers. It is low growing and gets about 2-3 feet in diameter. Planted in mass, they make a colorful ground cover. They are part of the evening primrose family and the blooms open up in the afternoon and die the next day. They are attractive to moths, hummingbirds and butterflies. Buttercups will grow in just about any soil and need little water. The plant needs to be trimmed midsummer and cut back in the fall. (Help trimming is always appreciated!) They seem to like living here at Good Shepherd since they have grown bigger than usual.



June 2016 Calendar

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 6:30pm Zumba	2 7pm Vietnamese Prayer Night 7:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Praise Band Practice	3 6:30pm Zumba	4 7am Zumba 9am Vietnamese Computer Class 2pm Vietnamese Worship Team Practice
5 8am Vietnamese Service 10:30am English Service	6 7pm Troop Meeting 7:30pm Bible Study – Bjelland's Home	7 6am Election Day 6:30pm Zumba	8 6:30pm Zumba	9 7pm Vietnamese Prayer Night 7:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Praise Band Practice	10 6:30pm Zumba 7pm Hot Summer Nights & Cool Movies – "Finding Nemo"	11 7am Zumba 9am Church Work Day 9am Vietnamese Computer Class 2pm Vietnamese Worship Team Practice
12 8am Vietnamese Service 10:30am English Service	13 7pm Troop Meeting 7:30pm Bible Study – Bjelland's Home	14 6:30pm Zumba	15 6:30pm Zumba	16 7pm Vietnamese Prayer Night 7:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Praise Band Practice	17 6:30pm Zumba	18 7am Zumba 7am Rummage Sale 9am Vietnamese Computer Class 2pm Vietnamese Worship Team Practice
19 8am Vietnamese Service 10:30am English Service	20 7pm Troop Meeting 7:30pm Bible Study - Bjelland's Home	21 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm Charge Conference	22 6:30pm Zumba	23 7pm Vietnamese Prayer Night 7:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Praise Band Practice	24 6:30pm Zumba	25 7am Zumba 9am Vietnamese Computer Class 2pm Vietnamese Worship Team Practice
26 8am Vietnamese Service 10:30am English Service	21 7pm Troop Meeting 7:30pm Bible Study - Bjelland's Home	28 6:30pm Zumba	29 6:30pm Zumba	30 7pm Vietnamese Prayer Night 7:30pm AA Meeting 7:30pm Praise Band Practice		



**Good Shepherd
United Methodist Church**

8152 McFadden Avenue
Westminster, CA 92683

Rev. Johan Dodge | Senior Pastor
Church Office: 714-897-0100
Email:
goodshepherdwestminster@yahoo.com

Rev. Ase Nguyen | Vietnamese Pastor
Church Office: 714-898-9108

Ana Flores | Preschool Director
Preschool Office: 714-894-4330

For more info, visit our websites:
www.gswumc.com
vngoodshepherdumc.com
www.preschool.gswumc.com



Sunday Worships:

English Service, 10:30am
Vietnamese Service, 8am



8152 McFadden Ave.
Westminster, CA 92683

Address Label