

This month I will be making my annual trek to Phoenix to catch some Spring Training baseball games with my son, Mark. It has become an annual ritual for the past few years, and one we look forward to. We try and see as many games as possible. Last year, in five days, we saw eight baseball games and a basketball game. We needed a vacation from our vacation after that! Last year was significant, too, in that while in Phoenix, Mark heard from a company he interviewed with that they wanted to offer him a job.

I love visiting the minor league ballparks. I love watching the players, the coaches, the fans. The days are warm, the skies are clear. We get to watch all-stars like Buster Posey, but also rookies or minor league players try to get the attention of the fans and most of all, the coaches.



Since March 5 is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season of Lent, I got to thinking about Lent and baseball. Both involve basic disciplines. For the baseball player, it involves running, hitting, catching and throwing. For the Christian, it involves Bible reading, prayer, worship and service to others.

A few years ago, Cardinal Timothy Dolan from New York made just this connection.

"Lent is spiritual spring training," Dolan said. Stressing the themes of prayer, penance and charity, Dolan said Lent gives Catholics 40 days to get back to the essence of Christian living.

"Our enemy is not the Boston Red Sox. Our enemy is not even the St. Louis Cardinals. Our enemy is Satan and sin and selfishness," said Dolan adding that the victory on Easter was not a pennant or a World Series Championship, "our victory is eternal life." (<http://www.wnyc.org/story/188415-blog-ash-wednesday-busy-day-cardinal-dolan/>)

I think he is exactly right. Though the observance of Lent has historically been a Roman Catholic tradition, many in the Protestant tradition have also begun to observe Lent. Lent's meaning and disciplines can apply to all those who love and follow Jesus Christ.

"Our enemy is Satan and sin and selfishness." Who among us does not wrestle with Satan who accuses us and discourages us? Who among us does not wrestle with sin, those habits of the heart that seek to kill our joy, and destroy the good things God is doing in and through us? And who among us does not wrestle with selfishness, where our number one goal is to have things go my way?

It is common practice during Lent to give something up. Usually people give up chocolate, or ice cream, or Facebook, or TV. But equally important is to take up a spiritual discipline: feed a homeless person each week, spend an extra 30 minutes a day reading a spiritual book, do a random act of kindness to someone each day or week, attend the Monday evening prayer meeting for the six weeks of Lent, etc.

I would urge you to recommit yourself to reading through a chapter a week of "The Story". We are just about finished with the Old Testament section, and about to embark on the New Testament section, and the story of Jesus Christ. Our schedule has us on pace to celebrate Easter with the readings on the resurrection of Jesus! The long, long, long waiting for the coming of Jesus into The Story is almost over, and we can thrill once again to the awesome thing God has done in Christ.

I'd also like to invite you to come to our Sunday morning Sunday School class at 9:15 a.m. where we are discussing Essential Tenets of Reformed Faith. It is pretty exciting to examine through the Bible and the Book of Confessions what essential beliefs Presbyterians share. We are laying a groundwork of common understanding so that we can examine some of those controversial issues. I'd love to see you on Sunday mornings before church.

I look forward to baseball's spring training, but also to the spring training of the soul during Lent. Let's continue to seek God together, and see when He can do in and through us. SDG



Some upcoming events:

March 2- Communion Sunday

March 4-10- Pastor Jim gone, Executive Presbyter Rev. Julia Leeth preaches on March 9

March 23- Harvest Conversations

# MARCH 2014



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2  Collection for Inter-Faith 9:15—Bible Study 10:30—Worship / Communion	3 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	4	5  Ash Wednesday	6 9:30 a.m.— Alpha Circle 6:00 p.m.— Praise Practice 7:00 p.m.— Choir Practice	7 10:00 a.m.— Women's Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's	8 
9  9:15—Bible Study 10:30—Worship	10 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	11	12	13 6:00 p.m.— Praise Practice 7:00 p.m.— Choir Practice	14 10:00 a.m.— Women's Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's 1:00 p.m.— Deacons Meeting	15
16 9:15—Bible Study 10:30—Worship	17 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	18	19 6:00 p.m.— Session	20  6:00 p.m.— Praise Practice 7:00 p.m.—	21 10:00 a.m.— Women's Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's 6:00 p.m.— Mariner's Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner	22
23 <b>HARVESTER DEADLINE</b> 9:15—Bible Study 10:30—Worship 6:00 p.m.— Harvest Conversations	24 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting	25	26	27 6:00 p.m.— Praise Practice 7:00 p.m.— Choir Practice	28 10:00 a.m.— Women's Bible Study at Margaret Kuglin's	29
30 9:15—Bible Study 10:30—Worship	31 6:00 p.m.— Church Prayer Meeting					

## **COURAGE IN TIME OF OPPOSITION—Margaret Kuglin**

What do the people who know you best see in you? As they watch you go through hard times and see your faith stay firm or do they see you give up and walk away? When you make mistakes do they see you apologize and fess up to your mistakes or see you blame others for what you did or even lie about it? When you are made fun of and laughed at, do you just walk away or do you say, "Let me tell you what Jesus has done for me"? Courage is a vital and essential characteristic of the life of the Christian.

What is the basis for your courage? Courage means following difficult instructions in the face of danger. Genesis 6 speaks of a difficult time in one of God's servants, named Noah. Noah was righteous in his generation in the eyes of the LORD. Genesis 8:9 states that he was a just man and perfect in his generation and he walked with God. God had work for Noah to do, to build a large ship that could carry all the living things, two of each kind and food for all of them including Noah's family, his sons and their wives.

What did God see when He looked on the earth? Genesis 6:5-8 states, "Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The intensities of the wickedness was great, there was sexual immortality depravity and violence. God saw what was going on in the earth and He was grieved and sorry that He had made man.

God had one voice and that was Noah. What was the basis of Noah's courage? It was his relationship with God, the Bible states; "that Noah walked with God." He has the assurance that he had heard from God. Maybe you are saying that I have never heard from God. God wants to speak to you. Are you listening to Him by reading his word and talking to Him in prayer. He wants to speak to you He created you to hear Him. Get on your knees now and ask Him to speak to your heart. Tell God "I want to hear from you, God I need to hear from you." You don't think He will hear you; yes He will.

Noah was aware of the presence of the Lord with him. Do you know the presence of God in your life? Do you talk with Him and walk with Him? He wants to walk with you and commune with you.

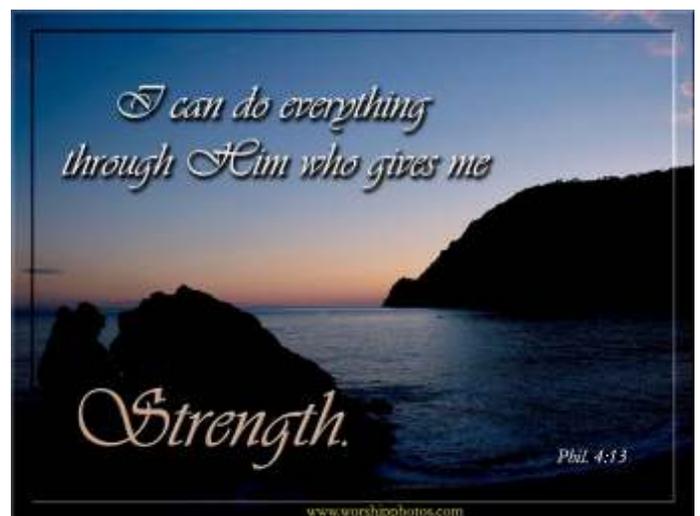


Noah heard the clarity of Gods instruction. He listened to God. He had the courage to believe God and obey Him. Are you walking with God? In Genesis 6:14-16 God told Noah what He wanted him to do. To make and ark large enough to bring every kind of animal, birds and all things that crawl on the ground. God told Noah to take enough food on the Ark for their stay and all the living creatures.

God told Noah that he was going to destroy every living thing on the earth. God's word is very clear on how to live a righteous and godly life. As you are reading God's word are you obeying what it says?

Noah experienced God's strength. Only by the strength of God can we do what He tells us to do. Only by the strength and power of God can we keep going as we stay close to Him. He gives us energy as we walk close to Him and obey His word.

I challenge you to read God's word every day. Seek to know God. Ask Him to make Himself real to you and He will answer that prayer. Its your choice to either keep the Bible closed and turn your back on Him or open it and have a closer walk with Him. The Bible is a living book, it will change you as you open your mind and heart to it.





- 20—Bettye Welsh
- 25—Martha McNamara
- 26—Ingrid Tillion
- 29—Brady Arias



**None**

*If your birthday or anniversary has not been listed, please call the office and let us know.*

## **Regular Prayer List**

### *Assisted Living:*

- Mildred Vine—  
*Paramount Court*
- Donna McRae—  
*Paramount Court (memory care)*
- Mabel Cronan—  
*The Stratford Place*
- June Limpsecht—  
*Paramount Court (memory care)*

### *Health Issues:*

- Lucy Gilliam
- Virginia Irons
- Roger Morrow
- Dorothy Nelson
- Bill Sperry
- Alice Visser



## **Stockton Presbytery Prayer List for March**

- March 2—The Federated Church; Patterson  
Pastor: Kevin Campbell  
Christine Powell-Millar HR
- March 9—Calvary Pres. Church; Stockton  
Pastor: Hiromi Yoneda  
Robert Ryland HR
- March 16—Calvin Crest Conference Center  
Paul MacMurray HR;  
John Snyder
- March 23—First Pres. Church; Stockton  
Pastor: Gus Wright  
Tino Ballesteros
- March 30 —Synod of the Pacific  
Support Staff  
Robert Sherwood HR  
William Nishimura HR

## **Ceres School's Prayer List for March**

- March 2—Carroll Fowler Elementary  
Principal: Bruce Clifton
- Feb. 9—Caswell Elementary  
Principal: Kirsten Chaplin
- Feb. 16—Central Valley High  
Principal: Amy Peterman
- Feb. 23 —Ceres High  
Principal: Linda Stubbs



## MISSIONS—LYN LARANJO

March 16<sup>th</sup> is our collection date for Living Water International. Through our funds collected they will be able to help provide communities with clean water and at the same time teach them of the "living water" that only Christ can provide. This organization began in 1990 after a trip to Kenya by a Texas group revealed the need for clean drinking water. Now groups are able to go into areas of need and train, consult, and equip the local people to implement solutions in their own communities. In the past 20 years 2 billion people have gained access to clean drinking water!



Church wide yard sale is scheduled for May 17th. It is never too early to start cleaning out your cabinets and/or garage. Please welcome your friends and neighbors to have a space at the yard sale too. Hundreds of people come through looking to buy your stuff. It only costs \$10 for your space and 10% of your profits will go towards our general fund.

## Marlin Sena Trip to Rwanda

Our very own Marlin Sena has been chosen to be part of a mission team to Rwanda to distribute Shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. He will be leaving around April 26 for about a week. We are proud of Marlin and Marilyn's dedication to Shoebox, and are thrilled Marlin gets to experience this.



The session has authorized the establishment of a Harvest Mission Trip Fund to which people can contribute tax-deductible gifts in support of mission trips. We'd like to raise some money to assist those from our congregation who travel on mission trips, in this case, Marlin. If you'd like to contribute to the fund, you can write a check with "Mission Trip Fund" on the memo line.

As a creative and healthy alternative, Pastor Jim has committed to walking 100 miles during the forty days of Lent. If you'd like to encourage Pastor Jim's physical health, and raise money for the Mission Trip Fund, you can pledge a per mile amount. Assuming Pastor Jim actually walks the 100 miles, a penny per mile would yield \$1.00. A dime per mile would yield \$10.00. A quarter per mile would yield \$25.00. A dollar per mile would be \$100.00.

We'd like the money to be collected on Easter Sunday, April 20, a week before Marlin leaves. So how about it? Let's be creative and generous for the cause of Christ, and the spreading of the gospel around the world.

Jim Stochl

Mission Statement ~ With God in control, the mission of the Harvest Presbyterian Church is to proclaim and bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and nurture the faith of our church family.

**Church Information**

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**POSTAGE**

**Harvester Deadline for April 2014 is  
March 23, 2014**

