



We welcome this new year as a gift from God. I am grateful for this past year, and the experiences I have had, and the lessons I have learned. And the lessons I have learned again. And again. And again.

One of those lessons is about trust; trusting God, trusting people and trusting myself.

A month ago, we welcomed Dempsey into our household. He is a beautiful black and white Cocker Spaniel. He was bred to be a show dog, but has a slight imperfection that only dog judges could see. So the woman who initially bought him to show sold him to us. Our previous two Cocker Spaniels died in early 2016, so we have been without a dog for almost a year. We were excited to welcome Dempsey, and loved him immediately. However, that has not been his experience.

There are things he loves to do. He loves going for walks. He loves running and chasing in the back yard. But he is very nervous about people, especially males. He is a nervous dog, and is not very trusting. He runs and hides. He barks at every noise, and every movement. He startles easily. We have tried to be patient and loving with him, giving him treats, trying to honor his sense of space. And while he has immediately attached himself to Beth and Rachel, he has not done so with me. When I shared this with a friend of mine, he replied, “smart dog!”

It has been hard on me to play with him, run with him, take him on walks, sit quietly with him, praise him, offer him treats, and he still backs off and barks. It has been painful for Beth to watch this as well, as she obviously wants Dempsey to bond with me as he has with her.

The previous owner said that if this didn't work, she'd love to have him back. We are wrestling with whether we can make this work with Dempsey, or whether for his own well-being he needs to be with someone he trusts. It is painful to consider this.

I wonder if this is how God feels about me sometimes. God is infinitely more patient than I am, and is always trying to woo me to deeper trust and love. And yet, things come about, and instead of drawing closer to God, I hide. When I feel threatened by circumstances, I bark rather than drawing close to my Heavenly Father. What God intends as a gift to me, I take as a threat to me. I am beginning to understand. “Ah, so this is what God must go through with me!”

So I will continue to try and build trust with Dempsey, though it would really help if I spoke fluent “dog”. But that's just what God did in Jesus, right? Jesus is the Word made flesh. Whatever God is, whatever God wanted to communicate with the human race, became a man in Jesus. He is Emmanuel, God with us. As John writes,

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— (1 John 1:1)

Building trust is hard work, and the one who is being urged to trust must have some openness to trust. Baby steps. So I will continue to lean into God this new year, to learn to trust Him in my successes and failures, in my strengths and weaknesses, and in all the things I would like to control, but cannot. May this be a year of building trust with God for you, too.

SDG

Pastor Jim



**Notes:**

- 1) I will be in Southern California on January 8th for the memorial service for a dear friend of mine. Please pray for safe travels. Lee Heim has agreed to preach that day.
- 2) We will ordain and install new elders and deacons on Sunday, January 15th. Thank you to those who have so faithfully served: Cyndy Cawley, Art Johnston, John Baughman and Nora McKinsey.
- 3) The Cookies and Cocoa Outreach was great! We were rained out once, but the other two nights saw us distribute 225 cups of Hot Chocolate, and we talked with maybe 400 people altogether. We will definitely have to do this next year!
- 4) A Griefshare group will be starting on Monday, January 16th at 6:45 p.m. in the Youth Room. If you know of a grieving person, or would like to help a grieving person, invite them to this group. And come yourself! Cost is \$15 for the workbook.
- 5) Some goals I'd like to set for 2017
  - a. Find a new Choir Director (please pray)
  - b. Add five (5) members to the Choir
  - c. Increase average worship attendance from 50 to 60
  - d. Add ten (10) new members
  - e. Grow the Youth Group
  - f. Double the Monday Prayer Meeting participation to six (6)
  - g. Begin a monthly reading group

## **What Grieving People Wish You Knew at Christmas**—by Nancy Guthrie

[Note: this can be true in every season]

“Happy Thanksgiving!” “Merry Christmas!” “Happy New Year!” As the end of the year approaches, everywhere we turn someone is telling us we should be happy.

But for those who've recently lost someone they love, the holidays can seem more like something to survive than to enjoy. The traditions and events that can add so much joy and meaning to the season are punctuated with painful reminders of the person we love who is not here to share in it. Many have wished they could find a quiet place to hide until January 2.

While those of us who surround grieving people can't fix the pain of loss, we can bring comfort as we come alongside those who hurt with special sensitivity to what grief is like during the holidays. Grieving people wish we all knew at least five truths, among others, at Christmas.

### **1. Even the best times are punctuated with an awareness that someone is missing.**

I remember a conversation I had with a friend as we prepared to head out on a holiday trip shortly after our daughter, Hope, died. “That should be fun!” she said. I sensed I was supposed to agree wholeheartedly with

her.

What I didn't know how to explain is that when you've lost a member of your family, even the best of times are painfully incomplete. Someone is missing. Even the best days and happiest events are tinged with sadness. Wherever you go, the sadness goes with you.

## **2. Social situations are hard.**

I have never been able to figure out why crowds are difficult when you're grieving, but they are. Small talk can be unbearable when something so significant has happened. Meeting new people will likely bring questions about family. To walk alone into a room full of couples when your spouse has died, or into an event filled with children when your child has died, can be a soul-crushing reminder of what you have lost.

"For those who've recently lost a loved one, the holidays can seem more like something to survive than to enjoy."

If you've invited someone in the midst of grief to your holiday event, let them know that you understand if it seems too hard at the last minute and they have to cancel, or that they may only be able to stay for a short time.

If you're going to an event, give a grieving person a call and ask if you can pick her up and stick with her throughout the event for support. When you come upon a grieving person at a holiday social event, let him know that you are still thinking about the person he loves who has died, and invite him to talk about his memories with that person. Don't be afraid to say the name of the person who has died. It will be a balm to the grieving person's soul.

## **3. Extended family can be awkward and uneasy.**

Grief is often awkward — even, and perhaps especially, with those to whom we're closest.

My husband and I host weekend retreats for couples that have lost children, and the difficulty of being with family at the holidays is often a topic of conversation among these couples. They know that some family members think they've grieved long enough and want them to move on. Others want to initiate a conversation about the person who died but aren't sure how. What often happens is that the name of the person who died is never mentioned, and it feels to the person who is grieving that they have been erased from the family.

Do you know a grieving person heading to a family gathering for the holidays? You might ask about their expectations when they're with family. And if they have a strong desire for their loved one to be remembered in a certain way, combined with a fear that it may not happen, you might encourage and help them to write a letter to their family in advance stating clearly what would bring comfort, rather than expect that their family will instinctively know.

## **4. Tears are not a problem.**

For most of us, grief tends to work itself out in tears — tears that come out at times we don't expect. Sometimes grieving people sense that people around them see their tears as a problem to be solved — that tears must mean they aren't doing very well with their grief. But it makes sense that the great sorrow of losing someone we love would come out in tears. Tears are not the enemy. Tears do not reflect a lack of faith. Tears are a gift from God that help to wash away the deep pain of loss.

It is a great gift to let grieving people know that they don't have to be embarrassed by their tears around you — that they are welcome to cry with you. An even greater gift is to shed tears of your own over the loss of the person they love. Your tears reflect the worth of the person who died and assure them that they are not alone in missing that person.

You can read the whole article here:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-grieving-people-wish-you-knew-at-christmas>

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POSTAGE



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.

## Harvest Leadership 2017

### Deacons

Virginia Bathe (Moderator)  
Pat Cousins  
Martha McNamara  
Nawatha Reed  
Linda Sherman  
Myrna Wilhite

### Elders

Patti Arbizu (Clerk/Worship)  
Susan Bennett (Communications)  
Michael Cousins (Treasurer)  
Karen Edwards  
Staci Edwards (CE)  
Brandy Meyer (CE/Youth)  
Wilson Kailiponi

### Church Information

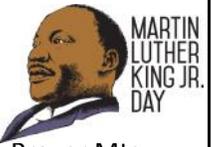
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### Emails:

Pastor Jim Stochl— [harvest.pastor.jim@gmail.com](mailto:harvest.pastor.jim@gmail.com)  
Prayer Requests—[prayer@harvestpres.org](mailto:prayer@harvestpres.org)  
Kohl James —[secretary@harvestpres.org](mailto:secretary@harvestpres.org)



**JANUARY 2017**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Communion Service— 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Prayer Meeting— 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>National Drinking Straw Day</p> 	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Alpha Circle— 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Choir—6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team— 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Worship Service— 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Prayer Meeting— 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p> 	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Choir—6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team— 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Women's Bible Study—10:30 a.m. (Margaret Kuglin's)</p> <p>Deacons— 12:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>14</b></p>
<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Worship Service — 10:30 a.m. (Ordain/Install Officers)</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>  <p>MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY</p> <p>Prayer Mtg— 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Griefshare— 6:45-8:15 p.m.</p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>Session Meeting: 1:30 p.m. (Youth Room)</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Choir—6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team— 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Women's Bible Study—10:30 a.m. (Margaret Kuglin's)</p> <p>Mariners— 6:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>21</b></p>  <p>National Granola Bar Day! Wednesday January 21</p>
<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Worship Service— 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Prayer Meeting— 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Griefshare— 6:45-8:15 p.m.</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Choir—6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team— 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>Women's Bible Study—10:30 a.m. (Margaret Kuglin's)</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>
<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Worship Service— 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>End of Month Potluck—11:45 a.m.</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Prayer Meeting— 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>Griefshare— 6:45-8:15 p.m.</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Choir—6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Praise Team— 7:30 p.m.</p>  <p>GROUNDHOG DAY</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Women's Bible Study—10:30 a.m. (Margaret Kuglin's)</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>

## January Sunday School Schedule\*

- 1/1 Nursery:** Kendall Meyer, Staci Edwards  
**K-3rd:** Brandy Meyer, Judy Salyer
- 1/8 Nursery:** Kendall Meyer, Nawatha Reed  
**K-3rd:** Beth Stochl, Anette Arias
- 1/15 Nursery:** Kendall Meyer, Judy Salyer  
**K-3rd:** Staci Edwards, Patti Arbizu
- 1/22 Nursery:** Kendall Mayer, Martha McNamara  
**K-3rd:** Brandy Meyer, Beth Stochl
- 1/29 Nursery:** Kendall Mayer, Brandy Meyer  
**K-3rd:** Cyndy Cawley, Staci Edwards

\* This schedule may change! Check with Brandy Meyer if you have any conflicts or questions.

## Regular Prayer List

### *Health Issues:*

Virginia Irons  
Dorothy Nelson  
Margaret Kuglin (eye)  
Patti Arbizu (knee)  
Alice Visser (English Oaks)



## **New Office Hours**

Tuesdays: 8:00a.m.—12:00p.m.

Thursdays: 3:30p.m.—7:30p.m.

Friday: 9:00a.m.—1:00p.m.

*Friendly  
Reminders*



15—Frank & Nawatha Reed



1—Michael Cousins