



*Trinity Presbyterian Church
Berwyn, Pennsylvania*

June 1 – 28, 2009

Music & Worship Notes Coming Up



- May 31 - - Pentecost . . celebration of the Lord's Supper & welcoming the 2009 Confirmation Class
- June 7 – Camp Donegal worship & children's choir sings
- June 14 – Choir Recognition Sunday with Rev. Ray Larson of Paoli Presbyterian Church preaching
- June 21 –celebrate our graduates from high school, college, and graduate programs
- June 28 – warm-up to worship with a hymn sing & special music with Paul Vanderslice as soloist and Ellie Watts as pianist

June, 2009

Dear Daily Walkers,

'Tis the season for walks at the shore for some, footprints in the sand. For some, the walk to school is slowly coming to an end; for others, the anxious walk of the search for employment is reaching a new level. Wherever we find our feet, the Spirit of God comes along side of us as advocate, comforter, counselor, friend.

I invite you to join me for the walk through the Scriptures for next month as we reflect on the Spirit spreading the good news of Jesus Christ in the ancient world, and today.

We will have opportunities for different approaches to the Scriptures this month. Worship on June 7 will be led by Camp Donegal's worship team, so the Scripture lessons they use will fit the camp theme. On June 14, Rev. Raymond Larson, the Interim Pastor at Paoli Presbyterian, will be preaching on the doctrine of the trinity, and the Chancel Choir will have some very special music. We will begin worship on the 28th and following Sundays with "an old fashioned hymn sing" as we warm up for the special summer music offerings. What an exciting mix of worship styles this month!

In Christ,

Jay Wilkins

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
June 1 – 7, 2009

Monday, June 1: Isaiah 6: 1-8

This passage could be titled “the Calling of a Prophet.” Like a good playbill, let me try to set the scene.

It is likely that Isaiah is a participant during a cultic ceremony meant to represent the return of the divine King to his temple. There is a procession. Isaiah is a prophet, not a priest. So he stands outside of the temple, looking in. There is thick smoke from the burning of incense swirling in the sanctuary. As Isaiah stares in, he sees a glimpse of the divine – then he is swept up in the intensity of the moment, and his spiritual absorption in the ceremony becomes a very real experience. He experiences the divine in all its glory. And he is awed. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. (Any guesses regarding what hymn we might sing this Sunday?)

But it doesn’t end with an amazing and awesome experience of being in the presence of the divine, does it? No, first there is a cleansing, and it comes without any warrants. I am struck by the amazing similarities of how Isaiah is cleansed of all sin in the same, undeserving manner that later, Jesus does for us. God delivered grace centuries before the birth of the Christ. It makes me wonder how wholly inept we must be, that God needs to send Jesus to deliver us from our sinful nature. How separated from God we must have become, how we still must be. It is truly an act of grace.

One of the texts I studied (The Interpreter’s Bible) suggests that the image of a live or burning coal or ember is the wrong image. It implies that there is a requisite pain associated with the act of receiving divine grace. The correct image is one of a heated flat stone that is used for domestic baking. This is a much different image, isn’t it? In the same manner that we use heat to cook and purify the food we eat, the heated stone is used to purify the lips of Isaiah. Isn’t this image more uplifting and nurturing?

Tuesday, June 2: Isaiah 6: 1-8

Continuing with Isaiah ... (isn’t this a rich passage?!)

Two more things happen after Isaiah is purified with the heat from the holy fire. First, there is a call from God. Verse 8 in my bible is translated, “And I heard the voice of the Lord ...” This might be better translated, **Then** I heard the voice of the Lord ...

“The hearing is consequent upon the act of purification, which affects not only the lips, but the ears and the heart.” - (The Interpreter’s Bible)

Now that Isaiah’s heart is prepared, he hears the voice of the Lord, asking, “Who shall I send? Who will go for us?”

The second thing that happens is that Isaiah responds. “Here I am. Send me.” (I’m thinking of another potential hymn for Sunday.)

So what does all of this mean for me? I have a few thoughts -- How can I immerse myself in an experience so awesome and transforming, that I cannot help but be moved to respond? How can I prepare myself so I will be ready to hear God’s calling for me? Will I be ready to respond, enthusiastically and unequivocally?

Wednesday, June 3: Romans 8: 12-17

Paul is using a very powerful metaphor of adoption to describe our new relationship with, in, and through Christ. To understand just how powerful this metaphor is, we must understand Paul’s context, as a Roman citizen.

Roman adoption may have been even more difficult and serious than the process that exists in our culture today. The Roman family structure was very father-centric. The father had absolute power over the family, and a son, regardless of how old he was, was always subject to and under the absolute possession and control of his father. If a person were to be adopted, he must pass from the control of one father to another. A very elaborate legal and symbolic process was required for the one father to cede control of the person. The adopting father had to present legal arguments for the transference. Only after both processes had been completed, was the adoption complete.

Within the Roman culture, once an adoption was completed, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family. The adopted son received the same heir rights as all of his step-brothers. In Roman law, the old life of the adopted person was completely wiped clean – all old debts were cancelled, and he was considered a new person.

“We see then that every step of Roman adoption was meaningful in the mind of Paul when he transferred the picture to our adoption into the family of God. Once we were in the absolute control of our own sinful human nature; but God, in his mercy, has brought us into his absolute possession. The old life has no more rights over us; God has an absolute right. The past is cancelled and its debts are wiped out; we begin a new life with God and become heirs of all his riches.” - William Barclay

I have a deeper respect for the gravity of the gift that God has presented us with. How did I ever deserve this? I didn’t – it is the miracle of grace.

Thursday, June 4: John 3: 1-17

These verses from John include one of the most loved and well-known verses – John 3:16. More on that tomorrow. Today let's focus on the beginning of Chapter 3, which starts with a story about a leader of the community, Nicodemus – a Pharisee, and maybe one of the Sanhedrin.

First, we need to understand a bit about the Pharisees. They were a small, select group of people within Hebrew society, and they were the most holy of all people – because they spent every waking moment of every day observing every bit of Jewish law. To a Jew, observation of the law was the most sacred act in the entire world. The Law consists of the first 5 books of the bible, the Torah. This was believed to be the perfect word of God. But these five books were not enough. Additional books, the Mishnah and the Talmud, were written to interpret and codify the law. And these books are perhaps every bit as convoluted as our current tax code. To a non-Jew, it may all seem to be a bit crazy. However, to Nicodemus, this was how he understood goodness – to follow the law. In this light, it is astonishing that he would wish to talk to Jesus. Yet there is something about Jesus that Nicodemus must recognize as god-like. And come to him he does.

But the encounter seems to be wholly unsatisfying. Nicodemus cannot grasp what Jesus is telling him. And Jesus seems somewhat exasperated with Nicodemus, unable to understand how a spiritual leader in the community cannot grasp his truth. So what are we to make of this? Later in John (7:50 and 19:39), we are given clues that Nicodemus is still working things out, or maybe Jesus' words are still working on Nicodemus. And maybe that is the lesson for us – that transformation may not be a slam-bang event, but rather a process – a time-consuming process.

In many ways, we, the folk of Berwyn, are like Nicodemus. We face many of the same obstacles to becoming a disciple that he faced. We are (relatively) wealthy, we yield more power than many others in the world, and we are an intelligent and learned people. Jesus had much to say about how wealth, riches, and power can be obstacles. And Jesus often asked his disciples to ignore common sense. The good news is that if the Word of God continued to work on Nicodemus, it can continue to work on us, and we can continue to grow in our relationship with Jesus and with God.

FRIDAY, June 5: John 3: 1-17

John 3:16 – I must admit, this verse has fallen dangerously close to becoming trite for me. I’ve seen it printed on placards in the stands at many televised football games. It has been printed on many knick-knacks and other hand-outs I’ve received from various folks looking to convert me. So I tend to dismiss this verse. What I mistake I am making.

This verse is so simple, yet it captures the essence of the gospel. It tells us that the initiative in all salvation lies with God. God did not send his Son in response to some act of repentance or contrition from us. No, God acted without provocation and started it all.

This verse tells us that the mainspring of God’s being is love. This text shows us that God is acting “not for his own sake, but for ours, not to satisfy his desire for power, not to bring a universe to heel, but to satisfy his love. “ – (Wm. Barclay)

This verse tells us the width of God’s love – it was the whole world that God so loved, not just a nation, not just the good people, not just the people that love God back. Everyone!! No conditions.

Finally, another quote from the Barclay commentary – from Augustine: “God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love.”

SATURDAY, June 6: Psalm 29

And we end the week back where we began. This Psalm evokes many of the same images as found in the Isaiah passage. Images of an all-powerful God, a God that is awesome, and wholly beyond our comprehension. We can only accept the blessings of the Lord for what they are, acts of grace from a loving father.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
June 8 – 14, 2009

I love the words of The Reconciliation Song, by Morris Chapman, Buddy Owens and Claire Cloninger:

*Oh, let us be the generation of reconciliation and peace
 And let us be a holy nation where pride and prejudice shall cease.
 Let us speak the truth in love to the lost and least of these,
 Let us serve the Lord in unity so others will believe.*

*O let us be the generation of reconciliation and peace,
 And let us build on one foundation till He comes and the wars of men shall cease.
 Let us share the love of Jesus without hypocrisy,
 Let mercy and forgiveness begin with you and me...*

In contrast to these sentiments, the themes expressed in this week's Old Testament scripture passages are those of triumphing over enemies; of seeing justice in the form of judgment of evil and annihilation of enemies. What are we to do with these passages? My first impulse is to say, 'we can see how far that's gotten the human race; let's try a new way.' Is that what wise people had in mind when the passages were included in scripture, and in our lectionary? Or is there really something we can learn about the way God works with people in these passages? I'll do my best to let God speak through them.

Monday, June 8: 1 Samuel 17:1a, 4-11, 19-23, 32-49

This story is taught to us from childhood: God empowered the little guy, David, to win against the big bad guy, Goliath. David states clearly that he is coming to the fight, not with sword and spear, but with the name of the LORD as his weapon. "It is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands." (v. 47)

David showed great courage, as well as great skill, both as an orator and as a marksman. He saw how these talents could be used by God. The prepared study material adds this: "At the heart of the story is God's faithfulness, God's power, and God's unique way of doing things. David responds faithfully to the call of God." And, we might add, David trusts that God will give him the victory.

Tuesday, June 9: 1 Samuel 17:1a, 4-11, 19-23, 32-49

In this story, we identify with David. But what if we as a nation actually have more in common with Goliath and the Philistines? The prepared discussion material asks some good questions:

What implications might David's response to the obvious power and dominance of the Philistines have for us today? What do we believe about power? How does our relationship to God help us discern right use of power? How should we respond to this story when, for much of the world, those of us from developed 'western' nations can often be seen as Goliath?

Wednesday, June 10: Psalm 9: 9 – 14

The psalmist expresses the faith that the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. "You have never forsaken those who seek you", he says (v. 10). These are comforting words, expressing an enduring faith that God will hear us in our time of need and will protect us.

Verse 12 asserts that God, the just, righteous judge, is on the side of those who are wronged: 'He who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.'

It's easy to imagine David and the victorious Israelites singing this psalm after the defeat of Goliath and the Philistines. That is surely the sort of setting in which it was created.

Thursday, June 11: Psalm 9: 15 – 20

The focus in this part of the psalm seems to go from specific (as if one battle has been won), to general, referring to 'the nations' instead of 'my enemy.' Two verses seem very timely: 15 The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden. 20: Let the nations know they are but men.

While the psalmist was probably speaking of 'the nations' as opposed to Israel, we can understand the words to include all who stray from God's path. In our recklessness and arrogance we forget that we are not gods. We think we can succeed even if we choose not to follow God's precepts: both those written in Scripture, and those written in the natural law of the universe. In so many ways we can see the results in today's world.

Friday, June 12: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13

Paul's letter begins, "As God's fellow workers, we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. (vv 1, 2)

Paul seems to be quoting Isaiah 49:8, though in the NIV those verses are translated, "I will hear you...I will help you." Perhaps Paul changed the time to emphasize that the time of God's favor and salvation is no longer in the future, but has come to pass.

Paul goes on to speak of his hardships (vv. 3 – 10). One in particular is a hardship that he chose: he is poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (v. 10) "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited." He did not choose hardship for the sake of hardship, but for the sake of commending himself in every way as a servant of God.

Does our wealth or easy lifestyle put stumbling blocks in anyone's path to God?

Saturday, June 13

What have we learned this week?

Paul speaks 'in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;' (2 Cor. 6:6); in truthful speech and in the power of God, with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left (v 7).

David's weapons were likewise unconventional. 1 Sam. 17:47: 'All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD'S and he will give all of you into our hands.' David's actions and words credit the LORD, as Paul's do.

But the preceding verse in Samuel reports that David said this: (46) "This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

Do we trust God – and our sword? When is it really God's battle? Do we have permission to fight wars? All wars, some wars, or no wars?

Goliath was an aggressor and the champion of an aggressor nation. Goliath was also clearly stronger than anyone in the Israelite army. We would probably all agree that David was acting in accordance with God's will when he killed Goliath. However, we must always be very cautious when we are tempted to equate our enemies with evil, and ourselves with good. Finally, we need to examine our lives and to prayerfully ask how we, like Paul, can live in a way that is not a stumbling block to any, but rather which makes many rich – spiritually.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE
June 15 – 21, 2009

*The readings for this week challenge us to put our faith into action. Jesus tells Jarius:
 “Do not be afraid; just believe.”
 May our hope and trust in him be fed daily by his words.*

Monday, June 15: Mark 5: 21 – 24

Jarius gives obeisance to Jesus, falling at his feet and pleading him to save his daughter’s life. His actions demonstrate his awareness of God’s presence in Jesus and his hope in him.

We can sympathize with his frustration when his need is interrupted by Jesus’ question: “Who touched my clothes?” The disciples are incredulous since the crowds are pressing them together. How could Jesus distinguish a single touch?

Tuesday, June 16: Mark 5: 25 – 30

Interrupting Jarius’ need is the woman who has suffered 12 years from bleeding. This disease made her ceremonially unclean, separating her from her family and society. What a tragic situation!

For this reason she probably approached Jesus from behind so as not to be noticed. Having touched his garment, she knew instantly she had been cured! Jesus was aware that power had gone out of him, and so his question in verse 38: “Who has touched my clothes?”

Jesus recognized her faith but wanted her to have a fuller understanding of what had taken place. Her touch spoke of her deep sense of need and her conviction of his saving power.

Wednesday, June 17: Mark 5: 35 – 43

We return for Jarius’ need for his daughter. People have come from his home saying she is dead and there is no need to bother Jesus further. How distraught he must have felt! If only Jesus had not been distracted? Jesus ignores the messengers and advises Jarius to “not be afraid; just believe.” Then he invites Peter, James and John to accompany him to the house. It prepared his disciples in a personal and intimate way. One can imagine the rejoicing in that household that day.

Thursday, June 18: 2nd Samuel 1: 1, 17 – 27

After the defeat of the Amalekites, David learns of Saul's death. Now Israel was without a king. Despite the ups and downs of Saul's and David's relationship, he truly mourned Saul's death. His best friend and spiritual brother was Saul's son Jonathan. David's grief is intense. He admired, respected, and honored Saul and what he had done for Israel. This lament cries out to God in faith and hope to bring healing to the nation and his personal loss.

Friday, June 19: Psalm 130

A song of ascents – climbing upward from despair. It expresses so wonderfully our feeling of lostness. It reminds us we need to meditate, learn to wait and listen to his voice. Hope endures and faith will heal.

Saturday, June 20: 2nd Corinthians 8: 7 – 15

Paul exhorts the brothers of Achaia to add their offering to the brothers in Macedonia to help the material needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem. We learn we have a duty to share with others and that the fulfillment of that duty can have rich spiritual significance. Despite great poverty and affliction the Macedonians gave out of a sense of fellowship.

Titus admits that he has no authority to demand a collection but desires to offer them the opportunity to express their sincerity. We recall the Lord's commendation of the widow in Mark 12: 41 – 44. It is the spirit in which the gift is made that is important. May we be so inspired also.

LECTIONARY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

June 22 – 28, 2009

We are all invited to live in and to tell out the good news about God and God's presence in the world. In each of these passages we are invited to move out into the life God has for us, despite the obstacles that may deter us from doing so. Moving out in faith requires trust in God and allowing imagination and hope to have at least as much influence over us as clear thinking about the challenges and hurdles.

Monday, June 22: Mark 6: 1 - 13

Who is Jesus? Is he the carpenter from Nazareth, as claimed by some in this week's passage? Why is this the most they are able to see in him? What are they missing in terms of who he is? Notice how so many around Jesus in this gospel don't "get it" about who Jesus is; even those that we might most expect to understand, such as his disciples.

As the readers of this gospel, we are on a journey of growing understanding about who Jesus is, as well. With the early hearers of this story, we too are invited live the question "who is Jesus?" What do we recognize in Jesus and believe about him? How do we respond to what we grow to believe about him?

The people of Jesus' hometown respond in opposite fashion. They disbelieve. Their disbelief precludes them from experiencing Jesus' "deeds of power." Unable to do works of power, Jesus moves on and sends out the 12 to take his message and the healing that accompanies his message to neighboring villages. They go out in humility, and, dependent on the hospitality of those who will cooperate, participate in and share in the ministry of Jesus. When Jesus sends his disciples out to the surrounding villages, he also prepares them for rejection, just as he will again in chapter 13 when the disciples ask Jesus about the future. They are to clearly and decisively leave behind those places where they receive neither a welcome nor a hearing. The disciples are to travel simply and lightly. They are to be satisfied with the first home to which they are welcomed in each place. They are also instructed to take little in the way of provisions. In keeping with the tone of the whole of Mark's gospel, there is urgency in this mission. In sending out the disciples with the instructions he does, Jesus ensures that the focus will be on the message of healing and deliverance that the disciples bring - not on the disciples themselves.

As the story of the healing of the paralyzed man in Mark chapter 2 reveals, it is by these healings that people will be able to perceive Jesus' identity. In this passage, the disciples begin to fulfill the promise that Jesus made to them at their call (Mark 1:17). The disciples - and by extension, we as the readers - are invited to be participants in

Jesus' ministry. We are invited to discover that God's grace is all we need as we live the good news of Christ.

Tuesday, June 23: 2 Samuel 5: 1 - 5, 9 - 10

Despite its brevity, this passage describes one of the most significant moments in the history of the Israelite people. During the reign of Saul, the first king, the people were engaged in a protracted war with their neighbors and amongst themselves. David became the ruler of Hebron while Saul retained the northern kingdom of Israel. At Saul's death in battle, the northerners were unable to find a king from their number and so approached David to rule Israel and to unify the nation. The people recognized something in this leader that would bring them prosperity and peace. What a contrast to the disbelief and lack of recognition of the Nazarenes about Jesus.

Wednesday, June 24: Psalm 48

This psalm is a multi-layered poem about God, the nation, and the city. The city we read of here is part reality and part hopeful nationalistic dream. It is a living reminder - almost an embodiment - of God and God's purposes. How does this vision empower the people to move towards the hope God holds for them? How does what the people recognize in the city allow them to participate in God's deeds of power?

We often pray both for God's guidance and a guide-a map that gives us landmarks and directions and a constant companion who has an intimate knowledge of the way and will make sure we interpret the map correctly. The Bible can be such a map and the Holy Spirit will be the constant companion and guide. As you make your way through, use both the map and your Guide.

Thursday, June 25: 2 Corinthians 12: 2 - 10

Speaking in the third person, Paul describes an experience of God so intense that he believes he is in danger of becoming self-important. Paul believes this possible tendency toward self-importance is ameliorated by a persistent and bothersome condition that he ascribes to Satan. Whatever the nature of these attacks, they do not prevent Paul from following his call to be a messenger of the gospel. Paul experiences God's grace as God works in and through him. Regardless of his weaknesses, he relies on the grace of God to keep him empowered for ministry.

The faithful life is like a pair of bifocal glasses: it keeps the present hardships and realities in sharp focus while helping us imagine a new world of promise. These passages are about recognizing the promise and moving towards it. Jesus moves on, the disciples move out, Paul keeps moving. How are we moving ahead in our faith? What makes it

possible for us to do God's work in the world? What do we recognize about ourselves and about our faith in Christ that empowers us? There is also a call in these passages for us to reflect on how we limit the power of God by our own lack of imagination. When do we not recognize God at work in others? Do we ever hinder the God's work in the world by what we cannot believe or fail to recognize?

Friday, June 26: Luke 14: 28 - 34

When a builder doesn't count the costs or estimates it inaccurately, his building may be left half completed. Will your Christian life be only half built and then abandoned because you did not count the cost of commitment to Jesus? What are those costs? Christians may face the loss of social status or wealth. They may have to give up control over their money, their time or their career. Following Christ does not mean a trouble-free life. We must carefully count the costs of becoming Christ's disciples so that we will know what we are getting into and won't be tempted later to turn back.

Salt can lose its flavor. When it gets wet and then dries, nothing is left but tasteless residue. Many Christians blend into the world and avoid the cost of standing up for Christ. But Jesus says if Christians lose their distinctive saltiness, they become worthless. Just as salt flavors and preserves food, we are to preserve the good in the world, help keep it from spoiling and bring new flavor to life. This requires careful planning, willing sacrifice and unswerving commitment to Christ's kingdom. Being salty is not easy, but if a Christian fails in this function, he or she fails to represent Christ in the world. How salty are you?

Saturday, June 27: John 13: 34 - 35

To love others was not a new commandment (see Leviticus 19:18), but to love others as much as Christ loved others was revolutionary. Now we are to love others based on Jesus' sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ; it will also keep believers strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God's love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus' love. Jesus says that our Christ like love will show we are his disciples. Do people see petty bickering, jealousy, and division in your church? Or do they know you are Jesus' followers by your love for one another?

Love is more than warm feelings; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting energy to others' welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of loving is hard to do. This is why people notice you and know you are empowered by a supernatural source.



Trinity Presbyterian Church
(corner of Waterloo & Berwyn Avenues in Berwyn)
Vacation Bible School
Ages: 4-12



June 21 - 25, 2009 (Sunday-Thursday)

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Games! Snacks! Crafts! Bible Stories! Music! Dinner!

\$30.00 Per Child; \$75.00 Per Family Maximum

Make checks payable to Trinity Presbyterian Church



For Vacation Bible School Information Call Terri Roseberry @ 610-993-8054

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