



White Rock Presbyterian Church

Overlook

An informative newsletter published by the White Rock Presbyterian Church

June 2013

From the Pastor's Desk

Spring into Summer? It's not that straightforward. For the past several years we seem to bounce back and forth between seasons for a while before Mother Nature settles on a more permanent shift. We've had very warm days interrupted by freezes that wipe out our precious apricot blossoms. We've had wind as if it were a season unto itself and, God bless us, we've had sunshine – lots of sunshine.

Sometimes we can get so caught up in what **isn't** going according to plan or along our set of expectations that we overlook the constant, stabilizing factor that sustains us. But without things being predictable, things will never feel quite stable. It keeps us on edge, on guard, and it's exhausting.

As a psychology major in at Willamette University (go Bearcats!) I had to train a pigeon, Thor, to perform a variety of tasks. One such task was to peck a disc by the mirror in his cage. When he did his job, I did mine, instantly giving him a luscious dried kernel of corn. As time went on he had to learn more difficult tasks for less consistent reinforcement. Poor Thor, this stressed him out. And after a while he stopped trying. Not knowing what the right response is and only being rewarded for a certain behavior sometimes, but at other times getting a negative response (Thor was given a shock), is crazy-making at its best!

Counselors and therapists will tell you that inconsistent messages in relationships keep them in business. It's one of the most distressing patterns for creatures like us to adjust to. When the feedback is random and dependent on unknown factors, it's often easier to be like Thor – just give up altogether. If everything you

try never results in some kind of reward, then the one thing you learn is that you may as well quit trying; you can't figure out the system.

Compulsive gamblers usually keep at these systems longer than most, but with pretty much the same dismal success rate. Meteorologists love to play with the unpredictable patterns of climates but, unlike the gamblers, they will concede from the outset that weather is one of those systems we will never fully conquer. When the tornado recently struck Oklahoma, there had been predictions, estimates, and warnings to the public. But no amount of preparation could have prevented the climax of natural forces at that point.

Some would say that prayer is another system no one can figure out and therefore isn't worth the effort. But you and I know better. We know that every time we pray there may be factors involved that make the outcome unpredictable. Still, there is always the consistent, positive reinforcement of God's intimate involvement in the outcome. God is in charge. God is good. And God never lets prayer go unanswered.

Both what we pray for and what we accept as answers to our prayers depend a good deal on our belief that those three things never change: God is in charge. God is good. God always answers us. We **know** that in praying for those unsettled by tornadoes, God is responding in loving ways. We **know** that in praying for WRPC and the future shape of its ministry, God is steadily with us. We **know** that in the uncertainties of our lives and the inconsistent messages of life, God's hand upon us is the **one** thing we can depend on as a constant hope and present help. That's faith.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Graham

WRPC Contact Information

White Rock Presbyterian Church is located at 310 Rover Boulevard, Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544. The pastor, Rev. Elizabeth Graham, can be reached at 575-770-6881 or by email at sweetp217@aol.com. Our church office administrator, Gillian Erickson, can be contacted at the church office (672-3682) Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. You may email her anytime at officemanager@wrpchurch.com.

Office Hours for Gillian Erickson
Tuesdays and Thursdays only, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

Letter from the Editor



I have long resisted getting a smart phone. I always felt that a cell phone should be just that, a phone. I didn't want to be bothered with e-mail, news alerts, tweets, instant messages, or any of the other urgent but unimportant distractions that come with the device. Not to

mention that the smart phone and its data contract come at a high cost. Not even Siri, the sassy assistant that comes with apple phones, could convince me. Nevertheless, when I recently switched mobile phone carriers (for entirely unrelated reasons) I decided to upgrade and got an iPhone.

It is easy to see why smart phones are so popular, especially with younger people who are not afraid to adopt new technology. These devices have truly changed the way that people communicate with each other and how we relate to each other. More and more communication among people, especially young people, is being done through text messages and short e-mails. An entirely new language has evolved among texters, who have become amazingly proficient at expressing themselves while typing with their thumbs. And therein lies a problem. While more connectedness is good, it sometimes comes at the expense of the more traditional ways of communicating.

First, texting promotes poor writing habits and bad communications skills. In the modern corporate world the ability to communicate effectively through formal written documents and personal presentations is an important contributor to success. Unfortunately, frequent texting tends to dumb down spelling and writing. Texting and formal writing need to be understood as separate and distinct skills. The ability to text proficiently is no substitute for formal writing skills. In the same vein, texting and verbal conversation should also be understood as separate and distinct skills.

Second, frequent texts are distracting and prevent one from being fully present. The smart phone is always present, ready to demand instant attention at any time. In some settings they can be rude, causing interruptions and breaking up ongoing conversations.

Third, communicating through text messages limits in-depth analysis or conversation. Because of the small size of the smart phone screen, the character limit of a text message, and the difficulty of typing with thumbs on a tiny keyboard, thoughts are reduced to sound bites (or text bites) with little room for expansion or analysis. The result is that no one thinks very much about what is said. Facts are not questioned or checked. Assumptions are not identified or discussed. Conclusions are not questioned nor are alternatives considered. These are bad habits to cultivate and can leave the unquestioning user vulnerable to the worst sorts of exploitation.

Finally, and perhaps most important, texting hampers social skills and adversely impacts close friendships. A text message involves no eye contact and no body language. A text message is impersonal and remote. One does not have to maintain his or her end of a conversation and does not have to express their feelings in real time. One does not have to even maintain a presence. Without the ability to carry on real in-person conversations it is impossible to develop deep and meaningful friendships.

In spite of all this I enjoy my smart phone and I recognize that smart phones are an important component of modern society. However, I will not let my smart phone control my life. Here are a few suggestions for keeping these devices in their proper place. (1) Do not allow texting to anyone under the same roof or in the same room. Talk to them instead. (2) Do not allow mobile devices at the dinner table or

at family times. Those text messages will just have to wait until personal time is over. (3) From time to time, give up an electronic device for a day and note how that affects the ways that you communicate and interact with other people. If you are a prolific texter the impacts may be significant. (4) Recognize that texting, formal writing, and verbal conversation are separate skills and that all three need to be fully developed.

Beyond that, enjoy your smart phone. I certainly enjoy mine. But don't send me a text; call me instead.

Dick Heaton

Session News

The Session met on 19 May with officers-elect to conduct the examination required by the PCUSA Book of Order prior to installation of officers elected by the congregation. The officers-elect, who will have been ordained as necessary and installed by the time you read this, are Joyce Haven as Elder and Session member for a three year term (Class of 2016), Jennifer Holmes as Deacon for a three year term (Class of 2016), and Jean Callaghan as Deacon for a one year term (Class of 2014). Joyce and Jennifer will be ordained (not having previously served as Elder and Deacons respectively); Jean has served as a Deacon in other congregations and will be installed.

We have also scheduled an officer training meeting for ALL WRPC officers to take place on June 15.

We are making progress on goals and format for the program of listening visits mentioned in an earlier Overlook. You should expect to hear more about this next month.

George Callaghan

Go Paperless! Save a stamp! If you would like to receive your copy of the Overlook electronically rather than through the mail, just let our WRPC Office Manager know and make sure she has your correct e-mail address. We'll send you a PDF file at the beginning of the month. You'll get your Overlook quicker and it will be in glorious color as well.

Pastor Nominating Committee

In the process of searching for a new pastor, the Church Information Form (CIF) is a little like a job ad. The PNC prepares the Church Information Form including both statistical and demographic data about the congregation and narrative information about the mission, programs, accomplishments, skills, and experiences of the congregation. A narrative about key theological questions facing the community is included as well as a description of the position to be filled. The Church Information Form is published by the Church Leadership Connection (CLC), a database maintained by the PCUSA that is available to all pastors who are seeking positions, including some from outside the PCUSA. Pastors have the opportunity to search the data base for job opportunities of interest to them and the CLC conducts searches on behalf of churches seeking persons to fill leadership positions. Pastors respond by forwarding their Personal Information Forms (their resumes) to the PNC or the Presbytery and the PNC begins the process of reviewing and selecting candidates.

The preparation of the CIF is an important and demanding task for the PNC. The major challenge is to capture the breadth and depth of the life of WRPC in about six short paragraphs – in a way that is both authentic in its description of the community and attractive to potential candidates. The WRPC Pastor Nominating Committee has completed work on our Church Information Form. The form has been approved by the Session and the Presbytery Committee on Ministry and is being published in the CLC. We await the first responses, which will arrive through Sallie Watson, our Regional Presbyter.

You can see the CIF on the bulletin board and receive an electronic copy by signing up (with your e-mail address) on the clip-board on the table in the hallway.

We all give thanks to God that we are one step closer to identifying our next pastor.

Bob Reinovsky

*For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Psalms 100:5

Summer Reading Book Group

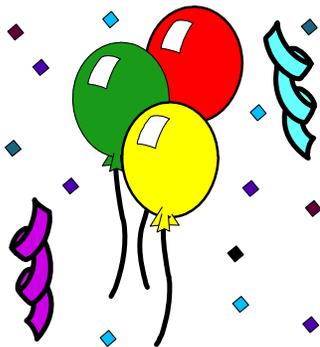
In this scientific community of Los Alamos, folks often ask for PROOF and DATA. The recent New York Times best-seller, **Proof of Heaven**, by neurosurgeon Eben Alexander is an account of his Near Death Experience, told through the lens of scientific inquiry. WRPC's Journeys in Faith book group has chosen this book for summer reading and discussion. The book is rather short (176 pages) and relatively easy reading (it's no *Divine Comedy*, that's for sure...). It tells, in medical detail, Dr. Alexander's bout with a rare illness and his reflections on his miraculous recovery.

All are welcome, even if you haven't read the book but do have ideas, questions, or thoughts on the topic of an afterlife. Let Bob Reinovsky know if you would like a book. We hope to cross reference the book with scripture, Presbyterian Confessions, and other Christian and secular literature on the topic to help us clarify our own beliefs and questions.

The Journeys in Faith Discussion Group meets Thursday evenings starting at 7:30 at the home of Bob and Selma Reinovsky, 77 La Paloma Drive, in White Rock (672-9216). Please come!

Jennifer Holmes

June Birthdays



Margie Lehman	1
Reuben Goettee	4
Wayne Meadows	5
Sabrina Kelley	16
Joyce Haven	18

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee met on Sunday, May 12, to plan fellowship events for the rest of the year. Allen Medendorp served as chairman.

The Out to Lunch Bunch will meet right after Sunday School on the first Sunday of each month to share lunch at a local restaurant. If you have a favorite in Santa Fe, Espanola, Pojoaque, Embudo, Taos, etc., contact Selma Reinovsky or Vernon Kerr. Santa Fe is only 35 miles away and Taos is 40. Eating is only part of the adventure.

Home events planned are: for June our hamburger and hot dogs in the park, for July a trip to Rancho de Chimayo, for August a picnic at Bandelier (for which we will take picnic baskets on the bus), for September a Chicken Fettucine Alfredo dinner, for October a pie supper, and for November a pot luck supper (theme to be determined), including a nutty gift exchange with cake and coffee. All of these are subject to change – Presbyterians are flexible.

Other eating events could include an ice cream social, a chuck wagon supper, a taco lunch, or a trip to the Kerr's place at Lake Heron.

In addition we are considering our own lecture series, such as Legends of the North, Tony Hillerman by Anne Hillerman, Governor Who?, the New Mexico Legislature, etc.

We are always interested in new suggestions; if you have any ideas, please let Vernon know.

Vernon Kerr

PW News

Presbyterian Women is on hiatus for the summer. However, we are planning sometime to have a social gathering, perhaps in July.

We continue to collect your donations of product **Labels for Education** – including: Bic, Campbell's, Franco-American, Pace Pepperidge Farm, Post Cereals, Prego Spaghetti-Os, Swanson, V-8, and Wolfgang Puck. Also **Box Tops for Education**: Betty Crocker, Bisquick, Juicy Juice, Cheerios, Chex, Green Giant, Pillsbury, Hamburger Helpers, Old El Paso, Progresso, Ziploc, Avery, and Hefty. Complete lists of accepted products can be found online or by the donation basket on the table in the hallway.

We pray for safe travels and a happy summer with family and friends.

Joyce Berzins

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet,

but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Luke 7:36-50



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