



White Rock Presbyterian Church

Overlook

An informative newsletter published by the White Rock Presbyterian Church

November 2013

From the Pastor's Desk

It's harvest time. A time of reaping and bringing in; a time of gathering 'round. Quilts always seem the best this time of year, for me. The way they wrap around you and help to fend of the chills of autumn is good, but the reason I think of quilts at harvest time is because of the handed-down quilts I have with so much family history in them. It is as if I am wrapping them around me, reaping their wisdom and gathering their lasting support for whatever lies ahead. In a sense, these quilts are a type of community for me.

Where do you find community? I am speaking of the community that runs silent and deep; the community that knows what your closets look like and loves you for being human. Here at WRPC there are groups where community has built over years, where community is beginning, and where community is beginning to deepen.

Sue Bender is a family therapist and the author of *Plain and Simple*, which is an account of her living for a number of months among the Amish. The adjustment from being an on-the-go mother and wife in Berkeley, California was humbling. As she tried to find her place among them she offered to do sewing projects.

I asked several neighbors if they had any old clothing I could use for a project. But they didn't know or trust me yet, so they said no. I wanted to join in, but I also wanted to ask questions. Of course, I wasn't there as an anthropologist, psychologist, or sociologist. I still wasn't sure why I was there.

When I finally had enough fabric, I began to cut out a pile of one-inch squares to make groups of nine patches. One of the girls asked if she could help. "Of course," I said. Then her 12 year old cousin asked if he could join in. "Of course." The challenge came when I decided to let them design the project. What emerged was a remarkable array of highly original color combinations, variations on the nine patch pattern.

One of the women who had refused to give me old clothing saw the squares and immediately offered to donate some old, unused clothing saying, "I can't use them for anything else, so if you like, we can cut them up."

Hearing her say "we" sounded lovely. No longer suspicious, she returned with a bundle of old and very worn dresses. I had passed an unspoken test, and now her old clothes, a part of her history, could join my new patches.

There is a kind of harvesting your own vulnerability and sowing your trust that together gives the abundance of blessing that community can be. Within WRPC there are many smaller groups where bonds of community have been formed—some over time, a few just beginning. Christ was very clear about the importance of community in living out our faith—faith praxis. I would challenge this congregation to consider how outsiders are accepted in our faith community beyond the coffee hour or committee work.

Bender also says, "Deeper bonds meant creating obligations." How are you deepening the bonds of people in the church you don't know very well? How are you extending your trust and vulnerability to those outside your own circles of community?

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Elizabeth Graham

The PNC Nominates Rev. John Guthrie



Meet Reverend John Guthrie.

On November 17, the White Rock Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) will place the name of Rev. Guthrie into nomination to be the Designated Pastor of White Rock Presbyterian Church. John will lead worship and preach here on November 17. The Session has called a congregational meeting after worship on November 17 to act on the recommendation of the PNC.

Plans are being made to give you an opportunity to meet John on the weekend of November 16-17, and the PNC hopes you will hold those dates on your calendar, plan to be with us that Sunday morning, and spread the news to friends and neighbors.

John is a native Texan. He spent most of his early years in San Antonio. He holds a Bachelor's degree in physics from Austin College (Sherman, Texas) and a Master's and PhD in physics from the University of Texas at Dallas. John is a second-career pastor. His first career was invested in software engineering and research in his specialty of chemical physics and kinetics. He taught physics for seven years at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Before starting seminary studies, at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, John served the church as a deacon, ruling elder, Bible study leader, new church development team member, and in other capacities. He responded to a persistent call to begin theological study in 2003, and graduated from Austin Seminary in 2006. He has served two churches since that time, a 65 member church in Lake City, Colorado and a 160 member church Cedar City, Utah, where he is currently the solo pastor. John is a third-generation Presbyterian pastor.

John has been married to Nancy Guthrie for thirty-three years. Nancy pursues a career in social and community services. They have four children, both biological and adopted: Robert (currently 27), Elizabeth (23), Zach (20), and Kyle (18). The Guthrie

family has lived in New Mexico, Maryland, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Utah over the years.

In accepting our invitation to consider serving at WRPC, John told me he had been praying earnestly about the possibility of adopting a full-time ministry helping a congregation discern new directions for ministry, and that the Holy Spirit had convinced him that White Rock is the place to do so. I am convinced you will enjoy getting to know John and Nancy—as the PNC has done.

If you, the congregation, feel the Holy Spirit leading you in the same way the Spirit has led the PNC, and in the same way as John has felt called, John is prepared to start on January 5, 2014.

Bob Reinovsky
For the PNC

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.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:10-12

Letter from the Editor



Last June in this column I ranted about the evils and problems associated with smart phones and the excessive use of texting in our daily lives. Now I'm back to continue my discussion of our over dependence on mobile communications technology

and what that may mean.

Facebook recently posted an ad that illustrates the issue quite well. It begins with a family engaged in conversation around the dinner table. It's a classical Norman Rockwell setting. The conversation eventually turns to "Aunt Minnie," who launches into a dull and long-winded story. The teenagers in the family get bored and start to tune out. Then one of them quietly pulls out a smart phone and logs on to Facebook. As she begins to read the posts and messages from her friends a smile overcomes her face and "Aunt Minnie" fades into the background. The message is clear: with Facebook (or any number of other social web sites) you don't ever have to be bored and you can always be engaged with friends of your own choosing.

What's wrong with this? Well, there are a number of things wrong but let's start with the obvious. Once the smart phone user logs on, he/she is no longer present at the dinner table. He might as well not be there and as far as the conversation goes he is in another world. This is true not only at the dinner table but also anywhere else that he logs on, be it in class, in the cafeteria, on the bus, in the back seat of a car, or in a restaurant across the table from his significant other. Smart phones combined with social network sites provide the optimal means for tuning out and escaping reality.

Another problem is that the intrusion of social networking applications is constant and never ceasing. I read somewhere that a typical well connected teenage girl is interrupted by a message or tweet once every four or five minutes. When I consider this my reaction is, "How can anyone function with so many interruptions?" The teenager would respond, "What interruptions?" To him/her the messages and tweets

are connections, not interruptions; the interruption is me, insisting that they put down the cell phone and talk to me.

Finally, the omnipresence of smart phones and social networking apps encourages and enables us to avoid conversation. Human conversation can be hard and boring. We've become intolerant of the way we stumble, make mistakes, and backtrack, particularly when we're discussing things that are complicated and difficult. Actual conversation takes place in real time and you can't control what you're going to say. But when typing or using digital media, you can edit, correct, and get it right. You feel in control and less vulnerable. One author calls this the "Goldilocks Effect." He means that we want to be in touch with more and more people, but people that are carefully kept at bay—not too close, not too far, just right, edited, and made perfect. With modern mobile technology we can do this and be in touch all the time, no matter where we are, without ever leaving our comfort zone.

Alas! You cannot have serious relationships with other people without being vulnerable. You simply cannot look someone in the eye and tell them how you feel via email. Personal relationships require sharing in real time under conditions that are not controlled. There are no provisions for editing, correcting, or getting it right. Furthermore, you cannot appreciate scripture or open your heart to God without giving up control and engaging in frank and open discussions. I might even argue that conversational skills are a necessary prerequisite for coming to and accepting our Lord.

Ironically, it is the need for community that drives the appeal of mobile technology and social networking applications. To the extent that social interactions are facilitated these technologies are useful and helpful. But people may feel that they've participated in their community if they go to a website and check "Like." They may feel satisfied by making a political statement in a tweet. However, real politics is actually going into your community, having a conversation, disagreeing with somebody, and putting yourself into somebody else's head. This is often very hard. Doing the hard work of empathy is something you can't learn by email. So participating in and being part of a community is either something that computers can help or that they can undermine, depending on how we use them.

Mobile technology and/or social networking sites are not intrinsically evil and we need not go overboard trying to avoid them. In fact, they provide a level of communication and interconnectedness that would not have seemed possible even a few years ago. People today plug in and communicate in ways that are almost incomprehensible to people of my generation. However, these technologies cannot replace or eliminate traditional modes of conversation. The gift of real conversation is an important and necessary skill and we should insist that our younger generation become proficient in it just as they are in the use of social electronic media.

Dick Heaton

Session News

The Focus Topic for the October Session meeting was the process we are currently in to secure pledges of financial support for 2014. You've heard already of the New Consecration Sunday process. Its primary characteristic—distinguishing it from some other approaches we've used—is its emphasis on individual spiritual growth and thoughtful, prayerful consideration of what God calls each of us to give for his work at our church.

The effort will culminate on Sunday, November 10, when we will have two opportunities: first, to record our intended financial giving to WRPC for 2014 and, second, to join all the WRPC family in a catered lunch thanking participants. Please **MAKE A LUNCH RESERVATION** if you haven't done so already; and plan to join us for **BOTH** events on November 10.

As you will see elsewhere in this Overlook, the Pastor Nominating Committee has announced its intention to recommend a Designated Pastor candidate soon. Accordingly, the Session has called a special meeting of the WRPC congregation for Sunday, November 17. The call for this meeting, which will be read from the pulpit on the first three Sunday's in November, is as follows:

Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting of the Congregation of White Rock Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, November 17, in Memorial Hall after morning worship.

The single agenda item for this Special Meeting will be for the Congregation to receive and act upon the recommendation of the Pastor Nominating Committee that the Congregation call the Reverend John Guthrie as Designated Pastor for WRPC for three years beginning January 1, 2014. The Terms of Call will be presented for Congregation approval.

George Callaghan

Operation Christmas Child Shoebbox Ministry Update

Since I'll be away this coming Sunday, and the next week is filled up with stewardship and PNC activities, I decided this might be the best way to give you more info on the Operation Christmas Child project.

First, I thank God for all of you who already have helped or will be helping to make the Packing Party on November 15 (7:00 PM) a success. I praise God for all the wonderful supplies that are coming in. Thank you! WOW! Isn't it great we can share Christ's love and blessings with children all over the world in this tangible way? (By the way, my local dentist office again generously supplied us with tooth-brushes and toothpaste! Praise the Lord!)

I want to call your attention to the help that is needed. There is a red sign-up sheet in the hallway next to the collection box. Please look it over and sign up where you are able to help.

There are also small-size fliers there to use to invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. They can also be posted in public places in the community. Please take as many as you need.

If you happen to have left over candy from Halloween, we'd love to have some of it for the party. If it is hard candy, we can use it for the shoeboxes. If it is not hard candy we can use it as a snack on our refreshment table.

One of the activities we'll do at the party is write a simple note(s) to include in our box(es). It makes the shoebox so much more personal and helps the child receiving the box to understand that someone does love and care for them and gives them hope. You may also

PW News

include a picture of yourself or of your family. You may take a sheet of paper, a note card, or a Christmas card and do this ahead of time at home if you wish. Do a couple, since more than likely you will be filling more than one box. I will have cards available at the party for your use too, if you like.

I have put out a few shoeboxes in case someone still wants to do a box at home or can't come that night. I also suggest that if you have bought something you really want to keep for yourself to put in "your" box, keep it aside rather than add it to our pool of supplies. You can bring it that night and use the pooled supplies to finish filling your box. I know pooling our supplies is a big change from the individual box filling we've done in the past.

Please come prepared to "Adopt a Box" the night of the party. It costs about \$7 for shipping and handling each box. Adopt one or more as you are able. For those of you that can't make it to the party but still want to be involved, this is another way you can help.

If you have still not added your contributions to our supply box, please do so if possible by Sunday, November 10. We will need to sort supplies and set up our "store" previous to November 15, the night of our packing party.

Why a Party you ask? I think by pooling our resources we will do more boxes. Remember, each box is an opportunity to share God's love and message of hope with children who never heard of Jesus before. ("Go into all the world and preach the gospel." Mark 16:15) We need to celebrate what God has done in the 20 year history of Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child program and the 100 million shoebox gifts that have been given. We will also celebrate what God is going to do with the shoebox gifts we will pack that night. Come, celebrate, and invite others. Have a night of fun, fellowship, and of course food! There will even be door prizes!

I cannot adequately express my thanks to all of you for the wonderful way you are responding to this whole project. Love and God's blessings to you all.

Contact me with any questions or ideas!

Mary Medendorp

Our First Wednesday Potluck Luncheon will be at noon, November 6, at the church. All are welcome and encouraged to join in Christian fellowship.

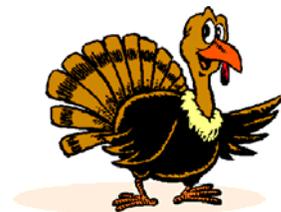
The Bible Study/Circle will meet on Thursday, November 21, at 10:00 o'clock at the church. We will continue with our book, *Abraham's Dilemma and the Birth of Three Faiths*, led by Selma Reinovsky. Come join us.

We continue to collect Campbell's Labels for Education (bar code portion) (soups, Prego, Post, Swanson, Bic, Pepperidge Farm, V8, and Glad) and also Box Tops for Education (Betty Crocker, Ziplock, Hefty, General Mills, Pillsbury, Motts, etc.). You will find a basket for your donations on a table in the hallway. These help Menaul School (Presbyterian) in Albuquerque to earn "free stuff" for the school. There is also a box for donations of your hotel-size extras of shampoos, lotions, etc., which are shared with the Family Shelter of the N.N.M. Crisis Center in Espanola, which also serves Los Alamos County. Thank you for your contributions!

Happy family blessings for Carol Honig and her new grandson, Austin Grant, born to daughter Alison and husband Heath Watkins at LAMC on Friday, October 25. He joins big brothers, Carter and Hayden.

Joyce Berzins

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November Birthdays

Craig Kelley 6

- ✓ Give the church appreciated stocks or mutual funds by transfer from your brokerage firm to ours. This creates a win-win situation for you and for us. We are opening a brokerage account with the Presbytery's brokerage firm to facilitate this special form of giving, since one of our givers plans to give stock to us in 2014. You'll receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the stock or mutual fund. Long-term appreciated assets have a fair market value greater than their cost, since they were generally purchased more than 12 months earlier.

Susan Buxton

Treasury Notes Giving Options

Did you know that you have a choice when you are planning how to give money to our church? You may:

- ✓ Pay by check at church or by mail.
- ✓ Pay by cash (and request contribution envelopes to hold the cash so we can provide you with a Contribution Statement for your income tax reporting).
- ✓ Set up a regular transfer from your LANB account to the church LANB account. (I will have forms at church that you can complete or you can set up the transfer through Access Banking.)
- ✓ Set up a regular electronic funds transfer from another bank to our LANB account—or we can set up a regular electronic debit transfer from your account. (There is usually no charge for this ACH transfer. I will have the form at church.)
- ✓ If you are a Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS) employee, sign up in ORACLE by Wednesday, November 27, for 2014 payroll deductions for WRPC through United Way of Northern New Mexico. LANS will match a portion of all giving up to \$779,000 and will cover all of the administrative costs! In 2013 the Lab matched 39% of each employee's giving!
- ✓ Set up a regular wire transfer from a money market account to our LANB account.

Facilities News A Book Report

I would like to review a book that Susan and I have been reading. We began reading this on our vacation and it is not the usual beachside reading. In fact the reading is such that I would not recommend it to everyone. The book is written by Eric Metaxas and is titled, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*.

I had seen the book in bookstores and always thought that it would be something I should read. Somehow I would be distracted by another book and would pass by this book. When downloading books for our kindle readers for our vacation, I saw the Bonhoeffer book for download and somehow knew the time was right.

Obviously the book is about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and pastor who is famous for his posthumous book, *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

Letters and Papers from Prison was required reading when I took religion back at Centre College. How this pastor wound up in prison and how and why he was executed for his part in the plot to kill Hitler remained vague. Since these were assembled letters with no additional material to explain the historical situation in Nazi-ruled Germany, the theology that the Centre professors tried to impress on us students remained somewhat unclear to me.

Since this new book is a biography the back-story is given in full. The "Spy" part of the title refers to Bonhoeffer working for the German Military Intelligence, or Abwehr, during World War II. It turns

out the Abwehr was run by an anti-Hitler admiral named Canaris. Under the cover of providing military intelligence, Canaris had all sorts of individuals, such as Bonhoeffer, officially doing one thing, while actually engaged in conspiracy activities against Hitler. Bonhoeffer was liable for military call up, but by working for the Abwehr, he could dodge the draft as a civilian military employee. His official job was to convince his theological contacts in neutral countries that the German Churches were flourishing under the Nazis. What he really did was to pass information to neutrals (and to the Allies) on the actual conditions in Germany. This included information that the Western Allies found hard to believe about death camps for the execution of Europe's Jewish population.

The book quotes from Bonhoeffer's prolific writings to demonstrate that he attempted to live a life of service to God. Bonhoeffer did not believe in cheap grace. It was Bonhoeffer's belief that to follow God, each individual had to follow God's calling for himself. This meant doing unpopular and even dangerous things to follow God.

When I think of the times I have compromised just to make things easier for all in a session meeting or when I have held my tongue so as not to offend someone else's views that I felt were wrong, I am ashamed. This is why I say this book is not for everyone.

If you are up for being challenged in your Christianity, not your religion, this book may be for you. You will have to read the book to find out what Bonhoeffer describes as the difference between Christianity and religion. It is huge.

Terry Buxton

Tractor Fund

I am pleased to announce that the second-mile giving for the church's new tractor has not only reached its goal, but has gone over. We will put the additional funds toward the purchase of a snow blade for the tractor. This will make clearing the parking lot during the winter a much easier job.

Terry Buxton

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The Road Not Taken

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost (1916)