

JANUARY
2020

REV'S RAMBLINGS

I took my dog for a walk in the park tonight. I do that often - in fact, I do so more nights than not. Typically I'll walk from my house to the park, enter the park, let my dog off the leash, and then walk three laps around, making sure that the dog runs along with me. And then I'll put the dog back onto the leash and we'll walk back home.

Tonight was different. As I walked past the picnic tables, a young man interrupted me and asked me if I could give his car a jump-start. I explained that I was walking my dog and that I'd have to walk around the park and all the way back to my house in order to get my truck. You might think that that would get me out of it. But no. He said that that'd be fine, that he could wait. So I told the young man that I'd be back, and I walked on with my dog.

As I walked, it occurred to me that there had to be others who were closer and who could probably get the job done more quickly. But somehow it felt right that I was doing it. I didn't know why. It just felt that way.

So I walked around the park, continued on back to my house, grabbed my jumper cables, and drove my truck back around to the park.

The young man was still there. Starting his car took a little bit, but we got it going.

Then, thinking that I was just being friendly, I asked what had brought him to the park. Before long, I'd learned a few things. I'd learned that he had his fiancé inside the car! (And I met her.) And I'd learned that he'd been homeless, had been addicted, and that he'd found help.

That help had come in the form of Whittier First Day - the same Whittier First Day that we know an in which we participate as a church. And while the young man and his fiancé were still struggling, he expressed a great love and gratitude toward First Day and toward God.

Then the young man offered to give me something for helping him. I explained to him that I didn't really need anything. And I told him, truthfully, that just having the opportunity to help him was a blessing that touched and warmed my heart. I offered to prayer for the two of them - an offer which they gladly accepted - and I wished them a good night as we went our separate ways.

As I think about this encounter, and as we get set to enter into a new year, I'm struck by several thoughts.

First, I absolutely do believe in "Divine Appointments", in those moments and occasions in which God puts us in position to help another person or to say something that needs to be said or to learn a lesson that needs to be learned. I believe that God fills our lives with such opportunities and that He then calls us to make the most of them. And I believe that the Principle of the Talents does apply, as each opportunity is a resource for us and God will want to see what we do with the resources that He gives us.

Second... In I Corinthians 3 the Apostle Paul spoke of another principle that seems relevant. He said (paraphrasing), "One plants. Another waters. A third harvests. But it is God who brings the growth." We see that a lot. No one of us is responsible to do everything. But if we'll each make our best use of the opportunities that God gives us, He can work it all together toward His results.

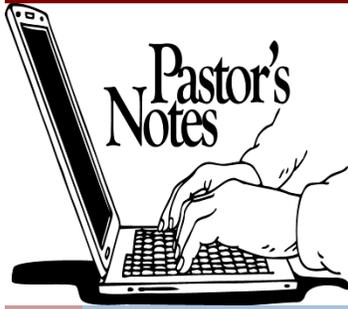
My third thought, regarding my encounter, was that I really did consider it a blessing to be able to help. My mind tells me that it's true theologically. But it's more than that. Helping others feels good for us. Maybe that's because doing so is in line with God's will for us, because it matches the nature that He's created us to have and to show. Maybe it's because we can sense that it pleases God who told us to "love our neighbors" and to "love one another." And with that, if we do commit ourselves to helping others - even if that puts us out a bit - doing so benefits us in our relationship with God as well. For these reasons, viewing such an encounter as an opportunity and as a real blessing, rather than as a chore or an inconvenience, makes sense.

So I intend to enter into the new year with a Divine Encounter mindset, with my eyes open, looking for those opportunities that God gives me to help others, whether that help be in word or in action. And I encourage you to do the same.

May God bless us all as we live for Him.

In Christ,

Rev. Jeff W. Rumble



THE ENCOUNTER

EWPC



Ambassador Ministry Team Activities

The Ambassadors Ministry Team coordinated the Family Movie Night on December 13th. We were so pleased to host about 75 people including families from MoPS, Scouts, and the EWPC School and Church. Everyone enjoyed pizza, salad, Christmas cookies, and watching *Santa Buddies*, a Disney movie featuring dogs as Santa's helpers. After the movie, the children were thrilled by a visit from Santa.

The Christmas Joy offering was received on December 22nd. You are still able to contribute online at www.presbyterianmission.org/give/christmasjoy, or by using the special envelopes found in the Narthex.

This special offering is used to support church leaders at various stages of their lives. Fifty percent supports students learning and growing in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The other fifty percent of the offering helps current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs. Thank you for your consideration and generosity!

As we begin 2020, we invite you to consider helping with the Whittier First Day Friday Friendship Dinner program. We prepare and serve meals to the residents of Whittier First Day on the 3rd Friday of each month. You can sign up on the chart in Purdy Hall on the Mission bulletin board, or by contacting Becky Campos, email jcsrms@verizon.net, or cell phone 562-201-9743.

We are thankful for these opportunities to serve our neighbors and help families in need.

Serving others is serving Christ!



NOTES FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH JANUARY 2020

Here we are starting a new year, a new decade. What will the future hold for us? Thank heavens we know that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, the one sure thing in our lives.

As we look back on 2019, this church, this congregation, has been so generous in support of the work of the Deacons. You have helped many organizations who need donations to carry on their work: Salvation Army, the Presbyterian Church Mission, Women's and Children Shelter, Interfaith Food Center, the youth of our church, Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Angel Network, Cold Weather Shelter, and families in our community. Thank you for helping so many in need.

We thank all the members of the Deacons who have served this year: Mary Coffee, Sue Fleming, Karen Frey, Janet Miller, Debbie and Ruben Miranda, Nancy Morgan, Ann Thorne, and Ellen White. Mary Coffee has signed on for another three-year term, but we must say goodbye to Sue Fleming and Ann Thorne ... **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.**

We still need one more Deacon to fill out a three year term. Please think about it and pray about it. To be a Deacon is so rewarding.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The
Deacon's

Bench



Presbyterian History

Did you know

According to the Presbyterian archives, President Abraham Lincoln and his family attended services at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for four years between 1861 and 1865. The pews where they sat were located six rows from the pulpit, on the right center aisle. The pastor, Reverend Phineas Densmore Gurley became a friend and confidant of the Lincoln family. Desiring privacy during midweek prayer services, Abraham Lincoln arranged with Pastor Gurley to access his private study, where he could enter through a side door and listen in on services. The President came to admire Pastor Gurley's rhetorical gifts as a preacher, and on occasion, Lincoln would call Pastor Gurley to the White House, seeking his advice on matters as pivotal as the writing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

When Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre, Pastor Gurley was among the few summoned to the President's bedside, remaining with him until his death the following morning. Four days later, Gurley delivered "Faith in God" to six hundred guests at the President's funeral. The sermon takes its name from what Gurley described as Lincoln's "*abiding confidence in God.*" He wrote: "*Never shall I forget the emphatic and deep emotion with which he said, in this very room ... 'My hope and success in this struggle rests on that immutable foundation, the justness and goodness of God.'*" The sermon also reveals how Lincoln's pastor viewed his place in history. Reverend Gurley writes that no man since George Washington was "*so deeply and firmly enshrined in the very hearts of the people.*" Above all, he sought to bring meaning to Lincoln's death, stating: "*Where reason fails, with all her powers, There faith prevails, and love adores.*"

President Lincoln's hope and success rested in "*the justness and goodness of God.*" What a contrast to these times of leadership turmoil! As we begin this new year and new decade, let's continue to pray that our nation's leaders will serve our country with empathy and concern for people, demonstrating love and faith in God.

Becky Campos

Ambassadors Ministry Team

EWPC Elder Commissioner to the Presbytery of Los Ranchos

Fount Team
January 2020

Wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year! There are new leaders for our church ministry this year.

The Fount Team has decided to continue with their EMBRACE program this year. Mackenzie and Michael are the new interim youth leaders. Please give them your support for this volunteer position. We greatly appreciate all that they have done and will continue to do to guide the youth.

The Flow has responded well with the new arrangement for them in the choir loft. We can see them up there! Our choir director, choir and our organist have used their gifts from God to inspire us with the hymns.

Thank you Karen Frey for your time and efforts for the Parent's Day Out on December 21st. It was a great success!!!!

Thank you to all that helped on this day too.

May God Bless You and Your Family this New Year.



THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

I want to send out lots of thanks and appreciation to all the wonderful EWPC Christmas "elves" who came together to help with our first-ever Holiday "Parents Day Off" event on December 21.

The parents were delighted to have a little time to spend by themselves shopping, cleaning, wrapping gifts, etc. One young couple told me they took the time to go on a "date" which they hadn't been able to do for months--just the two of them together.

The children who attended seemed to have a ball, thanks to all the adult helpers who did crafts and coloring with them, told stories, created colorful Play Dough objects, and made Lego designs ("Thank you, Tom White!")

A special thank you to Christine Simpson and Eric White who handled all the registration, and to Michelle Reilly who played the piano and sang Christmas songs while the children sang along and rang bells.

In addition, a special hug to the two church members who donated money towards the cost of the snacks and supplies.

4 I can never stop thanking God for all the wonderful gifts he has given you, now that you are Christ's: ⁵ he has enriched your whole life. He has helped you speak out for him and has given you a full understanding of the truth; ⁶ what I told you Christ could do for you has happened! ⁷ Now you have every grace and blessing; every spiritual gift and power for doing his will are yours during this time of waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ And he guarantees right up to the end that you will be counted free from all sin and guilt on that day when he returns. ⁹ God will surely do this for you, for he always does just what he says, and he is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, even Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1: 4-9

The above passage will be included in the service on the third Sunday of January. How comforting to be reassured that God has equipped us with everything we need to carry out His plans for us. I think my New Year's resolution should be to focus on what God wants for me and from me.

I like to spend time during my vacation planning anthems and service music as far into the spring as possible so that next week when school starts back I can concentrate on that. I love the crisp, cool mornings this time of year and the wonderful possibilities a brand new year can bring. I hope yours is a blessing with a renewed relationship with our Lord.

In His Service,
Jennifer Cormack



- 2 Gwen Stanga
- 3 Mariel De la Torre
- 7 Phillip Reece
- 8 Javier Villalon
- 10 Julie Fisk, Jan Harmer
- 11 Drew Sones
- 13 Karl Almquist
- 18 Christine Simpson
- 19 Irv Hoffman

MAY GOD BLESS
YOU WITH A

RENEWED
SPIRIT

AS
YOU BEGIN

YOUR NEW YEAR

- EZEKIEL 11:19