

MOVING SPIRIT

devotional newsletter of
Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

In earthly business, *authenticity* is expected. In the business of prayer, it is essential. God wants us to be authentic, that is, transparently open, unfeignedly frank. Since the Fall, we humans tend to seek camouflage, both from each other and from God. But fig leaves didn't fool God in Eden, and Sunday-go-to-meetin'-clothes can't hide a troubled heart from Him today. He wants us to come to Him as we really are— *authentically*.

The “praying mantis” cartoon at the side is a good reminder for us to be real with God in our prayer life, and not just to appear so. The present Lenten season is also a good reminder, because it calls us to recognize the real essentials in life and to realistically evaluate ourselves as created human beings with authentic physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The traditional way of practicing Lent includes some form of self-denial. But Lenten fasting is not so much a denial of our bodies as it is a heightened awareness that our spirituality cannot be anything other than *incarnational*. We



live in physically vulnerable bodies in an uncertain world. Lent refocuses our attention on the spiritual meaning and purpose of our earthly sojourn, urging us to seek the divine help we need. It points our souls back to the God who made us, who loves us, and who wants to guide us through the rest of our journey. Lent encourages us to come to that loving God in prayer. May we all set aside special time for *authentic praying* this Lenten season. — *Pastor David Hatton*

Parish Proclamations

No long EVCC, but VCC

By now most residents know that we removed “Eskaton” from our church name, making it “Village Community Church.” Our 15-year use of the original name was an illegal mistake that went unnoticed both by us and by the Eskaton staff, until our sponsoring church, Arcade Wesleyan, had trouble at a new bank with offering checks made out to EVCC. To make a long story short, the corporate officials asked us to drop “Eskaton” from our name, and the bank only accepts checks made out to our sponsoring church. So, if you attend VCC and wish to give an offering by check, please make it out to “*Arcade Wesleyan Church*.” This is the only way it can be legitimately cashed and count as a tax-deductible gift for our ministry here. Thanks for your patient attention to these matters as we get used to the changes involved. – Pastor David

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Personal Pulpit

A Reflection on Jeremiah 29:11

Recently someone me asked what the Bible said about whether or not God will ever abandon us, also asking me to pray

for someone who was depressed by life and didn't find any reason to live. I shared this verse: “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the LORD, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV). During our long lives, some of us have had amazing journeys. Others have had difficult ones. But regardless of the journey, our life has been and continues to be a blessing.

We can feel sorrow and sympathy for those who unfortunately spiral down into a depression about the unfairness of life. At times, we ourselves may suffer in this way. But life is lived best when guided and given to God. In such times of depression, the best remedy is to step out and serve someone else’s need.

Ignoring God is a sad mistake, when He wants to be with us, helping us right now. We need Him and should seek Him daily, whether it’s a good day or bad one, whether we’re healthy or sick, happy or sad. If you don’t know Him personally I encouraged you to seek Him, for He loves those who love Him and will be found by those who diligently seek Him (Proverb 8:17). Where else is your real hope? Where else is your real future?

A divine change of scenery can also bring a new perspective. If you're in a difficult time right now, or if all is well, seek God in the situation. He's there with you even if you don't know it. He suffers and rejoices in the midst of your situation and desires your communion with Him. Don't forget He's there. His heart breaks as yours does, and His heart rejoices when you seek His company.

— *Pastor Terry Brown of VCC*
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Pithy Pieces

When life seems too much to handle, remember the mayonnaise jar & coffee...

A professor stood before his class with a large mayonnaise jar. He filled it with golf balls and asked the students if it was full. They agreed it was.

Then he took a box of pebbles and poured them in, shaking the jar to make them settle in the open areas between the golf balls. When he asked again if it was full, the students agreed it was.

Next he poured sand into the jar and filled it to the top, as it settled in all the spaces that was left. Once more he asked the class if the jar was full, and they responded with a unanimous "yes."

Finally, taking out two cups of coffee hidden under the table, he poured both into the jar, effectively filling the space between the sand. The students laughed.

"This jar," he explained, "represents your life. Golf balls are very important things—God, your family, your health, your friends, your passions—things that make life fulfilling. Pebbles are the other things that matter, like your job, your house, or your car. Sand is everything else—the small stuff. Put sand in first, and there's no room for pebbles and golf balls. In other words, spend all your time and energy on small stuff, and there'll be no room for the important things.

"So, class," he advised, "pay critical attention to what's really important. Play with your children. Make a dinner date with your partner. Take time to pray and attend church. There'll be time to clean the house and wash the car. Set your priority on the golf balls first, things that really matter....the rest is just sand."

One student raised her hand to ask what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It's to show that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."

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Invest every "today" in eternity, and after your last "tomorrow" you will never regret any "yesterday". (DLH)

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Praise's Portion

GOD AND THE SPIDER

During World War II, a marine got separated from his unit on a Pacific island. As enemy soldiers came in his direction, he climbed a ridge to several small caves in the rock and crawled into one. He knew the enemy soldiers might sweep up the ridge, search the caves, and kill him. As he waited, he prayed, "Lord, if it's your will, protect me. But if not, I still love and trust you. Amen."

After praying, he lay quietly listening to the enemy drawing closer. "Well, I guess the Lord isn't going to help me out of this one," he thought. But then he noticed that a spider had begun to build a web over the front of his cave. As he listened to the enemy searching for him, the spider layered strand after strand of web across the opening of the cave.

"Ha!" he thought. "What I need is a brick wall and all God sends is a spider web. What a sense of humor!"

As the enemy searched each cave, they finally came to his. He prepared to make his last stand. But amazingly, after glancing at his cave, they moved on. He suddenly realized how the web over the entrance made it appear that no one had entered that cave for quite a while.

"Lord, forgive me," prayed the young man. "I forgot that you can make a spider's web stronger than a brick wall."

Praise God, that when we face times of trouble, God can work in our lives, sometimes in the most surprising ways.

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Prayer's Priority

ANSWERS

Answers to prayers
Come in various ways,
Sometime in minutes,
Sometimes in days.
And some take years
To fully unfold
The harvest of love
And the blessings they hold.

Answers to prayers
Come in various forms,
Sometimes in sunlight,
Sometimes in storms.
Some blossom early
And some blossom late
But each one will flower—
Have faith and wait!
—*Helen Inwood*

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Perpetual Precepts

You cannot bring about prosperity
by discouraging thrift.
You cannot strengthen the weak
by weakening the strong.
You cannot help little men
by tearing down big men.
You cannot lift the wage earner
by pulling down the wage payer.
You cannot help the poor
by destroying the rich.
You cannot establish sound security
on borrowed money.
You cannot further human brotherhood
by inciting class hatred.
You cannot keep out of trouble
by spending more than you earn.
You cannot build character and courage
by destroying men's initiative and
independence.
And you cannot help men permanently
by doing for them what they can and
should do for themselves.

—*Rev. William Boetcker (1873-1962)*

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Poetry's Place

Parable of Immortality

(A ship leaves . . .)

I am standing by the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white sails

to the morning breeze
and starts for the blue ocean.
She is an object of beauty and strength,
and I stand and watch until at last she
hangs like a peck of white cloud
just where the sun and sky come down
to mingle with each other.
Then someone at my side says :
“There she goes!”

Gone where?
Gone from my sight—that is all.

She is just as large in mast and hull and
spar
as she was when she left my side
and just as able to bear her load of living
freight
to the places of destination.
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone
at my side says:
“There she goes!”,
there are other eyes watching her
coming,
and other voices ready to take up the
glad shout :
“Here she comes!”

— *Henry Van Dyke (1852-1933)*

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Pearls of Prudence

Things We Can Learn from a Dog

by Joy Nordquist

1. Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joy ride.
2. Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
3. When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.
4. When it's in your best interest, always practice obedience.
5. Let others know when they've invaded your territory.
6. Take naps and always stretch before rising.
7. Run, romp and play daily.
8. Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
9. Be loyal.
10. Never pretend to be something you're not.
11. If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
12. When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.
13. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
14. Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
15. Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.

16. On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.

17. When you are happy, dance around and wag your entire body.

18. No matter how you're criticized, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout. Run right back and make friends.

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Pleasurable Pastime

Funny Footwork

We had gathered at my pastor's house for our church's monthly leadership meeting. Assembled around the dining room table were the elders, deacons, and their spouses. I sat next to an elder who was a good friend of my husband's. My pastor's little dog loved to sit under the table and let us rub our feet on her back and belly. I had my shoes off and felt her bump me, so I happily rubbed my feet on her while the pastor talked about integrity and accountability. Suddenly, I heard a bark, and there was the dog —across the room. I threw up the tablecloth to find I had been playing footsies with the elder. “I thought it was the dog!” I blurted, as my face turned a million shades of red. “I sure wondered,” said the equally embarrassed man.

— *Diana Mylek, Waterville, Ohio*

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Past Pathways

Message from an Appalled Observer:

Today I went to visit the new World War II Memorial in Washington , DC. I got an unexpected history lesson. Because I'm a baby boomer, I was one of the youngest in the crowd. Most were the age of my parents, veterans of "the greatest war," with their families. It was a beautiful day, and people were smiling and happy to be there. Hundreds of us milled around the memorial, reading the inspiring words of Eisenhower and Truman that are engraved there.

On the Pacific side of the memorial, a group of us gathered to read the words President Roosevelt used to announce the attack on Pearl Harbor: "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked." One elderly woman read the words aloud: "With confidence in our armed forces, with the abounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph."

But as she read, she suddenly turned angry. "Wait a minute," she said. "They left out the end of the quote. They left out the most important part. Roosevelt ended the message with "so help us God."

Her husband said, "You are probably right. We're not supposed to say things like that now."

"I know I'm right," she insisted. "I remember the speech." The two looked dismayed, shook their heads sadly and walked away.

Listening to their conversation, I thought to myself, "Well, it's been over 50 years. She's probably forgotten." But she had not forgotten. She was right. I went home and pulled out the book my book club is reading, *Flags of Our Fathers*, by James Bradley. It's all about the battle at Iwo Jima . . . right there it was on page 58. Roosevelt 's speech to the nation ends in "so help us God."

The people who edited out that part of the speech when they engraved it on the memorial could have fooled me. I was born after the war. But they couldn't fool the people who were there. Roosevelt 's words are engraved on their hearts.

Now I ask: "Who gave them the right to change the words of history?" People need to know before everyone forgets. People today are trying to change the history of America by leaving God out of it, but the truth is, God has been a part of this nation, since the beginning. He still wants to be...and He always will be!

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Serving Residents at Eskaton

Village Community Church offers an opportunity for interdenominational Christian worship under the sponsorship of Arcade Wesleyan Church. Honoring tradition, we maintain an evangelical spirit focused on the Holy Bible as the Word of God. Congregational unity is expressed by our confession of the ancient Apostle Creed or Nicene Creed at our monthly Holy Communion. We hope residents without a church home, or who find travel to their own churches too difficult, will visit our fellowship.

Rev. David Hatton is an RN who

leads VCC with the help of Rev. Terry A. Brown and Pastor Dawn Valerio, both also bivocational ministers. All three are available for pastoral visits and spiritual counsel by request:

Pastor David's cell phone: 605-9615

David & Rosemary home: 920-5854

Pastor Terry's cell phone: 425-4731

Pastor Dawn's cell phone: 764-2328

Or leave a message for any of them at the Arcade Church office, 487-5123.

Regular Meetings:

Worship (Music Room) . . . 10:00 a.m.

Worship (Assisted Living) 11:15 a.m.

Communion . . 1st Sunday each month

Village Community Church ***MOVING SPIRIT***

c/o Arcade Wesleyan Church
3532 Whitney Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95821

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