

MOVING SPIRIT

devotional newsletter of

Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

I'm a pastor concerned about God's Kingdom, but also a citizen who cares for our nation's welfare. Like the 'voter' in this cartoon, I'm worried. Am I alone in feeling unusually depressed about this presidential election year?

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington left me deeply suspicious of politics. A later film, *Dave*, echoed the message that rich business interests control both elected officials and the media. If true, then such powers this year made sure that a 'Mr. Smith' wouldn't be running. J. F. Clarke said, "A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman, of the next generation." Controlling interests never want true statesmen in office.

Pessimistic? Yes, but it reminds me of optimism about another kind of vote. Political debates can distract us from important outcomes that depend on us personally. Each of us has spheres of influence, areas of direct responsibility. In these, our decisions effect *ourselves*, *others*, and *eternity*. Only we can make these choices. It's our soul's vote alone.

With the choices offered by our



media-driven political system, I'm sure God won't judge our success in life by our apathetic or reluctant voting. But if we join our cry to the cartoon lady's "Anyone else...," Jesus might reply, "How about electing Me as Executive?"

Christ is indeed the best Choice for life's administration. He can balance our budget without taxing our energy. He's a Commander-in-chief who will defend us against spiritually foreign foes. His governing offers "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," as well as peace—but it's a peace that begins in *us*, as we obey His law of love. Let's cast our *prayer-vote* for Jesus to run the country and our lives. — *Pastor David Hatton*

Parish Proclamations

New Faces in the Pulpit

From time to time, those beyond our ministry team will be coming to speak at VCC. To be honest, this year we've had some health and circumstantial issues challenging our pulpit schedule. But this situation also allows a two-way blessing. Others called to preach can bless VCC with their gifts, while our pulpit gives them a chance to grow in ministering God's Word. Wherever they serve in the future, our little church will have had a part in their ministerial development.

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Personal Pulpit

Ruby's Secret

Occasionally I meet someone who seems to have a secret, some special knowledge that sets that person apart. Such a person was Ruby. I met her when she was conducting our Holy Land tour.

"She must have a secret," I said to myself enviously. "How else can she accomplish so much, so easily?"

She was a good listener, a troubleshooter, an organizer, a mother hen to all 72 of us plus her own two little children; yet she was never tired, never out of sorts.

Then, back home again, I visited Ruby. And I think I discovered her secret. There it was, a two-word motto over her sink: "YES, LORD."

— *Rosa C. Veal*, Spartanburg, SC

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Pithy Pieces

Courtesy is one of the properties of God, who sends the sun and rain to the just and the unjust through courtesy. Courtesy is the sister of charity, by which hatred is overcome and love is prized. — *Francis of Assisi*

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It's often sad but true,
We worry, push and shove
Trying to hunt molehills
To make some mountains of.

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The Difficult Seed

A little seed lay in the ground,
And soon began to sprout;
"Now which of all the flowers around,"
It mused, "shall I come out?
The lily's face is fair and proud,
But just a trifle cold;
The rose, I think, is rather loud,
And then its fashion's old.
The violet is very well,
But not a flower I'd choose;
Nor yet the canterbury-bell—

I never cared for blues.
Petunias are by far too bright,
And vulgar flowers beside;
The primrose only blooms at night,
And peonies spread too wide.”
And so it criticized each flower,
This supercilious seed;
Until it woke one summer hour,
And found itself a weed.
(from *The Outlook*, Oct. 1894)

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I would rather die of pure love than let
God escape from me in dark wisdom.
— *Mechthild of Magdeburg*

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Praise's Portion

You can always give thanks, even if it's
for the bad things that haven't happened
yet or maybe never will.

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Thank You, God, for Little Things
Thank you, God, for little things
that often come our way,
The things we take for granted
but don't mention when we pray,
The unexpected courtesy,
the thoughtful kindly deed,
A hand reached out to help us
in the time of sudden need —
Oh make us more aware, dear God,
of little daily graces

That come to us with “sweet surprise”
from never-dreamed-of places.
— *Helen Steiner Rice*

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Prayer's Priority

Thoughts on Prayer

There is often more talk about prayer
and more study of prayer than there is
actual praying. God will give a burden to
pray, if you will yield to it. . . . At the
greatest crisis in your life, if you will
look to Jesus, He will comfort you with
His peace. Living in the presence of
Christ is far better than trying to find
Him only when we need Him.

— *Mary Woodard*

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Prayer must not come from the roof of your
mouth but from the root of your heart.

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Don't pray for an easy life;
pray to be a strong person.

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I Can't Pray the LORD'S PRAYER...

I can't say 'Our', if my religion has no
room for others and their needs.

I cannot say 'Father', if I don't show this
relationship in my daily living.

I can't say 'who art in heaven', if all my
interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I can't say 'hallowed be thy name', if I,
who am called to bear his name, am not holy.

I can't say '**thy kingdom come**', if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

I can't say '**thy will be done**', if I am unwilling or resentful of having it in my life.

I can't say '**on earth as it is in heaven**', unless I am truly ready to give myself to his service here and now.

I can't say '**give us this day our daily bread**', without expending honest effort for it, or by ignoring the genuine needs of others.

I can't say '**forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**', if I'm holding a grudge against anyone.

I can't say '**lead us not into temptation**' if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I can't say '**deliver us from evil**', if I'm not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.

I can't say '**thine is the kingdom**', if I do not obey the King as a loyal subject.

I can't say '**thine is the power**', if I fear what my neighbors and friends may say or do.

I can't say '**thine is the glory**', if I am seeking my own glory first.

I can't say '**forever**', if I am too anxious about each day's events.

I can't say '**Amen**', unless I can say "Cost what it may, this is my prayer." (*adapted*)

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Those who sing, pray twice.

— *Augustine*

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Perpetual Precepts

Moments of Our Lives

In Happy Moments: *PRAISE GOD*

In Difficult Moments: *SEEK GOD*

In Quiet Moments: *WORSHIP GOD*

In Painful Moments: *TRUST GOD*

In All Moments: *THANK GOD*

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“Though life's road is not a smooth one,
Opportunity still knocks.

God will show us how to fashion
Stepping-stones of stumbling blocks.”

— *Mildred N. Hoyer*, Brooklyn, NY

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You cannot have faith and
frustration at the same time.

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Poetry's Place

WHILE THERE IS TIME

While there is time, Lord, may I use it well,
'Tis gone in a moment, one never can tell
Which day is our last one, with so much to do,
All must be in order, when summoned by You.

While there is time, Lord, and life is my own,
Let me bring gladness to someone alone.
Renew a small hope, rekindle a dream,
For shadows are never as dark as they seem.

While there is time, Lord, let me not waste
The chances you give me, I cannot replace.

Lend me Your wisdom, that I may learn
To give of myself, nor ask a return.

Let me be gentle, keep my words kind,
In spite of the worries, crossing my mind.
And when at long last, life's sun starts to set,
Let me have never a cause for regret.

— *Grace E. Easley*

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Pearls of Prudence

The fellow who complains the grass is
greener on the other side of the fence
forgets that the water bill is higher too.

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Those who worry pull tomorrow's
clouds over today's sunshine.

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WHAT GOD HAS FOR YOU:

A LIGHT for every shadow,
A PLAN for each tomorrow,
A KEY for every problem,
A BALM for every sorrow.

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Pleasurable Pastime

SURPRISE!

I dreamed death came the other night,
And heaven's gate swung wide;
An angel with a halo bright
Ushered me inside.
And there, to my astonishment,

Stood folks I'd judged and labeled
As quite unfit, of little worth.
And spiritually disabled.

Indignant words rose to my lips
But never were set free;
For every face showed stunned surprise
No one expected me!

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The older generation thought nothing of
getting up at 5 o'clock in the morning
—and the younger generation doesn't
think much of it either!

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The psychiatrist told his exasperated
nurse who was busy on the phone,
“Please just say that *we're terribly busy*,
not that *it's a madhouse*.”

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Farmer Jones: “*Well, Maggie, now that
we've struck oil, I want you to have
some decent clothes.*”

Maggie: “*Nothin' doin'.... I've worn
decent clothes all my life—now I'm
gonna dress like other women.*”

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The mother said to her little boy, “Now,
Junior, be a good boy and say ‘*ah-h-h-h,*’
so the dentist can get his finger out of
your mouth.”

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Proverb Prescriptions

Happiness Prescription:

If you want your life to be crowned with happiness, here is a good prescription—Keep your heart free from hate, your tongue from lying, your mind from worry. Live simply; expect little; give much. Fill your life with God’s Love. Scatter sunshine and good cheer. With truth as your motto, forget self; think of others, and do as you would be done by.

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Gossips, like alligators, are harmless as long as their mouths are shut.

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Priceless Prose

An Interview with God

“Come in,” God said. “So, you would like to interview me?”

“If you have the time,” I said.

God smiled. “My time is eternity. What questions do you have?”

“What surprises you about mankind?”

God answered, “That they get bored being children, are in a rush to grow up, then long to be children again. That they lose their health making money, then lose their money to restore their health. That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present. That they

live as if they will never die, and die as if they had never lived.”

God’s hand took mine and we were silent for awhile, then I asked, “As a parent, what are some of life’s lessons you want your children to learn?”

God replied with a smile: “To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives. To learn that it only takes a second to cause a loved one deep wounds and many years to heal them. To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but is one who needs the least. To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others. All will be judged individually, not as a group on a comparison basis. To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness. To learn that there are persons who love them dearly, but do not know how to express or show their feelings. To learn that two people can see the same thing quite differently, yet both their views are valid. To learn that a true friend is someone who knows everything about them, but likes them anyway. To learn that money can buy everything but happiness. To learn that it is not always enough to forgive others, but that they, too, have been forgiven.”

After sitting awhile enjoying the moment, I thanked God for the time and

for all that He has done for me and my family, and God replied, “Anytime, I’m here 24 hours a day. All you have to do is ask for me, and I’ll answer.”

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Precious Principles

Money Can Buy:

A bed BUT NOT sleep.

Books BUT NOT brains.

Food BUT NOT appetite.

Finery BUT NOT beauty.

A house BUT NOT a home.

Medicine BUT NOT health.

Luxuries BUT NOT culture.

Amusement BUT NOT happiness.

A crucifix BUT NOT a Savior.

A church pew BUT NOT heaven.

(What money can’t buy is what’s most important in this life: *a relationship with God’s Son*. People must each decide what they will do with Christ. . . whether to allow Him to be the Savior and Lord of their lives, or not. ***Money can’t buy*** forgiveness of sins and a future of eternal service in God’s Kingdom. *Why not?* Because God freely gives them to us, but only if we turn our lives over to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, His Son. It’s our decision. (adapted from *Money-A-Tracts*, 1989)

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Past Pathways

“The more one learns about scientific endeavors, the more one is convinced of the wonders of God’s creation. The more one contemplates the complex workings of millions of planetary bodies, and the unknown immensity of space, the more one realizes what a fantastic miracle it all is.”

— *Gordon Cooper* (former astronaut)

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Rev. Jowett told of a servant girl who applied for membership in his church. He asked her what she was doing for her Lord. She said she had very little time off and could seldom attend services, but that she always took the daily paper up to her bedroom at night. When he asked what good that did, she explained, “I always turn to the ‘Births, Marriages and Deaths.’ When I read over the births, I pray for those little babies to be early led to the Savior and be a great blessing to their parents. For the weddings, I pray that the brides and grooms will be happy together and always true to each other. And on reading each death notice, I pray, one by one, for all the bereaved, that they may turn in their sorrow to the Jesus, only source of lasting comfort.”

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Serving Residents at Eskaton

Village Community Church offers an opportunity for interdenominational Christian worship under the sponsorship of Faith Legacy 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, a retired RN,

leads VCC with the help of Rev. Terry A. Brown and Pastor Dawn Valerio. All three are available for pastoral visits and spiritual counsel by request. Our team also includes Rosemary Hatton, pianist, and Terry Evensizer, assistant.

Pastor David's cell phone: 605-9615

David & Rosemary home: 550-8200

Pastor Terry's cell phone: 425-4731

Pastor Dawn's cell phone: 764-2328

Or leave a message for any of them at the Faith Legacy Church, 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

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c/o Faith Legacy Church
3532 Whitney Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95821

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