

MOVING SPIRIT

devotional newsletter of

Village Community Church

Pastor's Parcel

Greek mythology tells about a woman named Pandora who received a box that was to stay shut. When curiosity got the best of her, she yielded to temptation and opened it. A swarm of tragic curses escaped from it, filling the world. Eve basically did the same thing in Eden, when she ate the forbidden fruit.

These stories have another similarity. Eve was promised that her “*offspring*” would someday defeat the one who had misled her. And left behind in Pandora’s box was what a world cursed by disease and death sorely needed: *hope*. Christ fulfilled both of these expectations.

The Bible tells of this fulfillment: “*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil,*” (1 John 3:8b, ESV). It also describes how it took place: “*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil,*” (Heb 2:14, NIV). God took on human nature to defeat death by His Cross. His empty



tomb became the symbol of *His victory over death and our promise of eternal life*.

As *hope* escaped at last from the open lid of Pandora’s deathly box, so *hope beckons to a death-bound human race from the open doorway of Christ’s empty tomb*. Fruit from a lethal tree led us into a tomb. Fruit from Mary’s womb died on Calvary’s Tree to lead us out of it—starting by spiritual new birth, then later, by our own bodily resurrection.

The Easter greeting “*Christ is risen!*” declares this hope. Our response echoes our faith in it: “*He is risen indeed!*” May this hopeful faith be both in our hearts and on our lips! — *Pastor David*

Parish Proclamations

Just as we encourage those who attend VCC to share their blessings on Sunday mornings, we encourage the same for readers of the *Moving Spirit*. Spiritual poems, quotes, little stories, or personal testimonies are welcome. They can be brought to church and given to the pastoral staff or put in VCC's box in the Mail Room. Thank you in advance!

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Personal Pulpit

A noted psychiatrist recognized his own limitations in a conversation he had with British clergyman William Barclay. "All that a psychiatrist can do," said the doctor, "is strip a man naked until you get to the essential man; and if the essential man is bad stuff, there's nothing you can do about it. That's where you come in." Barclay later commented, "I think he meant that this is where Jesus comes in."

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Pithy Pieces

Christ's resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian faith. Without it we have no hope for this life nor the life to come. That's why it is important to

recognize that belief in the resurrection of Jesus isn't based on religious feeling, nor on unfounded rumor, but on historical fact with solid evidence to support it.

In the early part of this century, a group of lawyers met in England to discuss the biblical accounts of Jesus' resurrection. They wanted to see if enough information was available to make a case that would hold up in a court of law. They concluded that Christ's resurrection was one of the most well-established facts of history!

In his book *Countdown*, G. B. Hardy offers thought-provoking questions about the resurrection: "There are but two essential requirements: (1) Has anyone cheated death and proved it? (2) Is it available to me?" Here's the record: Confucius' tomb? Occupied. Buddha's Occupied. Muhammad's? Occupied. Jesus Christ's tomb? Empty! Historical evidence and countless changed lives testify that the resurrection of Jesus is a fact, not a fable! Have you put your hope in the risen Christ?

— adapted from ODB, Easter 1995

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Perpetual Precepts

The heart kept warm by love is never frozen by age. — Jack Wyrzten

It has been scientifically proved that
worry, discord, and melancholy
undermine health. Good spirits make
for good digestion. Cheerfulness costs
nothing, yet is beyond price.

— *B. C. Forbes*

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A proud man is always looking down
on things and people; and, of course, as
long as you're looking down, you can't
see something that's above you.

— *C. S. Lewis*

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When you reach for stars, you may
never quite get one, but you will not
come up with a handful of mud either.

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Poetry's Place

HEAVEN'S GROCERY STORE

As years ago I walked life's road,
with miles that stretched before,
I came upon a sign that read,
"Heaven's Grocery Store."

When I approached the building,
the doors swung open wide.
Before I knew what happened,
I was standing there inside.

I saw the Grocer, with angels
surrounding Him everywhere.
He said, as He gave me a basket,

"Be sure that you shop with care."

What people really needed
was in that grocery store,
And, of what you couldn't carry,
you could later come back for
more.

First I got some *Patience*.
Love was in the same row.
Further down was *Understanding*,
to help me wherever I go.

I grabbed a great big bag of *Faith*,
a box of *Wisdom*, old and new,
Some *Charity* and *Compassion*—
I had to have them, too.

I picked up *Strength* and *Courage*,
to help me run the race.
As my basket was getting heavy,
I remembered I needed *Grace*.

When I finally found *Salvation*,
I felt my soul set free,
And I couldn't miss the *Holy Ghost*—
He was moving all over me.

Thinking I had all I needed
to do the Master's will,
I started toward the counter
to pay my grocery bill.

But as I went up the aisle,
I saw *Prayer* and put that in,
For I knew, when stepping outside,
I'd surely run into sin.

Peace and *Joy* were right nearby,
 so I just helped myself.
Song and *Praise*, which I took last,
 were jumping off the shelf!

And then I asked the Grocer,
 “Look here, how much do I pay?”
 He broadly waved His hand and said,
 “Just take them wherever you may.”

I questioned again, “Be honest, now,
 how much do I really owe?”
 “Nothing” He said, “for Jesus, my Son,
 paid for them all, long ago.”

—*Unknown author, adapted by DLH*

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Pearls of Prudence

Salvation is infinitely costly,
 but absolutely free.

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We are saved by Christ’s atonement,
 not by our attainment.

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Our spirituality can be compared to an
 airplane ride; the higher we ride, the
 smaller things on earth become.

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How to Be Perfectly Miserable:

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself,
3. Use ‘I’ as often as possible.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the

- opinion of others.
5. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
 6. Expect to be appreciated.
 7. Be suspicious.
 8. Be jealous and envious.
 9. Be sensitive to slights.
 10. Never forgive a criticism.
 11. Trust nobody but yourself.
 12. Insist on consideration and respect.
 13. Demand agreement with your own views on everything.
 14. Sulk, if people are not grateful to you for favors shown.
 15. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
 16. Be on the lookout for a good time for yourself.
 17. Shirk your duties if you can.
 18. Do as little as possible for others.
 19. Love yourself supremely.
 20. Be selfish.

— *Rev. Pierce Harris, Atlanta, GA*

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Pleasurable Pastime

The only exercise some people get
 is jumping to conclusions, running
 people down, sidestepping
 responsibility, and pushing their luck.

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He who carries a tale
makes a monkey of himself.

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Some books that are bound
should also be gagged.

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Lite Fare from *Christianity Today* “Pay Per View”

Helping my 75-yr-old mom’s recover from her mastectomy was made easier by her upbeat attitude about the situation. “It doesn’t make any difference,” she told me. “No one sees me but the doctor, and I have to pay him to look.”

— *Connon Barclay, Zeeland, MI*

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Proverb Prescriptions

A clear conscience can only be
destroyed by its owner.

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Bad men excuse their faults,
good men abandon them.

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Following the line of least resistance
makes men and rivers crooked.

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Live your life so that on judgment day
you’ll only be called for jury duty.

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One of the best remedies
for anger is delay.

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Kindness is the language the deaf can
hear, and the blind can see. Kindness
puts shoes on the feet of love.

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Priceless Prose

New Version of “FOOT PRINTS”

Imagine dreaming that you and Jesus are walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord’s footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace. B u t y o u r footprints are a disorganized stream of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns.

For much of the way, it seems to go like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord’s, soon paralleling His consistently. You and Jesus are walking as true friends!

This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens: Your footprints that once etched the sand next to Jesus’ are now walking precisely in His steps. Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones, you and Jesus are becoming one.

This goes on for many miles, but gradually you notice another change. The footprints inside the large footprints seem to grow larger. Eventually they

disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints. They have become one.

This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse! Zigzags all over the place. Stops. Starts. Gashes in the sand. A variable mess of prints. You are amazed and shocked.

As your dream ends, you pray, “Lord, I understand the first scene, with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But You walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with You.”

“That is correct.”

“And when the smaller footprints were inside of Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps, following You very closely.”

“Very good. You have understood everything so far.”

“When the smaller footprints grew and filled in Yours, I suppose that I was becoming like You in every way.”

“Precisely.”

“So, Lord, was there a regression or something? The footprints separated, and this time it was worse than at first.”

There is a pause as the Lord answers, with a smile, “Didn’t you know? It was then that we danced!

— *Author unknown*

Present Perplexities

YOUR MISSION

If you cannot, on the ocean,
sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
laughing at the storms you meet,
You can stand among the sailors,
anchored yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them,
as they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
up the mountain steep and high,
You can stand within the valley,
while the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure,
as they slowly pass along;
Though they may forget the singer,
they will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
ever ready to command;
If you cannot toward the needy
reach an ever open hand;
You can visit the afflicted,
o’er the erring you can weep;
You can be a true disciple,
sitting at the Savior’s feet.

If you cannot, in the conflict,
prove yourself a soldier true,
If, where fire and smoke are thickest,
there’s no work for you to do;
When the battlefield is silent,

you can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
you can cover up the dead.
If you cannot, in the harvest,
gather up the richest sheaves,
Many a grain both ripe and golden
oft the careless reaper leaves;
Go and glean among the briars
growing rank against the wall,
For it may be that their shadow
hides the heaviest wheat of all.
Do not, then, stand idly waiting,
for some greater work to do;
Fortune is a lazy goddess,
she will never come to you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
do not fear to do or dare,
If you want a field of labor,
you can find it anywhere.

by Ellen M. H. Gates

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Precious Principles

Blessed is the one who digs a well
from which another may draw faith.

— *from Heartland Sampler*

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WORDS

A careless word may kindle strife;
A cruel word may wreck a life.
A bitter word may hate instill;
A brutal word may smite and kill.

A gracious word may smooth the way;
A joyous word may light the day.
A timely word may lessen stress;
A loving word may heal and bless.

— *Author unknown*

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Past Pathways

On his deathbed, British preacher Charles Simeon smiled brightly and asked the people gathered in his room, “What do you think especially gives me comfort at this time?” When they all remained silent, he exclaimed, “The creation! I ask myself, ‘Did Jehovah create the world or did I?’ He did! Now if He made the world and all the rolling spheres of the universe, He certainly can take care of me. Into Jesus’ hands I can safely commit my spirit!”

Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, in the closing months of his life said to a friend, “I am so weak. I can’t read my Bible. I can’t even pray. I can only lie still in God’s arms like a little child and trust.”

Both Simeon and Taylor knew that the almighty God who created the universe was holding them in His hands.



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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