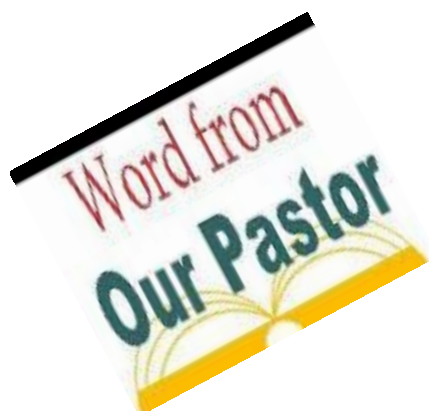


February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Dear NCFA Family and Friends,

I am mindful that many of us are going through some very tough times. We find ourselves burning the candles at both ends. We find ourselves carrying our feelings on our sleeves. We find ourselves “swallowing camels and choking over gnats” because we feel like we are losing control over things we value.

These moments drive me back to the Bible and the old Dwight Moody quote written in one of my first Bibles. “The *Bible* will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the *Bible*.” I still struggle with sin; and when I am overwhelmed with life, I find myself not getting as deep into my Bible readings and reflections as my personal devotion, apart from my vocational call.

Similarly, when families find themselves in crises, it seems hard for them to participate in the life of the Church. I have worked hard to ensure that we not spending so many hours and days at NCFA that we fail to have an opportunity to live out our faith at home or in our community. However, I still believe that it is important for us to worship and spiritually struggle together as the body of Christ. Read these words from *Hebrews 10:23* ***Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*** When we isolate ourselves, we become easy prey for the enemy of our souls.

We continue to provide the 8:15 am Chapel service as our outreach, contemplative reformed worship, and opportunities to train leaders. Please note that on February 8th and 15th the service will take place at 1507 Wilshire prior to our 10:15am service.

I thank those of you who participated in the NCFA Leadership Retreat. I still encourage you and your family to identify your goals and your big audacious dream. Below, please find four areas of focus coming out of our retreat:

1. Retain and minister to visitors and members through personal contacts, strengthening families, ministry-driven events, and identifying and utilizing the gifts of our members.
2. Better utilize social media and other modes of communication to celebrate our ministry, share resources, and organize ourselves.
3. Enhance our Children and Youth ministries through mentoring, attending their extracurricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.
4. Continue to emphasize marketplace ministry and identify the various ministries within our church and community. Continue to reach out into the community.

Please know that we are getting ready to embark on an important period of time for us to deepen our commitment to God, our families, ourselves, our community, and our church. I want you to maintain healthy boundaries and stay engaged. Remember again last week’s quote: “Give, but don’t allow yourself to be used. Love, but don’t allow your heart to be abused. Trust, but don’t be naive. Listen to others, but don’t lose your own voice.”

It is my hope that you hear encouragement from one who loves you and prays for you. It is my hope that no matter who you are that you experience the best that God has for you and your family. As you consider the ***Philippians 2: 12-13***, please consider how much joy God has partnering with us for the glory that comes out of our partnership and the blessing of the people God created. Doesn’t that motivate you to open up to new possibilities with God? I hope so!!!!

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

God bless and keep you, James

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNE**X**ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

CONVERSATIONS AROUND THE BELHAR CONFSSION

Sundays February 15, 22, and March 1
12:30 – 2:00pm

A lively study of the “Belhar Confession”
Deacon Ashley Phillips, Convener
Soup and sandwich lunch and childcare provided.

The “Belhar Confession” is the first confession from the Global South to be considered for inclusion in *The Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church USA. For a copy, see pcusa.org/resources/belhar.

We are providing our leaders opportunities to
learn more about the Belhar Confession and to
equip our two commissioners to vote their convictions
during our next presbytery meeting:
March 6-7th in Corpus Christi.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 17

5:30-7:30 pm

Live entertainment 6:30-7:30pm
Abraham Weaver

Auction of goods and services.

No ticket price "donations accepted"

Deacons are asking the NCFA
Congregation to donate:
pancake mix, butter, syrup,
orange juice, coffee, bacon, sausage

Invite your friends,
neighbors, and coworkers!

Coming up: Chiapas Mission Trip
March 18-25, 2015

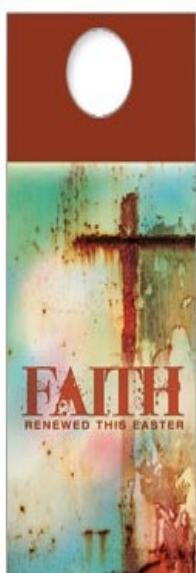
Minute for mission and fundraising on February 8th.
Please see Elder Caly Fernandez
and Rev. Lydia Hernandez

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



As we prepare for the Lenten Season, we will be distributing door hangers and prayer-walking through the community on Sunday, February 15, 2015 after we honor our seminarians.

Please plan to join us.

Please contact Elder Randy Mojica or Elder Caly Fernandez for more information.

Proposed Lenten Offerings:

We have been invited to join Genesis Presbyterian Church as the use we Austin Seminary Lenten Devotional to guide us through a time of reflection and self-examination. Cliff Frederick, APTS-Senior class of 2015 and Genesis intern, will facilitate this learning opportunity. Tentatively, the series will begin Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 5pm. Please feel free to contact Cliff at cliff.frederick@student.austinseminary.edu.

The Rev. Jeff Saddington is offering to lead a 6-class series on the Gospel of Mark using the book Mark's Gospel from Scratch, by Griggs and Myers. The study would take place on Thursday evenings starting March 12th. The dates would be March 12th, 26th, April 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd. Please express your interest so that we can coordinate space with Genesis. It is important to note that this event will not have child care or meals provided. Please plan accordingly.

Four areas of focus coming out of the NCFA Leadership Retreat were to

1. Retain and minister to visitors and members through personal contacts, strengthening families, ministry-driven events, and identifying and utilizing the numerous gifts of our members
2. Better utilize social media and other modes of communication to celebrate our ministry, share resources, and organize ourselves.
3. Enhance our Children and Youth ministries through mentoring, attending their extra curricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.
4. Continue to emphasize marketplace ministry and identify the various ministries within our church and community. Continue to reach out into the community like the Community Garden, where we donated \$100.00.

The challenge of leadership is to
Be strong, but not rude;
Be kind, but not weak;
Be bold, but not bully;
Be thoughtful, but not lazy;
Be humble, but not timid;
Be proud, but not arrogant;
Have humor, but without folly.

~ Jim Rohn ~

WWW.MESSAGES.365GREETINGS.COM

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Rarely do we find men who willingly engage in hard, solid thinking. There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think.

• Martin Luther King, Jr.



PS what is Fat Tuesday???

Lent, the forty days before Easter, begins on ASH WEDNESDAY.

Traditionally, the faithful abstained during Lent and used up

all their “fat” by making pancakes the day before Lent began.



**Did you know the most effective Christian education takes place in homes where the adults are growing in their faith?
Check out one of these opportunities for growing in 2015:**

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study - 6:30pm - Kitchen

Men are finishing up a study on the book of Judges by Tim Keller. The next topic will be selected by the Men's Ministry.

Thursday Noon Bible Study, 12 noon –1 pm at the home of Connie Jones – 5107 Edenborough Ln.

(north of 290 East, just past Springdale) A study of the writings of the Apostle Paul.
All welcome, bring a bag lunch as desired.

4th Saturday Adult Bible Study, 8:30 am

Chapter 3 of "Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians"
by Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty

Sunday Morning Adult Sunday School - 9:15am - Rm. 7

This class is studying a book by Bill Hybels and John Ortberg on the Sermon on the Mount, the Passion story, "The Lord's Prayer," and several parables. The scripture is read together and then questions in the guide are discussed, making it real to current life.

Dates for Presbyterian Women

March 1, Sunday CROP Walk, Camp Mabry

March 6, Friday Church Women United will meet at 9:30am at Crestview United Methodist Church, 1300 Morrow St. The program will center around World Day of Prayer.

March 8, Sunday Celebrate the Gifts of Women; NCFA women will take leadership roles in worship. Rev. Lydia Hernandez will preach at the Waller Creek Chapel Service at 8:15am, and CRE Estela Sifuentes will preach at 10:15 at 1507 Wilshire Blvd.

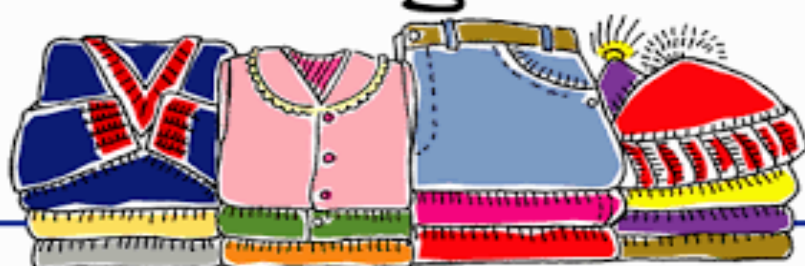
February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Clothing Drive



Greater Hope Center

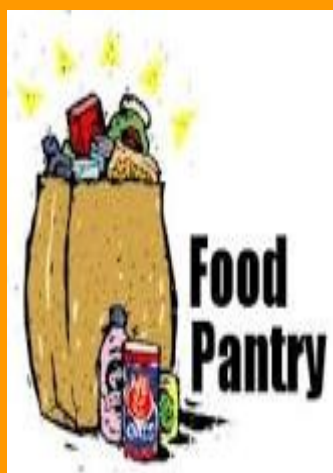
Clothing donations can be delivered to our boutique located at 4136 E. 12th, Austin, Texas 78723.

We accept all clothing donations during the hours we are open: Tuesday and Thursday 4:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

We will also make special arrangements for donations at other hours.

Free clothing for those who need it.

FOOD PANTRY AVAILABLE TO ALL



The New Covenant Fellowship Deacons are now providing a free to all food pantry each Sunday. This is to help anyone who needs a little help in the obtaining of groceries. The table at the back of the church will have canned goods and other non-perishable food each Sunday. If you or anyone you know needs some help with groceries, please feel free to partake of the items available.

If you are able to donate food items to this table, please feel free to do so and bless you for your contribution. Paper bags with handles are also needed and if you have extra ones of these, please put them on this new food table.



February 5, 2015



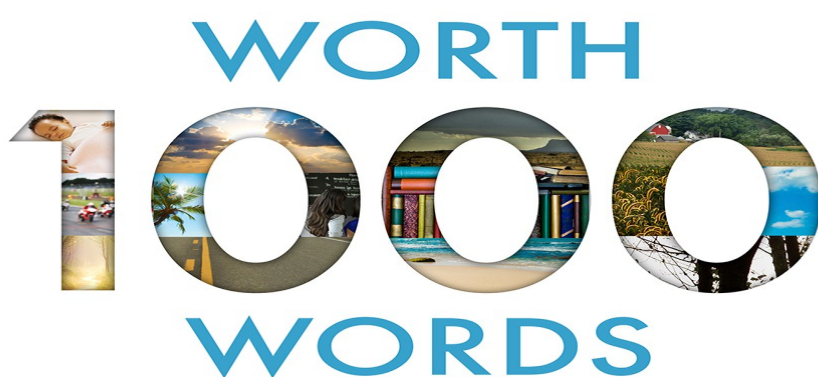
NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Proposed Lenten Offerings:

Austin Presbyterian Lenten Project

Presbyterian Churches and Leaders collaborating to spark homiletical imagination and utilize art as one of many modes for theological reflection throughout the Lenten Season. The theme is "Worth 1000 Words".



A VISUAL JOURNEY THROUGH LENT

Pancake Dinner and Live Music

Presented by the Deacons of New Covenant Fellowship

**You are joyfully invited to our
Pancake Dinner & Live Music by Abraham Weaver,
as we celebrate Shrove Tuesday**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, February 17, 6-7:30pm
Pancakes served through 6:30, live music at 7**

**Place: New Covenant Fellowship of Austin
1507 Wilshire Blvd., Austin**

**No charge for the dinner
Donations invited to benefit the
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin Deacon's Fund,
which assists individuals and families with emergency needs.**

**Please let us know if you are coming!
RSVP: info@ncfaustin.org or call 512-334-3041
Directions: <http://www.ncfaustin.org/>**

**Please continue to pray for all of our
Mission and Evangelism efforts:**

**Austin Club House, Austin Presbyterian Seminary,
Cabo, Café Justo, Chiapas, Patterson Park Community
Gardens, Cuba, Mo-Ranch, NCFA Health Fair, Summer
Food Program, Sudan, and Souper Bowl of Caring
Crop Walk — March 1st**

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service
Waller Creek Chapel
41st St. and Red River

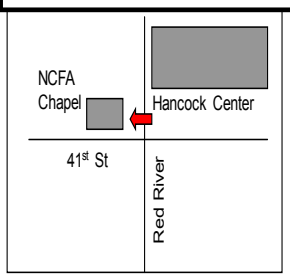
10:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:15am -- Waller Chapel

Come rise and shine with us
at our **8:15am** chapel service
where we glorify God
through the Word, Prayer, Hymns,
and Communion.

41st and Red River, entrance gate on 41st.

In the words of Phillips, Craig & Dean,
"Come, just as you are, to worship."
All are welcome to this traditional,
intimate style of worshipping our Lord.



NCFA Waller Creek Chapel — Upcoming Preachers

February 8—Pastor James Lee

February 15—Shane Blackshear

February 22—Sam Okyere Mireku

March 1—

March 8—Rev. Lydia Hernandez

March 15—Estela Sifuentes, CRE

March 22—

NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10:15am

We would love to have you and your family
come share in the CELEBRATION OF
THE GOOD NEWS!

We are worshipping in the Fellowship Hall of
Genesis Presbyterian Church on the Wil-
shire Campus starting at 10:15 a.m.



New Covenant Fellowship of Austin PC(U.S.A.) is a

racially diverse community informed by the Bible,
empowered by the Holy Spirit, and motivated to share
God's love with all. In response to God's love, we are
called to equip disciples to faithfully serve, to encourage
seekers to joyfully commit, and to implore all to
worship our Lord, as we love our neighbors,
grow in grace, and live by faith.



JOIN US IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE GOOD NEWS

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



2/1 Tim Lenz
2/6 Rey Mojica
2/7 Gina Cox
Tracey Lenz
2/8 Angel Hernandez
Yejae Shin
2/9 Mary Ann Akujor
2/11 Pastor James Lee
2/12 Destiny Edwards
2/14 Reece Listach
“ MaryAnn Ramirez
2/17 Ashley Phillips
2/20 Nikkie Shubitz
Eli Smith
2/26 Navy Dajae Shin
Oliver Smith

2/24 Mary and Randy Mojica

Session Members

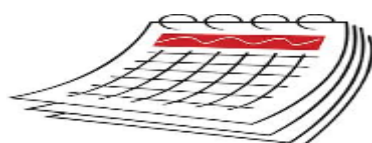
***Rev. James Lee**
Pastor/Moderator
***Elder Kathy Smith**
Clerk of Session
***Rev. Bill Harris**
Administration & Personnel
***Elder Tim Lenz**
Buildings & Grounds
***Elder Mary Jo Mojica**
Congregational Life
***Elder Randy Mojica**
Children and Youth
***Elder Cathy Angell**
Discipleship & Women's Ministry
***Elder Caly Fernandez**
Evangelism
***Elder Tracey Lenz**
Finance & Stewardship
***Elder Robert Booth**
Lay Ministry
***Elder Benton Hooks**
Men's Ministry
***Elder Vernon Bailey**
Missions
***Elder Charles Robinson**
Worship & Membership

Deacons

Connie Jones, Chair
Kathryn Aldas
Ulysses Cox
Naomi Jones
Samuel Okyere Mireku
Lucy Oglesby
Ashley Phillips
Carol Saddington
Cathy Trifiro
Roxann Vallejo

New Covenant Fellowship

FEBRUARY



**Study of the
Belhar Confession
Sundays February 15, 22, and
March 1
12:30 – 2:00pm**

**February 15
Pizza and Potluck to
honor our seminarians.
All are invited.
12:30 pm. Door Hangers and
Prayer Walking the community.**

**February 17
Shrove Tuesday
Pancake Dinner; 5:30-7:30 pm.**

**February 18
Ash Wednesday Service
Dinner at 6:30pm
Worship at 7:00pm**

**February 22
Family Friendly Worship
NCFA Session Meeting**

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

February 1, 2015

PSALM 111:1-10 1 PRAISE THE LORD! I WILL GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD WITH MY WHOLE HEART, IN THE COMPANY OF THE UPRIGHT, IN THE CONGREGATION. 2 GREAT ARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD, STUDIED BY ALL WHO DELIGHT IN THEM. 3 FULL OF HONOR AND MAJESTY IS HIS WORK, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER. 4 HE HAS GAINED RENOWN BY HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS; THE LORD IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL.

- PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING FOR THE 39 YEARS OF WEDDED BLISS ENJOYED BY OLIVER AND ELIZABETH. OLIVER IS STILL BLESSING THE DAY SHE SAID, "YES!"
- PRAISE FOR CONNIE'S FRIEND AND VISITOR REX LAFITTE (YES, HE IS DISTANTLY RELATED TO THE PIRATE JEAN LAFITTE) AND HIS ATTENDANT.
- HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO TIM. ALSO, PRAISE FOR HIS LATER MARRIAGE TO TRACEY.
- PRAISE FOR THE SUDAN MISSIONARIES' SAFE RETURN TO KAPOETA. PATRICIA WILL REMAIN IN SUDAN FOR A COUPLE MORE DAYS TO COMPLETE WORK THERE BEFORE RETURNING HOME. AS WE ANTICIPATE HEARING ABOUT THE TRIP, PLEASE CONTINUE TO LIFT UP THE SPREAD OF GOD'S WORD TO THE TOPOSA PEOPLE.
- PRAISE THE LORD! PRAISE THE LORD! RICK CONTINUES ON THE ROAD OF RECOVERY FOLLOWING SURGERY. PLEASE CONTINUE TO LIFT UP HIS PROGRESS AS HE RETURNS TO SCHOOL AND RESUMES NORMAL ACTIVITIES; AND HIS PARENTS AS THEY BEGIN TO BREATHE ONCE AGAIN.
- LIFT UP CALY AND ALBA AS THEY TRAVEL TO FALFURIAS TO SHARE ALBA'S STORY OF COMING TO THE UNITED STATES FROM GUATEMALA.
- LIFT UP CONTINUED HEALING FOR SCOTT'S COUSIN RICK AFTER A SEVERE ASTHMA ATTACK. ALSO, LIFT UP RICK AND HIS FAMILY FOR CLARITY AND MUTUAL SUPPORT AS THEY CONFRONT ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND RECOVERY.
- PRAISE THE LORD! JOHN MADE IT THROUGH ORDINATION EXAMS! PRAISE FOR GOD'S MAKING A BEST EFFORT GOOD ENOUGH. LIFT UP TRAVELING MERCIES AS JOHN TRAVELS TO ST. LOUIS TO SEE MICHELE AND TO PRESENT HIMSELF TO PRESBYTERY THERE AS A POSSIBLE PASTOR CANDIDATE. GOD'S WILL BE DONE (EVEN THOUGH WE'D LIKE TO KEEP JOHN HERE).
- LIFT UP VERNON AND HIS EXTENDED FAMILY FOR GOD'S ABOUNDING GRACE AND COMFORT AS THEY GATHER AROUND VERNON'S SISTER IN HOSPICE. LIFT UP PEACE AND A PAINLESS TRANSITION FROM THIS LIFE TO THE NEXT FOR HIS SISTER.

**FAITH and PRAYER
both are invisible,
but they make
impossible things
possible.!!!**

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

February 1, 2015

PSALM 111:1-10 1 PRAISE THE LORD! I WILL GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD WITH MY WHOLE HEART, IN THE COMPANY OF THE UPRIGHT, IN THE CONGREGATION. 2 GREAT ARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD, STUDIED BY ALL WHO DELIGHT IN THEM. 3 FULL OF HONOR AND MAJESTY IS HIS WORK, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER. 4 HE HAS GAINED RENOWN BY HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS; THE LORD IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL.

- PRAISE FOR SAM O'S GRADUATION FROM SEMINARY! PRAISE ALSO FOR JANE'S AND LARRY'S OFFER OF HOUSING UNTIL SAM'S FAMILY CAN ARRIVE AND THEIR FUTURE IN GOD'S SERVICE UNFOLDS.
- PRAISE FOR THE THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIP GROWING TO SUPPORT THE MISSION WORK IN CHIAPAS. PRAISE GOD FOR THE INCREDIBLE WORK OF PASTOR LYDIA TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THIS WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY AND ELDER CALY FOR HER TIRELESS EFFORTS IN COORDINATING AND ADMINISTRATING EFFORTS BEHIND THE SCENES. THANK GOD FOR ELDER VERNON, CHAIR OF MISSIONS, WHO SUPPORTS EFFORTS FOR THE THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN CHIAPAS, CUBA, SUDAN, McALLEN, AND LOCALLY.
- PRAISE FOR JEFF'S SAFE RETURN FROM A TWO WEEK TRIP TO ISRAEL. AS YOU IMAGINE WORSHIP WITH PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS CONDUCTED IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH THINK ON "PONDER ANEW ALL THAT THE LORD CAN DO."
- THANKSGIVING FOR THE ENCOURAGEMENT RECEIVED THROUGH PASTOR LEE'S SERMON, "AUTHORITY ACTUALIZED."
- LIFT UP PASTOR BILL FOR HEALING FROM HIS RECENT ILLNESS.
- LIFT UP THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS—ESPECIALLY BETTY THE WIFE—OF SAM M'S FRIEND AND MENTOR RICH WHO ENTERED THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT. LIFT UP TRAVELING MERCIES FOR SAM AS HE GOES TO GALVESTON TO PAY HIS RESPECTS



February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

January 25, 2015 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Authority Actualized"

Psalm 111: 1-10; Mark 1:21-28

*Pastor James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin*

Psalm 111:1-10 1Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. 2Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. 3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. 4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful. 5He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. 6He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. 7The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. 8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. 9He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Mark 1:21-28 21They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

As we hear the text today, there are some challenging things that have taken place. We hear about a person with an unclean spirit being there and having need of Jesus to address him. What I want us to think about is how many of us come to church with burdens? How many of us have come overwhelmed with burdens and pain? If everything had to be perfect in order for us to come to church, would we ever be in church? I remember growing up when we used to say when you do come to church, you leave your burdens and come in to worship; if you brought any burdens with you, you leave them at the altar. But if I had a good time in worship after leaving my burdens outside, what did I have to go do? Pick my burdens back up! But God didn't plan this life to be lived like that. God wants us to know that God is with us in the good times and in the bad. And that through Christ there is a liberating that is already taking place. And yes, there are forces that are already going on around us that still show forth power and authority; but Christ has dealt with that system in his giving of his life for us.

As we hear this text, it is before he has gone to the cross, before he has been buried, before he has been resurrected and sits on the right hand. So we get to see how it is that he models for us a way of dealing with us in crisis, others who are in crisis, in everyday settings, or even in worship settings or religious settings so that liberation can take place...life can take place. The sermon title is ***"Authority Actualized."***

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

January 25, 2015 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Authority Actualized"

Psalm 111: 1-10; Mark 1:21-28

*Pastor James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin*

I know "actualize" is more of a financial term, but it also means to be realized, to become a reality and not just a here and there, somewhere.

I want us to think about *"Authority, "Aggressiveness," and "Amazement."*

Authority:

As you read the text, they talk about Jesus' authority and how he taught with authority. They could recognize the authority. And the way we don't understand it as much here and now is that they were in the synagogue on the Sabbath, a time no work would have been done, a time of resting. A time to pray and to study. In a synagogue you would sit around, and you would talk, and debate, and work through Scriptures. In the temple you would bring your offering to say, "Lord, I messed up...I've brought my offering." The priest would take it, present it, and bless you to go on and live and enjoy life. But in the synagogue there was debate, teaching, and all of this going on. And Jesus, who knew the **Torah**, Jesus, who knew the **Pentateuch** (the first five books of the **Bible**), spoke with authority because he knew it was about him and how the triune God was revealing him through even those five books. So he didn't have to debate it because he knew it was about him! He spoke and taught with authority.

We need laws and authority so we're not in an anarchy—Amen? Even if it is not experienced the same way, we still all rely on laws and authority to be exhibited so that at some level we can have some security and some peace. That becomes our reality so that we're not living in anarchy. So if something happens, we have recourse. If something happens that we disagree with, we have somewhere to go and a reason to go. And Paul would say, even as we understand the laws of the Bible and the laws of life, they're there just to tell us about right and wrong, and tell us where we are; but it is only by grace, through Christ, that we begin to have a teacher to say how do we live in this, and when we have messed up, how do we work our way beyond that.

Authority makes it different also. Sometimes it's about the position you have that gives you authority. Well, you can have the authority and people still do not recognize the authority. And so that can be challenging. Or you can be a person who does not have the position, and someone gives you the authority that you did not think you were warranted, because they knew how much you cared. You can hear the old saying, "People don't care what you know until they know how much you care." And when they know you care about them and you're looking out for their best good, they can give you authority to speak into their life, to mentor them, to counsel them, to console them...that you didn't even ask for! There are times we want the authority and other times we're like, "No, I don't want that authority or the responsibility; you can take that!"

But here it is; they're there, and a person with an unclean spirit is in the room. A person who has gone through some stuff is in the room, and he recognizes Jesus. "Jesus, what do you have to do with us? Did you come to destroy us? We know who you are." And so they recognize the authority of Christ, and it's a powerful thing.

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

January 25, 2015 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Authority Actualized"

Psalm 111: 1-10; Mark 1:21-28

*Pastor James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin*

I want us to recognize the power and authority of God right here and right now. The Psalmist said, ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom."*** We sang the song, *"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice."* Jesus wasn't born today, but if he is ever born daily in our hearts and our minds, we'll know that he was born to save, so we won't live bound day to day to day....

He has authority over all, even if it hasn't been realized yet. And so they speak, and Jesus speaks. The Word says he rebuked, and even though there was a disruption in the service, Jesus didn't disrupt everything with aggression. Sometimes we are passive aggressive or "nice nasty". Other times, it is visible or verbal -- "nasty". Nevertheless, it's aggression. There is a way you can address a situation and not destroy everything. It is said, "Can you kill a fly with a flyswatter and not an ax?" Every now and then I come with the ax....

Aggression:

Sometimes aggression is someone saying "I'm scared. I'm vulnerable, and I need you to back off." Because it's easier to come with anger than it is to say "I'm scared....I'm unsettled....I'm vulnerable, and I don't understand." Did you come to destroy us or did you come to bless? And in life, especially in our world today, we think you have to attack force with force. Force escalates, we escalate. fight power with power. Jesus didn't trip out. He rebuked. And when he rebuked, he spoke. "Come out of him. Be silent." And guess what, they did. He had authority. And he didn't address the aggressiveness with anger and aggression but spoke with authority. When it came out, it came out aggressive. Most of us are a little intimidated by what's gonna happen up front or what's gonna happen on the back side. But the reality is, there are some times when we've got to stand up and rebuke, correct, reprove what is wrong. Because we have been given the authority as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, representatives of the Lord here on this earth. And most of the time, I'm like, "Lord, I don't want it. You can have it. Anybody but me, Lord." And where do I find myself but right in the midst of it, not wanting to be there but called to be there.

So when you do not understand, or you do and you regret what you did, I understand. But invite God to be with us when we're called to do, not by our power and not by our might, but by the way of the Lord. Because we'll mess it up if we do it on our power; but if we allow God to come in and help and lead and guide us, it will make a difference. And I know I just talked about something spiritual amongst something very everyday, but I need us to understand there are things going on outside of what we can see in the here and now.

Ephesians 6 tells us that we battle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, things in high places, that are ever present. But we're like, "No, it was that guy who did that to me. She did that to me." You may be right, but what was going on in them that brought that out so that they responded the way they did? Let's think about it that way as we assess and see what's going on around us and how we interact with each other.

February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

January 25, 2015 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

"Authority Actualized"

Psalm 111: 1-10; Mark 1:21-28

*Pastor James H. Lee
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin*

Do you ever wonder if you're holding a rose, a beautiful thing, when someone comes up to greet you, and all of a sudden they sneeze? You didn't do anything wrong holding the beautiful rose; but if they're allergic to the rose, the allergy caused them to respond to the rose—not to you—but to the rose because of the allergen in the pollen that was there. Sometimes that same symbol of the rose, for one it means romance, for another it means a relationship broken—guilt, shame, pain, hurt—and it can cause people to respond differently. And so we can pay attention to that as we speak to different situations. And I know it's a stretch referencing aggression through a sneeze and a rose, but still the principles apply as we're working with people.

Amazement:

He speaks; the demons come out; there was noise, and they wondered what kind of authority does he have as he's teaching? Is that a new thing? Did you notice the fact that the unclean spirits could recognize Jesus, but the religious leaders couldn't? How often are we missing the things of God happening around us because we're used to what it used to be, or we like how it is/was. God says, I'm not trying to throw away my foundation; I'm trying to give you a way of understanding fully what this thing means so you can live in your purpose and in your calling. Amazing and exciting! "If he can deliver that guy, and I know what his mess was, I know he can deliver mine!" Yeah, man, I want to be with him." And a different response, "Who's he and what is he doing? We need to shut that thing down, that's dynamite, that's a keg ready to blow." And you get to determine: Is this thing a move of God that will bless or a move that will boom so we need to suppress it?

For an example of how I would love us to exercise this principle of this text, I want to share a situation about Nathaniel Hawthorne. He had gotten fired from his job, and he went home with his head down to let his wife know he'd been fired. He felt like a failure and didn't know how they would make ends meet. When he tells his wife, she said, "Finally, you can write!" "Uh, yeah, I can write, but how are we gonna eat?" So she goes to her drawer and surprises him with all this money...."Where did that come from?" "Well, from the money you gave me for keeping up the house, I spent some and I saved some, because I knew you were a genius and you needed to write. I knew you were a genius!" She had the authority to do what she wanted to with money, and she spent some and saved some. And he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*.

What do you do with the authority you have? Do you spend some and then you save some, not just for yourself but for others? And when the right moment came, she spoke into his life and said, "Now you can write! I knew you are a genius." How many geniuses in here have been working the 8 to 5 and feel so bound that you don't feel liberated to do the extra stuff? I'm not saying go quit your job.... Part of what T. D. Jakes says in his book *Reposition Yourself*, like the garden of Eden, we should look for rivers or streams of income to flow into and out of our lives or sacred places.

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So you can have one job that can pay your bills; you can have another that can give you a little extra income on the side; and another one that just feeds you—feeds your creative side. These different streams can help to make a difference, and it will blow you away. Let's look to God to say, "I know this job is one I have to have to pay the bills; I'd like to pay those bills and have some joy...." Just think outside the box a little bit.

In conclusion,

1. Today, know that you have authority that is given to you in Christ Jesus. He said you have the power to forgive, you have the power to release someone who has hurt you, and in freeing them, free yourself. You can act with grace, mercy, forgiveness, and blessings. You have the authority to say "Yes, I will" or "No, I won't." It's yours.
2. You can be aggressive and approach aggression with aggression. You can also recognize what the real stuff is behind this and say, "God, what would you have me to do with this so that we can address it appropriately?"
3. Be amazed when God does something amazing in your life. Instead of saying, "Ew, that's a bomb, we need to stuff this," try saying, "Whew! If He can do that for him, I know He can do that for me."

Let us pray:

*Lord, thank you. I know that as I preached this sermon from **Mark** and their community, they didn't have any of this in mind. But as we read your Word which is live and acts like a double-edge sword, it helps us to get into the stuff of life. We're thankful that the Word has a way of speaking to us. Whatever is of great value, sow it into us, and let us be ready to respond. And whatever is not appropriate for what we need at this moment in time, trash it. Free us to be the liberated people you've called us to be—your babies, your representatives, your ambassadors, your children, those who have been made righteous through Christ our Lord. It's in his holy name we pray. Amen.*



February 5, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Café Justo

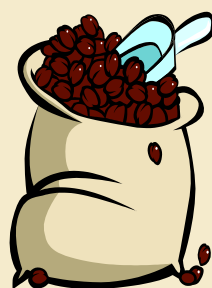
IF YOU LIKE COFFEE OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO DOES

Consider supporting the NCFA Evangelism Committee and its partnership with Café Justo to bless this coffee grower's cooperative.

Café Justo is a coffee grower cooperative based in Salvador Urbina, Chiapas, Mexico. They market a pure organic coffee which is grown, harvested, and marketed in the spirit of justice. Our goal is to provide incentives for people to remain on their family lands.

Orders will be arranged through NCFA's Evangelism Committee. Please see Caly Fernández to place an order. Coffee is available in 1- and 5-lb. bags. The cost of a 1-lb. bag is \$9 and a 5-lb. bag is \$35. Dark roast, medium roast, and decaf are available in ground or whole beans. Coffee will be delivered biweekly to NCFA

Contact Caly to make your purchase today! 512-228-4712



February 5, 2015



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Buildings & Grounds is in need of persons to help one or more days a month with light cleaning and set up for Sunday worship. This would typically be done on a Friday or Saturday and require between one and two hours of your time.

*For details see Tim Lenz,
Chairperson Buildings &
Grounds*

NCFA Women's Ministry

Important Dates and Opportunities

March 8, 2015

Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday:

We honor women who contribute their gifts to the church and community and lift up the bond between young and senior women in God's household. Resources available.

June 18-21, 2015

**Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women
Minneapolis, MN**

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free— and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

—1 Corinthians 12:12-27

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER NOTICES

During Georgette Kleinpeter's

FMLA Dec. 15 – Feb. 15

**the deadline for putting information in the
“NCFA Newsletter” is Wednesday at 9pm.**

Please send to Trish Holland

at geotriholland@yahoo.com. Thank you!