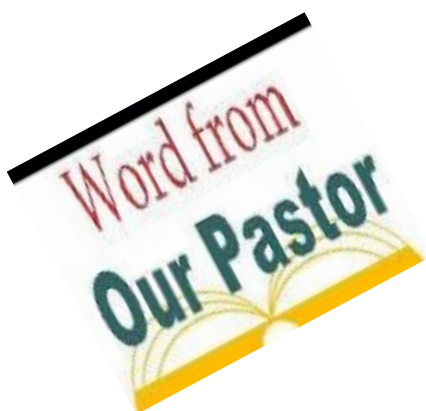


March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

Dear NCFA Family and Friends:

We are preparing to enter into Holy Week. On Sunday, we will celebrate either Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday. I have typically focused on Palm Sunday because it helps me to consider why some people are in the midst of dire circumstances. It is easier to praise God when life is great and to protest when our experiences are challenging and unexplainable.

I also like the thought of choosing to honor other people when everything within us wants to be rescued, recognized, and honored; however, we need to be constantly reminded that honoring other people does not take honor away from us or diminish who we are and what God has called us to be and do.

Whereas humanity keeps introducing the spirit of scarcity to justify why we need to withhold our blessings and resources, Scriptures and even our history would remind us that God is a God of abundance, not scarcity. God gave the best gift for all of us in Christ Jesus and continues to bless us with tender mercies which are new every morning, from generations past, present, and future.

As a pastor who surrounds himself with people from varying perspectives theologically, spiritually, academically, financially, and ethnically, I identify with people where they are in their current situations. I identify with people who are fighting for justice that they feel is way overdue; and I identify with those who feel like every other minute there's another cause being forced down their throats.

Somewhere along the way, we have forgotten how to be civil with one another and to seek to intentionally honor God by way of serving another person or honoring them. Jesus told his disciples if you want to be great, serve. I was taught to open the doors for women and my elders. The imagery of laying down palm branches on the dusty road reminds me of the romantic gesture of a man laying down his coat so that a woman did not walk in a water puddle. Unfortunately, many women would be offended by the gesture, and many men would not think of soiling their coats.

I want to invite us to wave our palm branches out of hope and to lay them down on the ground as a way of honoring God and God's people and purposes

Hope for what's yet to come. Hope for the healing of nations. Hope for reconciliation among family members and communities. Hope for new jobs and economic opportunities for everyone across-the-board. Hope for homes for the homeless and greater education opportunities for those lacking education.

- Please remember the Hesus Lectures at the Seminary on Friday evening and Saturday—details follow on this second annual free lecture series focusing on building vibrant and safe neighborhoods with workshops on health, law enforcement, education, and business.
- Please remember Palm Sunday morning worship at 8:15 and 10:15am.
- Please join us Sunday evening as we are the guest Church at His Highest Praise starting at 6pm.
- Please plan to continue committee work on Wednesday, April 1.
- Please plan to join us for our Tenebrae service on Good Friday at 7pm.
- Please plan to join us for worship on Resurrection Sunday and the Easter Egg Hunt and Picnic afterwards with Genesis, Turning Point, and NCFA.
- And last but not least, please continue to pray for all who are on our prayer and praise list. Specifically pray for the family of JJ Baskin who entered the Church Triumphant and also for Jane, Stacie, and so many others battling for their lives. Let us praise God for the March 19th birth of Masa and Schuyler's son and Danita's grandson, Dario Oliver Nelson.

God bless and keep you all.

Rev. James Hickson Lee, Pastor

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

NEWSLETTER (3/27/2015)

Passover Seder Service & Meal

April 19, 2015 after Worship



Why a Seder at NCF? Because we are called to observe the Seder.

We are in a land which is not our own. Even as the Israelites were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, we have found ourselves in bondage to sin. Even as the Israelites called to the Lord to deliver them, we have called to the Lord to deliver us. He has heard our cry! He has saved us! Throughout all ages, Jews have symbolically reenacted their salvation from Egypt through the eating of the Seder meal. Jesus Christ on the night before his death celebrated the Seder with his disciples.

As Christians, the Seder has meaning for us, not only because it helps us to understand the original context of the first Lord's Supper, but because it symbolically reflects so much of our experience of God's grace.

Passover, or Pesakh, is designed by God, and presented to us in scripture, as a home-based, family oriented worship time. Many parts of the Seder are traditionally done in Hebrew, the original language since before the first Passover, and in which almost all the Bible was first written. The Passover meal is called the "Seder" which means the "order." This booklet is called a "Haggadah," which means "the telling." The key theme of the Seder is the questions and curiosity of children, to which scripture refers and emphasizes (Ex. 12:26, 13:8, 14, Dt. 6:20). The Haggadah is loosely organized around the four cups of wine which even the poorest in the Mediterranean culture could do, and they reflect the four part promise "I will . . ." of Ex. 6:6-7. Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am Adoni; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 'I will take you as my people, and I will be your God.'

LIMITED GLOSSARY: Adoni - The Lord; Brit HaKhadasha - New Covenant, or Testament; HaMasheeah - The Messiah; Matzah - unleavened bread; Pesakh - Passover; Sh'voo-ot - Pentecost; Sukkot - Feast of Tabernacles; Yeshua - Jesus

March 20, 2015



NCFA CONNE**X**ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



March 29, 2015 at 6 p.m.

NCFA is the Guest Church as we worship with
HIS HIGHEST PRAISE, Pastor Rudy Mojica, Sr.
Pastor Lee is the commencement preacher for the
"Seven Cries from the Cross Series" for Holy Week

His Highest Praise
100 West Pflugerville Pkwy., Unit #107, Pflugerville

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL STUDY

Hosted by Genesis Presbyterian Church

**Curriculum: Austin Seminary Len-
ten Devotional**

Led by: Seminarian Cliff Frederick

cliff.frederick@student.austinseminary.edu

**GPC Library:
Tuesday 7-8pm March, 31**

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

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MAUNDY *Thursday*

GENESIS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MAUNDY SERVICE
THURSDAY, APRIL 2ND
6:00 PM



MARCH *TO* Easter

NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP
MARCH 29TH
PALM SUNDAY SERVICE
8:15 AM CHAPEL
10:15 AM 1507 WILSHIRE

APRIL 3RD
TENEBRAE GOOD FRIDAY
7:00 PM 1507 WILSHIRE BLVD.

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE**X**ION!

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JOINT ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT AND PICNIC

Sunday, April 5th

At 12:30

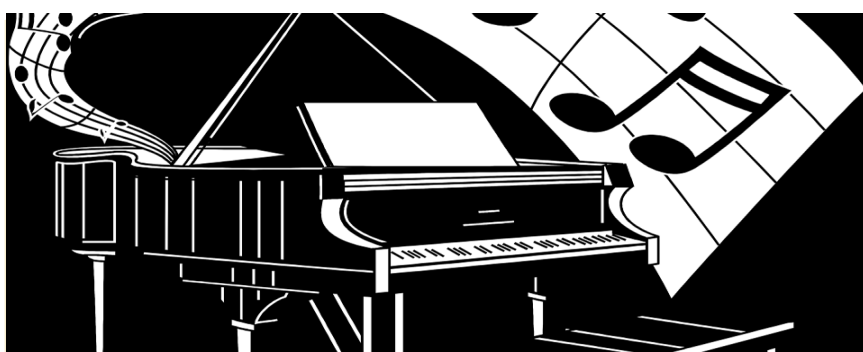
1507 Wilshire Blvd. 78722

**New Covenant Fellowship
Genesis Presbyterian Church
Turning Point Fellowship**

Bring a blanket or lawn chairs
and your sack lunch
along with your Easter basket for the hunt!

We need volunteers to bring stuffed Easter eggs
by April 1st so we best plan for Resurrection
Sunday and the Easter egg hunt. .
Please do not bring chocolate candies.
They cause a melted mess!

For more information, e-mail maryjomojica.com



**ARE YOU A MUSICIAN??
A pianist? A guitarist? A Soloist?**

**Our 8:15 am service at the NCFA Chapel
on the Perry Estate 4100 Red River
is in need of a musician now, as Carol has re-
tired from playing the piano at the early ser-
vice. (she will continue to accompany the
10:15 service).**

**If you can help, or know someone who might be able
to, please contact Trish Holland, 512-461-6250 cell
or 512-892-0680 home.**

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



- | | |
|------|----------------------|
| 1st | Nancy Tallman |
| 5th | Matthew Aldas |
| | Kali Christman |
| | Rev. Lydia Hernandez |
| 7th | Kwasi Agbottah |
| 9th | Christine Wagner |
| 11th | Gianna Mojica |
| 12th | Nhyira Okyere Mireku |
| 17th | Jason Lee |
| | Christopher Davis |
| 19th | Hosea J. Lee |
| 20th | Sam Buford |
| 22nd | Crystal Unegbu |
| | Jacob Pan Lew |
| 23rd | Nina Buford |
| 29th | John Harrison |
| | Jessica Lee |
| | Almari Alvarez |
| 31st | Jumarcus Daniels |
| | Debbie Saddington |

2/24 Mary and Randy Mojica

New Covenant Fellowship

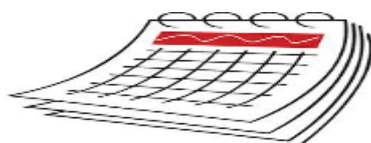
Session Members

***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

MARCH



March 29
Palm Sunday

March 31 6:30 –9:00 pm
Men's Ministry Dinner and
Bible Study, in the NCFA
Kitchen

Lenten Study-Last Class in
Genesis Library-Come!
Tuesday Mar. 31- 7-8pm

April 1
6:30pm Light Dinner,
1st Wednesday Night
Ministry Meetings at 7pm.

April 3
Good Friday Service at 7pm.

April 2 12noon
Bible Study at Connie
Jones's home

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



We Care Kits

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”
1 Peter 3:15

We are currently accepting the following donations:

Food/Drink Items:

Granola Bars
Peanut Butter Crackers
Trail Mix
8-oz. Water Bottles

Hygiene/Personal Items:

Travel-Size Toothbrush
Travel-Size Toothpaste
Travel-Size Soap or Body Wash
Travel-Size Shampoo
Pocket-Size Kleenex
Pocket-Size Comb (no pointed handle)
Chap stick
Adult White Crew Socks – Size Large

All donated items should be placed in the donations box located in Classroom 7. If you have any questions, please email or call me:

calyflower2020@yahoo.com / (512) 228-4712

NCFA Evangelism Committee and the Children and Youth Committee will schedule a date in April to put the kits together.

March 27, 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

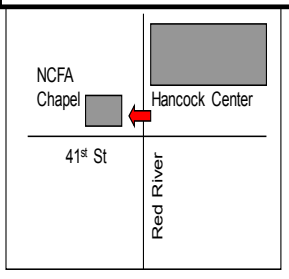
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9am Adult Sunday School
10am Fellowship
10:45am - Children's Church

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

March 29 — Pastor James Lee

April 5 — Pastor James Lee

April 12 — Rev. Jeff Saddington

April 10 - John Harrison

Prayerfully seeking a musician called to join this worship service.

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
Wilshire 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 encour-
age 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

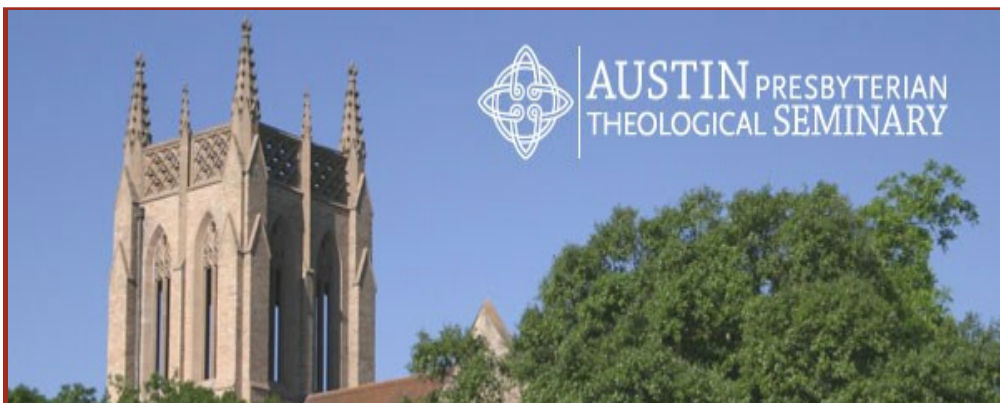
Real Church...
Real People...
Real Simple...

March 20, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



On January 15, 2015, the African American Presidents and Deans in Theological Education issued a call through an open letter to leaders and citizens of our country and to those who serve theological and divinity schools. The letter seeks a response to the current and persistent forces in our country that result in the violence against and devaluing of the lives of African American men and women. Indeed, the call emerges from a concern for the preservation of human dignity everywhere. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

At the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presidents and board chairs, Dr. Brian Blount, President of Union Presbyterian Seminary, and one of the signers of the open letter, read the letter as part of our opening prayer. We were all deeply moved.

Therefore, we the seminary presidents of the PC(USA) affirm our solidarity with you, our colleagues in theological and religious education, as we all work toward a more just world, shaped in the image of Jesus’ vision of Jubilee in which God announces good news to the poor, proclaims freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and sets the oppressed free (Luke 4:18–19, Isaiah 61:1–2).

We commit to creating and sustaining conversations, programs, and/or actions, consistent with the missions of our schools that respond to our country’s current situation so that we might embrace anew a vision of “the beloved community.” Finally, we are grateful to you our colleagues, who have committed yourselves to the equipping and training of future leaders in our churches and in society. Your prophetic witness inspires us. Our own various complicities within oppressive structures humble us. May the Spirit of God, which dwells in each of us, transform our world so that we might more fully embrace a Christian witness that seeks to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

The peace and grace of Jesus Christ be with all of you, The Seminary Presidents of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

*-The Rev. Dr. M. Craig Barnes, President, Princeton Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount, President, Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey F. Bullock, President, the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. William J. Carl, III, President, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Katharine Rhodes Henderson, President, Auburn Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Michael Jenkins, President, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. James McDonald, President, San Francisco Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Paul T. Roberts, Sr., President, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary
-William E. Scheu, Interim President, Columbia Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Theodore J. Wardlaw, President, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
-The Rev. Dr. Frank M. Yamada, President, McCormick Theological Seminary*

Faithfully yours,

Theodore J. Wardlaw
President Friends All:

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE^XION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

2015 Hesed Lecture Series at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Order tickets via Eventbrite: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-hese...>

This year's Hesed Lecture Series will focus on building safe neighborhoods by looking at the areas of Commerce, Law enforcement/Legal services, Health, and Education through workshops lead by guest lecturers. There will also be two keynote addresses; Virginia Raymond will open up as the Friday evening speaker and Dr. Frederick Douglass Haynes III will end this year's lecture series as the luncheon key note speaker.

HESED

2015

LECTURE SERIES

at AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MARCH

FRI. 27 SAT. 28

REGISTRATION 6:15 PM
OPENING SESSION 7:00 PM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DR. FREDERICK D. HAYNES III

JOIN US FOR OUR SECOND ANNUAL FREE LECTURE SERIES AS WE FOCUS ON BUILDING VIBRANT & SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS WITH WORKSHOPS ON
Health + Law Enforcement
Education + Business

VIRGINIA RAYMOND
OPENING SPEAKER

FOR ONLINE REGISTRATION VISIT:
HESEDLLECTURES.EVENTBRITE.COM
FOR MORE INFO: HESEDLLECTURES@GMAIL.COM

Presented By:
The African American Student Group & The Hispanic Student Association of
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary

For more information or to purchase tickets please go to
Short link; <http://bit.ly/1DWXKhI>
and the long link: [http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-hesed-lecture-series-at-austin-presbyterian-theological-seminary-registration-15839696960?](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-hesed-lecture-series-at-austin-presbyterian-theological-seminary-registration-15839696960?fb_action_ids=10101944942511411&fb_action_types=oq.shares)
[fb action ids=10101944942511411&fb action types=oq.shares](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-hesed-lecture-series-at-austin-presbyterian-theological-seminary-registration-15839696960?fb_action_ids=10101944942511411&fb_action_types=oq.shares)

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Annual Cesar E. Chavez "Si Se Puede!" March Saturday - March 28, 2015

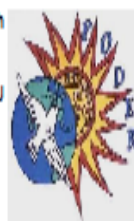
March starts at Terrazas Library, 1105 E. Cesar Chavez
Assemble at 10 AM - march to City Hall Plaza
201 W. Cesar Chavez Street.

Special Guest Speaker—Paul Chavez, son of Cesar E. Chavez
We'll have Music, Speakers & Entertainment

Cesar E. Chavez is one of the most important leaders of the 20th century. His legacy of workers rights, civil rights, environmental justice, equality for all, peace, non-violence, children and women's rights deserves national recognition. Let's march to end the cycle of poverty, education for all children, affordable- accessible health care, diversity & equal rights for all, immigrant rights, workers rights, LGBTQ rights, affordable housing and environmental Justice.



SPONSORED BY: PODER, Hermanos de East Austin, Southwest Key, Raza Roundtable, UT MECHA, HABLA, LatinoCare Health Forum, Dove Springs Neighborhood Association, Grassroots Leadership, Resistencia Bookstore, Save Our Youth, Dove Springs Proud, Alma de Mujer, Proyecto Defensa Laboral, Austin Immigrants Rights Coalition, Austin Peace & Justice, ACLU of Central TX, Chicanos in Action, Theatre Action Project, Urban Roots, Capoeira de Rua, St Edward's Hispanic Students Association & MultiCultural Leadership Board, Fair Food Austin, & Young Scholars for Justice, LULAC
For more information: PODER - 512-401-3311 poder-texas.org poder.austin@gmail.com



We are overjoyed at the arrival of the
new member-Dario Oliver Nelson!

CONGRATULATIONS!



Wishing you lots of happiness with your
little one-Skylar and Masa!



March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. Jeff Saddington will offer a 6-class series on the Gospel of Mark starting April 9th.

He will facilitate the class using the book Mark's Gospel from Scratch, by Griggs and Myers.

The study will take place on Thursday evenings April 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, May 7th and 14th.

Please note, this event will not have child care or meals provided. Please plan accordingly.

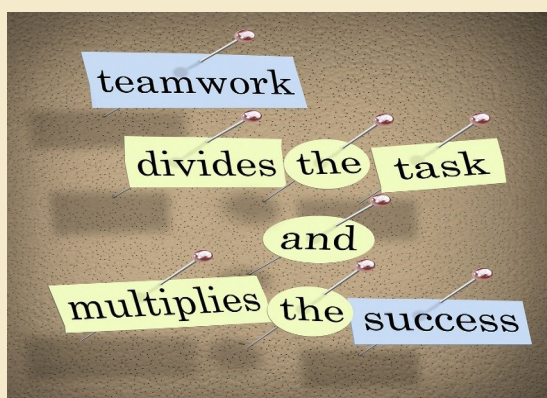
**"You can do
what I cannot
do. I can do
what you
cannot do.
Together we can
do great
things."**

- Mother Teresa

Four areas of FOCUS for 2015

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 extracurricular activities, utilizing their gifts in worship, and assisting in the Nursery and Church School.
4. Continue emphasizing Marketplace Ministry and celebrating the various ministries within our church and community.

Continue to reach out into the community like the Community Garden and our



Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

PRAYER AND PRAISE

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

Get More Quotes @ thedailyquotes.com

- PRAISE FOR TIFFANY'S SOLO, "TOMORROW."
- REMEMBER GOD WANTS US TO HAVE FAITH IN HIS PLAN AT ALL TIMES.
- LIFT UP TEENAGERS WHO ARE GOING THROUGH HARD TIMES. PRAISE FOR PATRICK'S PARENTS WHO HAVE TAKEN IN A YOUNG MAN AND ARE GIVING HIM A SECOND CHANCE. PRAY FOR THEIR PATIENCE, WISDOM, AND DISCERNMENT.
- PRAISE FOR NCF BEING AN OASIS IN THE WILDERNESS OF LIFE. AS SUNG IN THE THEME SONG FOR "CHEERS," EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME AND LOVES YOU AS YOU ARE.
- PRAISE! OLIVER AND ELIZABETH'S SON ERNEST GRADUATED WITH HIS BACHELOR'S DEGREE AND IS ON HIS WAY TO FINDING A GOOD JOB. THANK YOU LORD! PRAISE FOR NATALIE WORKING AS A LOBBYIST DIRECTING LEGISLATORS' FOCUS TO THE LAST, THE LEAST, AND THE LOST.
- ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH WILL HAVE TO CLOSE ITS DAY CARE PROGRAM. LIFT UP THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTINUING THE PROGRAM THROUGH THE SUMMER SINCE THAT IS PROVING TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME TO FIND ALTERNATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENTS. LIFT UP THE FAMILIES AFFECTED AS THEY SEARCH FOR AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE.
- LIFT UP STACIE, JANE, AND THEIR CAREGIVERS.
- PRAISE FOR PASTOR LEE SHARING HIS EMOTIONS AND STRUGGLES TO FOLLOW GOD'S CALLING. LIFT UP PASTOR LEE UNTIL HIS "CUP RUNNETH OVER."

PRAYER AND PRAISE



- PRAISE FOR TODAY'S SERMON FOLLOWING A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT WEEK FOR CALY. SHE IS RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY TO STRESSES IN HER LIFE BECAUSE GOD IS CHANGING HER. PRAISE FOR THE REALIZATION THAT HER MISSION AND KINGDOM WORK IS WHAT AFFIRMS HER, NOT HER JOB.
- LIFT UP FRIENDS WHOSE MARRIAGE HAS ENDED. PRAISE FOR RECONNECTING OLD FRIENDSHIPS AS THEY RE-START THEIR LIVES.
- LIFT UP RESPECT FOR LOVED ONES WHO HAVE DIFFERENT FAMILY BACKGROUNDS AND PRACTICES.
- LIFT UP THE NATION OF NIGERIA AS IT STRUGGLES THROUGH VERY DIFFICULT TIMES.
- LIFT UP ANGELA IN HER WORK AS A CAREGIVER. PRAISE FOR CRYSTAL'S BIRTHDAY!
- LIFT UP LYDIA AS SHE TRAVELS TO THE VALLEY WITH HER TWO SISTERS AND A BROTHER. THEY ARE BRINGING CLOTHING TO SACRED HEART CATHOLIC RELIEF CENTER FOR IMMIGRANTS.



March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!



Friends, we need your help. We are our best when we serve together. Please consider ways you can help our ministry leaders and ministries.

- 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*
- Congregational Life is in need of folks with the gift of hospitality and/or planning events. Contact Mary Mojica at maryjomojica@yahoo.com

After worship: Enjoy fellowship. Put away the Bibles and Hymnals. Collect the brown baskets and attendance sheets. Throw away our trash. Empty waste baskets in the classrooms, restroom, and kitchen.

**Coming together is a
beginning;
keeping together is
progress;
working together is
success.**

Henry Ford



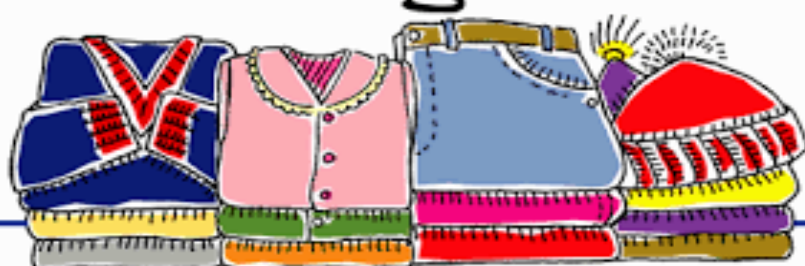
March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Clothing Drive



Greater Hope Center

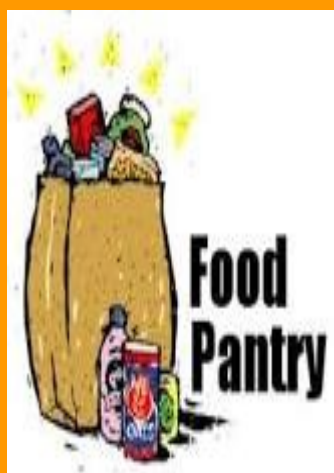
Clothing donations can be delivered to our boutique located at 4136 E. 12th, Austin, Texas 78723.

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.



March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNE~~X~~ION!

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.



**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

April 2, Thursday The Thursday Noon Bible Study will meet at Connie Jones' home, 5107 Edenborough Lane. They are discussing *Horizons*, "Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians."

April 3, Friday Church Women United will meet at 9:30 AM at Austin Mennonite Church, 5801 Westminster Dr. Ecumenical Development Forum: "Economic Justice" will be the program.

April 9, 16, 23, Thursday The Thursday Noon Bible Study will meet at the home of Connie Jones, 5107 Edenborough Lane. They will continue discussion of *Horizons*, "Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians."

April 25, Saturday The 4th Saturday Morning Bible Study will meet at 8:30 AM in the kitchen to discuss Lesson 6 in *Horizons*, "Reconciling Paul: A Contemporary Study of 2 Corinthians."

March 27, 2015



NCFA CONNEXION!

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

***March 22, 2015—Fifth Sunday in Lent
“Living with the Weight of God’s Glory”
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12: 20-26
New Covenant Fellowship of Austin***

Pastor James H. Lee

Hebrews 5:5-10 ⁵So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; ⁶as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

John 12:20-36 ²⁰Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. ²⁷“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. ³⁴The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.” After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.”

When Tiffany told me she was going to sing “Tomorrow” by the Winans, I was so glad; but I didn’t remember the effect it would have on me. I was running from my calling with songs like that. So when you talk about “Living with the Weight of the Glory,” the last thing I wanted to do was preach. I wanted to be in an office, being a manager, making money, enjoying the best that life had to offer.

When I was 9 years old, back in the old days you had the elders who would see something in you and they’d say something about it. Like “I see God in you, I see a calling you.” Not the way some of us are doing it today where the kids feel like they’re rejected, that all they can do is bad, and that there is not any good in them. The “Imago Dei,” the image of God, is in them now; the Imago Dei is in you; and the Imago Dei is in us. The very image of God is in us all. Amen.

And one might say, “James, if you hearing that at the age of 9 was such a burden, why do you reflect and rejoice over it today?” Because at that time, even though I didn’t want to say yes, I understood that God had said yes, and that God was patient with me for 15 years before I could finally say yes. After saying no, no, no, no, no, I understood the Weight of the Glory of God that was on me. When I was finally ordained, there was a pastor who put the stole on me. And when he put the stole around my neck, he made a sound like “Unghh!” He didn’t just put it around my neck, he went “Unghh!”—and he said this stole and the cloth is like the anointing, the call that goes with it is heavy.

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As we listened to the text coming from *Hebrews* and from the *Gospel*, we could hear Jesus at work in one area; and then we could hear it again and how he's at work in another. In both *Hebrews* and the *Gospel* is this long story of a gracious God from the beginning, the Alpha, from *Genesis* to *Revelation*, and how God calls us into relationship. That glory that God has, God doesn't just keep it for God but also bestows it upon you and upon me.

As we work through the sermon today, I just want us to think about being Selected, Serving, Submitting—and there is a part of the Submitting where there is Suffering also.

Selected

A lot of times we don't like being selected because either you've been selected or you feel like you've been rejected. But the gift of being selected is that you have been chosen, and you have been called, and you are known. Isn't that powerful? Chosen, called and known! And the sovereign God of the Universe is the One who does that. The One who knows your junk and says “I chose you.” And for the kid at heart, that's the Pokemon calling—I choose you, come on out, and let's do our thing.

To be selected, the text talked about that Jesus was appointed as a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. And what we would need to know is that Melchizedek came only once in the Old Testament, and it was when Abraham gave a tithe unto the Lord, and then the high priest Melchizedek left. You'll not hear about him again until we get to *Hebrews*. But there it was, he was selected, he was called, and he didn't do it for his own sake; he did it for all of us. The powerful thing about us if we're selected, we get to choose and to say yes or no, yes or no.

That leads me to the next part of the selecting and then going to the serving. Here it was that there were some folks who were going to another one of the festivals. I just want us to know that over here in the back of our Bibles it talks about the Jewish feasts; and so we are talking about Passover as we're preparing for the Cross. It just gives us a reference to the feasts; and I won't go through all of them today, just wanted us to know about another resource.

Why is that important? Because there were people going to the feast, and they we're going to the festival. The Jews would have been understandable, but when you look at the text, it tells you that some Greeks were going too. Why is that important for me to lift up? I am glad you asked! If you look at our Mission Statement, we are there to help those who are seekers to faithfully commit. But how is it that a seeker would come to a place of committing to serve and be present if we are not serving, if we're not observing, if we're not doing what we are called to do? Not because we have to, but because we want to in response to God's grace and mercy that has been bestowed upon us.

So it is that Phillip and Andrew have an encounter with some Greeks, and what do they do? They point them to Jesus. Then they go to Jesus and say they want to see him. And that's what you are called to do; that's what I'm called to do, point them to Jesus. A lot of times we are so worried about how it is that we're to speak with people and what it is we're supposed to say to people; and all I want to encourage you to do is just point them to Jesus, just point them to the Lord. And you say, “Well, there's a lot of stuff in there and there's a lot of stuff in here.” This stuff can get in the way, and you don't want it to get in the way of what God would want to do through them and in their lives. Amen.

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But we still want to be people who are living and walking the faith and not by sight. Living this call that we have.

We have two ***Psalm*** readings for this lectionary period. One is in ***Psalm 119*** where it says, ***“How might one keep their way pure?”*** And the way you do it is that you delight in the Word of God. As it says, ***“I will meditate on it with my whole heart. Why, Thy word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you.”***

We will mess that up. We will miss the mark, but having the word in our heart will make a difference. And then when we do miss the mark, we know what to do. When we fall short, and miss the mark, we confess. What happens is that God is faithful and just to forgive us. He cleans us up and then puts us back on our way. That's what we do. That's the good news. That will keep us from getting caught up in the blame game, the shame game, the guilt game, sitting over in the corner feeling lame and can't move on. Amen.

Serving

I'm going to tweak this for a minute. Now, my professor would have said “James you used eisegesis and you didn’t exegete,” but I am going to use eisegesis for a moment. Jesus said if you are going to be my servant, then you are going to follow me, and where I am, servants will be, and in doing so, God will honor you. I want to tweak it a little bit and say where you serve Jesus, God will be, and God will honor you. That's important because it is in our serving that we know our serving is not in vain. The hardest thing in the world is to serve and to do and think that is for naught. But we have the word telling us that as followers, we follow; and when we follow, he will be present and God will honor. In tweaking it, you go, and when you go, God already is there. And since God is there, God can say, “Hmmm, good job, baby, keep on doing it.” Amen.

The hardest piece is that Jesus throws them a curve ball. There's nothing like inviting your friends to your house or somewhere where you know someone, and you're ready for them to throw the pitch and you say, “Come on, let's go, let’s have a great time. Come be a part of me. Here are my followers, they're following, you follow, let’s go.” And what does Jesus tell them? He’s going to have to suffer and die on a cross and be lifted up. Huh, why would you do that?

Again, we need to understand the plan we have in 2015; and being a part of this culture, we think you keep obtaining, obtaining, and gaining, gaining, gaining. And what Jesus knew is that you have to give up to get. Imagine if everyone in the room were able to get their way 100% of the time? My God! But it requires us to take our will and submit it to God so that God’s will would be fulfilled. He who wants to save his life loses it, and in the process of losing it, you will save it.

I didn't quite understand it until after the situation happened with my lungs because at that point, I was mad at God. It wasn’t fair. Why me? Why now? Why, why, why, why. Then there came a point in time that I said, “If not me, then who? If not now, then when? And now that it has happened, what are you going to do about it?” That's kind of talks we have. And so God said, “If you keep trying to elevate this disease, how are you going to live? So why don't you bury it so I can resurrect it for my purpose and for my glory for not only am I a resurrecting God, I'm a redeeming God. Let me redeem that, let me resurrect life anew, and now you can rejoice in the life you have.”

I mean it is a different way of seeing that text for y’all who have been through some things. I know some of what we have been through, but I want to invite you to allow Christ to come in and redeem it. So allow it to be buried as one single grain and then to come up and be a harvest. A harvest of a blessing for someone else that has gone through it. A harvest of a blessing for someone else who needs hope in the midst of despair. A harvest of a blessing that’s consistent with our core value that we are blessed to be a blessing. Have mercy.

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And so it is that Christ says this, and as he would be lifted up, he would draw. I love that part, because it meant that I don't have to do the drawing, all I have to do is do the pointing. Does that seem too hard? God does the drawing. Y'all know how it is this week I did a status in Facebook because I was struggling through a lot of stuff. I had an encounter, had a talk with God, and he said, “You know there was only one Christ and it ain't you. There's only one God and it ain't you.” Okay, you didn't have to say it like that, but ok, but by you getting that and you who are heavy laden and burdened. Why don't you give it over to me and let me do what I do with my babies? Cause in all that you do, you still are doing it the way it needs to be done and you're driving yourself in places I don't want you to go. That's what God would have us do. In *Hebrews*, part of it talks about what a high priest would do, and I love the beginning of it because the high priest once a year would on the Day of Atonement and the feast, they would lift up all the prayers of all the seasons of the nation. But the one that would do it would do it with tenderness as one that has also been one that has fallen and has failed. Isn't that powerful?

Have you ever gone to someone who's never seemed like they've ever made a mistake in their life? And they couldn't hear you in your humanity, and all you're saying is, “Can I have your heart for just a moment?” That's what the high priest would do. That's what our High Priest has done. He makes intercession for us. He gave His life for us. With a tenderness and a mercy that's from everlasting to everlasting.

Submitting, Suffering

If we read our *Psalms* 51, which we didn't today, it would tell us that even the Psalmist David cried it out. He said, “*Purge me with hyssop and I will be white as snow....*” When we go to this table, this table is to remind us that it has been done so we can live. He subjected himself to suffering for our sake. And many people hate the word “submit.” Every time I hear the word or someone tells me if I say the word “submit,” you're not supposed to be a doormat. But I have to say I submit every single time I go down a highway and it says 55. And I have to go back to a rock star who said he can't drive 55. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak; you know what I am saying, but you got submitted. You submitted when you took a driver's test, you submitted when you pay for car insurance, you submitted when you put in an application for a job. You submit every time you make a payment or say “I'm going to make a payment.” So why is it we can submit to everything else but God or the things of God, when everything is God's? The world and everything within it is God's, including us.

We need to tweak how we think about God and how we work this thing out. It is suffering, it is subjecting; but what that says is, “I have authority and power over my life, and I choose to give it to someone else for a greater purpose. I choose to take my grain and submit it for harvest.” Can this world misuse it, abuse it, manipulate it? Yes, that's what it does, but that's not what God is trying to do. So to try to overlay the worldly stuff on God's principles is not fair, not right.

I didn't come to church to be beat up on, you're thinking. I Love You, I Love You... and I want us so badly to understand when we talk about this weight of Glory, it is not to burden us down. It's to lift us up; it's to lift us up. Because some of us are struggling because not only are we suffering, but those that we love are suffering, and we're just trying to understand why God would allow it. God said, “I allowed my son to suffer so that you would know that I identified with you in your suffering.” I cry when you cry. I rejoice and laugh when you do. I take no joy in this suffering at all. But the other side of it is to give us hope in the suffering that it has a redeeming value. I know right as I said that someone would say, “What redeeming value?” I don't know on this side of Glory, but we will on the other side.

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But I do know that we're called to journey together, to encourage each other, to pray for each other, to love each other, to show grace to each other, to be merciful with each other, because there are a lot of hurting people in the world and in the church; and God is ever saying “I want to be the balm of Gilead. I want to heal you. I want you to know my love and that I haven't rejected you. You are mine and I'm yours, and I won't leave you, and I won't forsake you.” Amen. That's ***Jeremiah 31:31-34*** letting us know of a new covenant that God will establish upon our hearts so that we would know.

As I close out the sermon, I had a conversation with my neighbor, and we kind of look and laugh at each other because we all kind of go through. Yesterday they had a memorial for his grandmother, and I expressed my condolences to him. He said, “You know, Pastor, I'm glad to have you as my neighbor. I told him “Brother, I'm glad to have you as mine. Because the Lord knew that this fool would suffer in silence, and I would need some help. And he gave me a man like you who would help me when I didn't ask for the help, who would see me struggling and suffering and would come by to help me.” I said to him, “Brother, my heart goes out to you and your family, but I want you to know and I know I will offend some people when I say this, but I want you to know that God prepared you for this day.” And he looked at me, and I thought, “I know I'm about to get this.” But he was like, “You are right.” Because he was called to speak at the memorial, and he was the right person to honor his grandmother and the right person to speak to the family members that were hurting because they knew he wasn't getting that religious speak that you know preachers do...he was going to give them some real stuff, and he did. And he helped them in their hurt and allowed older folks who needed to get their “Hallelujah” in and the other folks who needed to get their holler out. And he said, “Man, how did you know?” And I said, “I didn't for you, but while I was running from my calling and I finally said ‘Yes,’ and I went to seminary, and while I was in seminary, my grandmother passed. And when it came time for her eulogy, the denomination that we were a part of was different than her denomination. But my grandmother and my aunt and uncles, they said ‘He will give the eulogy.’”

And the only one who gives you the power to speak in your suffering is God! Only one who could choose to say “God, in my weakness may you be perfected.” It is you. When someone invites you, invite the Lord to redeem painful situations. Bury it, resurrect it for a new harvest. What harvest? I don't know. When will it come? I don't know. But just begin the process. But if I let it go and I bury it, I can't hold it again. You're right, there's some stuff we should have buried a looonnnnnngggg time ago. God is saying, “I am ready to redeem it, I am ready to let you reap the harvest.” But we say “But I know it so well, I can rehearse it so well. And he says “That's the problem. You are rehearsing that, but you are not rehearsing the new life that I want to give you. You are not rejoicing in the new life that I have for you.”

So hear David as he writes ***Psalms 51*** with the broken heart as his child has died. And he says, ***“Create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right spirit.”*** May God renew in us a right spirit and the joy of our salvation. Even we can't explain why things are happening. We trust in a God who can and who is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than what we think or can imagine. Amen.

Let's pray:

God thank you, thank you for your Word. Thank you for a suffering savior. The weight of the Glory is heavy, but it's not for us to bear, but for us to take seriously. Christ himself asked us to count the costs and then choose to say “Yes.” He let us know that where we follow him and where we serve, he will be, and then he gave us the assurance and knowing that when we do serve God, You honor us. We thank you, Lord, that you glorified him; and at his baptism, You glorified him that moment when everybody thought it was thunder and lightning. And You glorified him, Lord, as he rose and ascended into heaven; and You glorified him on Pentecost when the Spirit came down and was poured out upon all flesh, men and women, boys and girls of every nation. For that we give you thanks, praise, glory, and honor. Amen.

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