

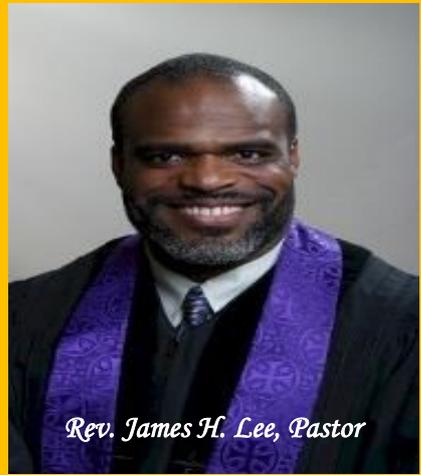
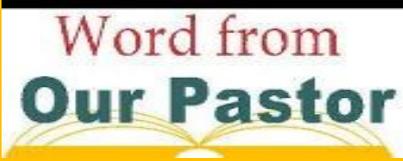
January 9, 2016



NCFA CONNE^XION!

WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor

NCFA Family and Friends:

Several years ago, while flying to a conference, I saw some thunderclouds outside of my window. The pilot told us, "Go to your seats and put on your seatbelts." When I am on the ground, I don't mind seeing clouds because I know that we need rain to nurture our land, crops, flowers, trees, and livestock; however, there are some clouds that bring storms with them. When those storm clouds come, we get on the alert because they bring a different level of challenges. There are a number of you who are facing storms in your lives. It seems like the challenges are coming from every direction.

I want to encourage you and let you know that after going through several clouds and having the plane jolted by the turbulent winds, we rose above the clouds. There above the clouds was the sun. What a welcome sight; and it was there all of the time!

Please know that God's constant peace, power, and love are present with us even in the midst of our storms. We just can't see God for the storm clouds or the challenges right before us. I invite you to trust that God is present just like we can trust that the sun is present even when we can't see it because of storms or when we orbit around it.

I want to remind you that Sunday is going to be a very full day (*or would 'very busy day' sound better?*); after-worship activities include:

- The Evangelism Committee will be working with volunteers from the church to assemble our "We Care Kits." You will be invited to take some of these emergency kits for our homeless teens, sisters, and brothers. Let them know that God loves them and bless them with a kit. Special thanks for the Evangelism Committee and members of NCFA, who donated supplies and will be working to prepare the kits.
- We will have New Officer Examinations in my office.
- Our Deacons will be meeting in the kitchen.
- We will have our first Tutoring Session.

Plan to join us as we celebrate our 7th Anniversary of Chartering next Sunday, January 17th, with a luncheon including desserts of cake and ice cream!

Prayerfully submitted,

Pastor James H. Lee



January 9, 2016



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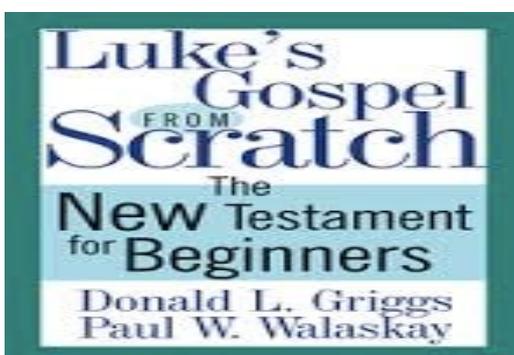
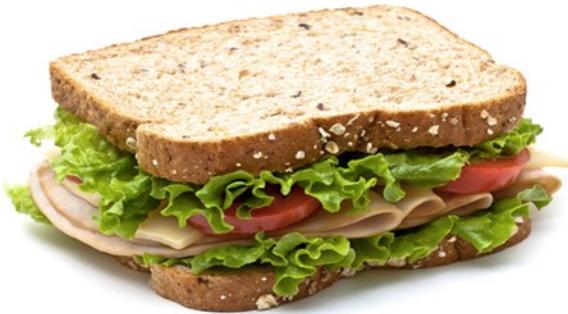
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**Luncheon Next Week
January 17th
7th Anniversary
of NCFA Charter!**

Bring a side or dessert to share



*The Gospel
According to Luke*

**Thursdays at 7pm
through February 18**

Fellowship Hall

**For Study Notes, see Rev. Jeff Saddington
jeffsaddington@gmail.com**

January 9, 2016



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- ⇒ *Matthew 6: 1 Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*
- ⇒ Lift up NCF to become all God has planned for it. Do something in the church this week. Help out with the 'behind the scenes' jobs. Challenge yourself.
- ⇒ Praise for the double Baptism of Matthew and his son James.
- ⇒ Lift up George and Nekia while she is deployed in Iraq.
- ⇒ Praise for all God has done for Danielle and her children! She is in nursing school now and working as a dietician at a local hospital. Also, lift up her extended family as they grieve the death of a cousin who leaves three children without a father.
- ⇒ Lift up Ben's mother (94 years young) for an improved appetite. Also, lift up a 19 year old whose spine was severed in a recent accident.
- ⇒ Lift up Kimberly's friend Kaya who has been afflicted with multiple medical problems this past year as well as sustaining a traumatic brain injury from a fall.
- ⇒ Lift up a decision about Jimmy returning to Ethiopia with Sofia and a mission team.
- ⇒ Lift up a smooth transition to retirement (her second!) and improved health for Vi.
- ⇒ Praise the Lord! Lift up possibilities and provisions for Chris and family to be able to travel to Nigeria. Lift up traveling mercies for Fortune as he returns to Medical School.
- ⇒ Praise for another year to worship God and love his people. Praise for safe travel that brought Eddie, Kayla, and children to Austin to visit family and NCF. Thanks be to God for my husband.
- ⇒ Lift up friends as they approach the first anniversary of the loss of their child to SIDS.
- ⇒ Lift up rapid healing from shoulder surgery for James.
- ⇒ Praise for visitors!
- ⇒ Lift up the Ross family as they grieve the death of their daughter.
- ⇒ Lift up Matthew and his classmates for safe travels in Mexico for a January term seminary class. Prayers for Kathryn in her single parenting role during this time. Prayers as well for Matthew's Ordination Exams coming up later this month.
- ⇒ Prayers for Lucy's brother Michael and his medical team while tests are being run at MD Anderson.

January 9, 2016



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SUNDAY MORNINGS

NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:15am - Worship Service
1507 Wilshire Blvd.
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 -- Wilshire Blvd.

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

1507 Wilshire Blvd.

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 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.

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

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

January 9, 2016



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



- 1st Kimberly Hall
- 3rd Katie Keeler
- 4th Doug Caroom
- 6th Craig Dyer
- 7th Josh Harris
- 13th Patricia Caroom
- 15th George Washington IV
- 16th Stacy Robinson
- 17th Nora Quinn
- 17th Amanda Phillips
- 25th Awudizi Vida-Torku
- 30th Doug Smith



- 1-5 Wonho and Charlie Shin
- 1-15 George and Grace Washington
- 1-20 George and Trish Holland
- 1-21 Scott and Ashley Phillips
- 1-31 Oliver and Elizabeth Smith

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
- Lucy Oglesby
- Ashley Phillips
- Carol Saddington
- Cathy Trifiro
- Roxann Vallejo

JANUARY 2016

- 10th **Baptism of the Lord**
8:15am 1507 Wilshire Blvd.
9-10am Adult Sunday School
9:30am Psalm 150 Praise
Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at 1507 Wilshire
Pastor James H. Lee, preaching
Sunday School during worship;
Ages 3-5-Rm 1, Grades 1-5 -Rm 7
Deacons will meet after worship
Officer Examination in Pastor's Office
We Care Kits assembly
Tutoring
- 12th 6:30pm Men's Ministry
Dinner, Study at 7pm
- 13th Prayer and Praise Service at 6:30pm;
Worship at 7pm.
- 17th **2nd Sunday after Epiphany**
8:15am 1507 Wilshire Blvd.

9-10am Adult Sunday School
9:30am Psalm 150 Praise
Team Rehearsal
10:15am Worship at 1507 Wilshire
Pastor James H. Lee, preaching
Sunday School during worship;
Ages 3-5-Rm 1, Grades 1-5 -Rm 7
7th Anniversary Celebration
following worship
- 20th Church Leadership Retreat

January 9, 2016



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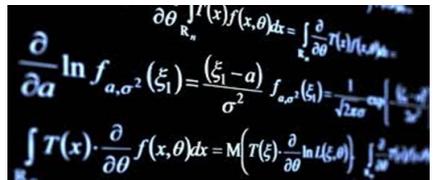
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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Wednesday Night Fellowship Homework Help 5 – 6 PM and 7 – 8 PM

Bring your homework. Enjoy a family - friendly meal. Finish assignments. Beginning January 13, 2016

MATH WITH MAŠA!!!!



- ⇒ Do you *love* math, *hate* math, or *need* help with math?
- ⇒ Are you getting ready for a big test or college entrance exam?
- ⇒ Bring your arithmetic, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, geometry, trigonometry, statistics and calculus math problems.
- ⇒ All school-aged students, elementary through undergraduates
- ⇒ 2nd and 4th Sundays, immediately following worship service
- ⇒ (Noon – 1:30 PM)
- ⇒ Maša Prodanović holds a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics from the University of Zagreb, Croatia and a PhD in Computational Applied Mathematics from Stony Brook University, New York. She is an Assistant Professor and Chevron Teaching Fellow in the Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering Department at the University of Texas at Austin.

January 9, 2016



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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 or Trail mix
8 ounce size water bottles

Hygiene/Personal Items:

Travel Size Toothbrush & Toothpaste
Travel size hand sanitizer or hotel size bar soap
Men's size small crew ankle length white or black socks

Quart size freezer bags

Please note: this is a smaller kit with fewer items.

All donated items should be placed in the donations box located on the back table by the AV equipment. If you have any questions, please email me: calyflower2020@yahoo.com or call me at (512) 228-4712.

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

2016 POINT IN TIME COUNT **REGISTER NOW!**

ABOUT

The Austin/Travis County Point in Time (PIT) Count is part of the national effort to eliminate street homelessness spearheaded by the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Veterans Affairs (VA). By knowing who is on the street, where they are, and what they need, ECHO and its partner agencies can most effectively target services to those that need them the most.

OBJECTIVES

- ♦ Determine the total number and characteristics of those who are homeless in Travis County
- ♦ Provide quantitative results including demographics, trends in homelessness, with stratified outcomes by homeless sub-populations (veterans, unaccompanied youth, etc.)
- ♦ Compare annual results with previous count information to assess and improve community performance in preventing and ending homelessness

WHEN AND WHERE

- ♦ **Shift 1:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 3-7am-Downtown
- ♦ **Shift 2:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 5-9am-Suburban
- ♦ **Shift 3:** Saturday, Jan. 23rd from 6-9am-Rural

WWW.AUSTINECHO.ORG

TRAINING

Echo will provide volunteer training and assign volunteers to areas. All teams will receive maps, clipboards, flashlights, pens, and all necessary forms. All volunteers will be required to attend at least (1) volunteer training prior to participating in the count.

VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for:

60 Team Leads

600 General Volunteers

Note: Team leads must

register by November 24th!

THE COUNT

Teams generally consist of at least three members. Volunteers will observe and count homeless individuals within a defined area of Austin or Travis County. Each volunteer will choose from 3 available shifts.

JOIN US

Raise awareness and learn about homelessness in our community, along with the need for viable, long-term solutions that will alleviate suffering and improve the quality of life for all Austinites.

REGISTER!

www.austinecho.org/2016-point-in-time-count-registration/

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Women in Engineering Program



INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING DAY (GIRL DAY)

The University of Texas at Austin
Women in Engineering Program (WEP)
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 2 - 5 p.m.
Cockrell School of Engineering Complex on Campus

DESCRIPTION

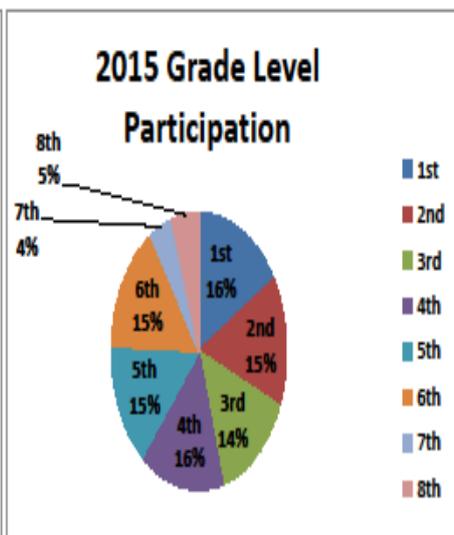
Families and educators were invited to join their students during Engineers Week for an afternoon of hands-on engineering fun during WEP at UT Austin's Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (Girl Day). WEP at UT Austin's national award winning and 14th annual Girl Day gave over 1,600 first through eighth grade students a chance to:

- have fun doing grade-specific, hands-on engineering activities
- interact with 952 UT students, staff and faculty as well as volunteers and engineers from industry
- explore 96 activities, booths and demonstrations hosted by 113 student organizations, corporate partners, community organizations, schools and college/university partners

Participating Girl Scouts received a Girl Day patch available through partnership with the Girl Scouts of Central Texas. Current engineering students were provided leadership and presentation skills development opportunities. The day concluded with an exciting interactive show from Science in the Movies showcasing the engineering and science behind movie stunts.

SUMMARY of STATS

Girl Day, WEP's premier outreach program, has reached over 15,500 girls in its 14 year history. In 2015, 1660 first through 8th graders participated – 98% of participants were female, 9% African American, 26% Latina, 12% Asian, 1% American Indian and Native Hawaiian. Approximately 64% of participants came from Central Texas, 15% from the greater Houston area, 11% from the greater San Antonio area and the rest coming from as far as Dallas, Laredo, and Ft. Lauderdale. Volunteers have grown from 51 in 2002 to 952 in 2015. Note that Girl Day 2015 was hit with wintery weather which greatly impacted participation with less than 40% of those registered actually attending.



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PUBLICITY & RECOGNITIONS

Saturday, February 28, 2015 was proclaimed “Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day” by Mayor Steve Adler and the City of Austin. Girl Day was featured in a [USA Today College article](#), a [Time Warner Cable News story](#), a [KEYE TV news story](#), a [The Daily Texan article](#), and a student’s [news documentary story](#). WEP’s Girl Day program was also featured in a press release and a [Capitol Hill briefing](#) on Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day led by Discover Engineering. Finally, Girl Day was featured in a [promotional video produced by Discover Engineering \(previously\) the National Engineers Week Foundation](#) using extensive footage from Girl Day 2012.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

The Women in Engineering Program (WEP) partnered with 113 university, corporate and community organizations to ensure the success of Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day 2015. WEP event and initiative staff, materials and supplies, and administrative and overhead costs for programs such as Girl Day are supported through corporate, community and government grants.

Corporate: Girl Day 2015 was made possible through generous grants or donations from Girl Day Lead Partner Halliburton along with all our fantastic Girl Day Partners: 3M, AMD, Applied Materials, BASF, Bechtel Corporation, Caterpillar, Chevron, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company, ExxonMobil, Fluor, General Motors, GivePulse, Google, IBM, Intel, and National Instruments. Microsoft provided an in-kind contribution of check-in technology. DSW, Minigrip and Payless ShoeSource provided in-kind contributions of materials for our hands-on activities. AMD and IBM provided in-kind contributions of printing. Partnering companies also hosted hands-on activities, displays or demonstrations at the event.

Community & College: Numerous community organizations and nearby colleges and universities have missions and goals in alignment with WEP and Girl Day. By partnering with the Girl Scouts of Central Texas, local-area Girl Scouts are encouraged to participate in the program and are able to receive a specially designed Girl Day patch. In 2015, 660 participants (40% of participants) identified themselves as Girl Scouts.

In total, 25 community organizations supported and volunteered for Girl Day efforts:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. 4-H CAPITAL | 14. Phoenix Arising Aviation Academy |
| 2. American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) | 15. PyLadies ATX |
| 3. ATX Hackerspace | 16. Science in the Movies |
| 4. Bullock Texas State History Museum | 17. Skillpoint Alliance |
| 5. Central Texas Discover Engineering | 18. Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) – Austin |
| 6. Geekbus | 19. Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Southwest Texas Section |
| 7. GenAustin | 20. Southwest Texas American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) |
| 8. Girl Scouts of Central Texas | 21. Texas Museum of Science & Technology (Austin Planetarium) |
| 9. Girl Scouts of Central Texas Lady Cans Robotics Team | 22. Thinkery |
| 10. Girlstart | 23. VentureLab |
| 11. KLRU | 24. Westlake High School’s Team 9053 Psionics |
| 12. Laurel Mountain Elementary LEGO Lions | 25. YPW Camps |
| 13. National Association of Women in Construction | |

In addition, 6 college programs outside of UT Austin participated in Girl Day 2015:

1. Austin Community College Renewable Energy Student Association
2. Baylor Women in Computer Science
3. Society of Women Engineers - Texas State University Section
4. Society of Women Engineers – Trinity University Section
5. Society of Women Engineers - UT San Antonio Section
6. Texas State Technical College – Waco

Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

UT Austin Programs and Organizations: WEP partnered in 2015 with 67 UT Austin engineering and science student organization, research groups, classes and programs. Over 700 students, faculty and staff participated in Girl Day.

University Partners

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Fun with Chemistry | 6. UT Austin US DOE Solar Decathlon Team |
| 2. Longhorn Energy Club | 7. UT Undergraduate Women in Physics |
| 3. Physics Circus | 8. UT Women in Computer Science (WiCS) |
| 4. Rose Research Group, Chemistry Department | 9. UTech Outreach |
| 5. UT Austin Center for Identity | |

Cockrell School Partners

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10. Alpha Eta Mu Beta (Biomedical Engineering Honor Society) | 39. Institute of Transportation Engineers/Intelligent Transportation Society |
| 11. American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) | 40. Kinney Lab and Environmental and Water Resources Engineering |
| 12. American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) | 41. Longhorn Maker Studio |
| 13. American Nuclear Society UT Chapter | 42. ME WEP Engineering Ambassadors |
| 14. American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) | 43. Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Board (MEGGSB) |
| 15. American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) | 44. NASCENT Engineering Research Center |
| 16. Architectural Engineering Institute (AEI) | 45. National Society of Black Engineers |
| 17. ARE WEP Engineering Ambassador Group | 46. Omega Chi Epsilon |
| 18. Austin Chapter of the Acoustical Society of America | 47. Pi Sigma Pi (PSP) |
| 19. Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES) | 48. Pi Tau Sigma International Mechanical Engineering Honor Society Texas Kappa Chapter (PTS) |
| 20. Biomedical Optics Graduate Organization (BOGO) | 49. Sigma Gamma Tau Aerospace Engineering Honor Society |
| 21. Biomedical Outreach and Leadership Team (BOLT) | 50. Society for Biomaterials at the University of Texas at Austin |
| 22. BME Engineering Ambassadors | 51. Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE) |
| 23. Chemical Engineering Women (ChEW) | 52. Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) |
| 24. Chi Epsilon | 53. Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) |
| 25. Department of Petroleum & Geosystems Engineering | 54. Society of Women Engineers (SWE) UT Austin |
| 26. Donglei Fan Research Group | 55. Student Engineering Council (SEC) |
| 27. Dr. Korgel Research Group | 56. Student Engineers Educating Kids (SEEK) |
| 28. Engineering Chamber Orchestra (EChO) | 57. Tau Beta Pi: The Engineering Honor Society |
| 29. Engineers for a Sustainable World | 58. Texas Theme Park Engineering Group (TxTPEG) |
| 30. Eta Kappa Nu (HKNU) | 59. Theta Tau Professional Engineering Fraternity |
| 31. Formula Society of Automotive Engineers | 60. University of Texas Solar Vehicles Team |
| 32. Graduate Engineering Council (GEC) | 61. WEP First-year Interest Groups |
| 33. Graduate Leadership Council | 62. Women in Aerospace for Leadership and Development |
| 34. Guihua Yu Lab | 63. Women in Biomedical Engineering (WBME) |
| 35. IEEE Communications Society | 64. Women in Electrical and Computer Engineering (WECE) |
| 36. IEEE Power and Energy Society | 65. Women in Engineering Program |
| 37. IEEE Robotics and Automation Society | 66. Women in Mechanical Engineering (WME) |
| 38. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) | 67. Women in Petroleum & Geosystems Engineering (WPGE) |

GIRL DAY 2016 & CONTACT INFORMATION

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day 2016 is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, 2016, 12 - 4 p.m. on The University of Texas at Austin campus. Contact Tricia Berry (triciaberry@utexas.edu or 512-471-5650), WEP Director, for all partnership and community organization opportunities.

January 9, 2016



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Honoring Those Outside of Our Culture"

Matthew 2:1-12

Pastor James H. Lee

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 3, 2016

Matthew 2:1-12

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Ephesians 3:1-12

¹This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— ²for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, ³and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; ¹⁰so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

This morning we switched the readings—placing the Gospel reading first instead of the Epistle—and it was important for me that we did it that way because I wanted us to hear Paul talking about being a prisoner, being a servant for the Gentiles, having been called after a special revelation that was given unto him to do so. He was not of the original twelve, and then the ones that were chosen; but yet it was there on the Damascus Road where the Lord tells him, **"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"** Which reminds us so often that we try to do things our way, while the Lord is saying, "Baby, isn't it hard? And you're going to keep doing it?" So it was there that the Lord and Saul had an encounter. Over a period of time, he was blessed by a man by the name of Ananias who served him. And as a result of serving him, scales fell from his eyes. He was no longer "Saul," but "Paul."

As we enter into 2016, I want us to let go of some things. Ask God to remove some scales from our eyes so that we can see things afresh, see things anew...and that God would also touch our hearts so that where there is every reason for our hearts to be hardened, they might be softened to love again, to experience full life.

January 9, 2016



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Honoring Those Outside of Our Culture”

Matthew 2:1-12

Pastor James H. Lee

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 3, 2016

I want us to be the body of Christ that welcomes people we know and don't know, who look like us and don't, but who are part of the Body of Christ, who gave his life for us. Another powerful thing about what was written is that the mystery was not revealed to previous generations, but it has been revealed to us. So this Epiphany Sunday, if you're not happy about anything else, be glad that God has made God's self known unto you...thank God for doing something amazing—He has become a part of us. This is significant because our heroes of the Bible did not have an encounter like we have. Unfortunately, we're so used to it that we don't even reverence or recognize it as God's precious and powerful gift to us.

The other side of what Paul said is he became a servant. For 2016, our theme is *“Servant Leaders Serving Others and Living Faithfully in 2016.”* Amen? Paul understood that he was called for the purpose of sharing the Good News with the Gentiles. *For those of us who are not Jewish in the house, that's us.* We need to hear that because in the West, we think we started it all. But it came from the East, and then we got a chance to be a part of it. But again, he said he was a servant.

We hear these words as Jesus addresses his disciples. After James and John wanted to have a good spot and the other brothers got upset, he says, ***“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28)***

What would you do when you go to eternity, and you get to look back and say, “I sacrificed a lot. I gave a lot.” And you get to see ALL the people whose lives were influenced by your reflecting the light of Christ—by a handshake, by a hug, by doing administration, by being a marketplace minister, by being a servant for those who were outsiders. The Gentiles were the outsiders.

So how could we do such a thing? I'm glad you asked! It's by honoring those who are outside of our culture. When I was called to Covenant in 2003, we went to Senegal. I'd been to Israel, but I'd never been to Senegal. My world opened up in a way that I had never understood. First in Israel, then in Egypt, and then to go to Senegal and to have an experience that I'd never had before. A pastor gave me this stole to honor me because he hadn't seen an African-American pastor in Senegal. This stole comes from Cuba. As a representative of Mission and out of relationships with folks from Luyanó and La Fernanda (the church plant in Luyanó), I was blessed with it. For the sake of the sermon, I am acknowledging it as a way of honoring our relationships and a covenant outside of themselves.

We made a trip to Chiapas, Mexico, to establish a relationship. Whereas they've kicked many out of Mexico, CODIPRECH (Communion of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Chiapas) said, “We want to develop a partnership with you,” This was an honor from the folks of CODIPRECH as Caly, Estela, Lydia (previously as a part of our team), and we were there honoring folks outside of our culture. And in some cases outside of our country.

You may ask, “James, what does that have to do with us today?” There were three wise men; some may call them Zoroastrians, and some may call them Astrologers. But they had an encounter, and some would say that they had an encounter with that Old Testament reading out of *Malachi* that would say that this little teeny tribe, Bethlehem, who were just a part of Judah...between Benjamin and Judah...out of that would come the Messiah, and out of that experience, they sought after him. Out of that experience, they would look into the skies and they would see the stars that would direct them in close proximity.

I want to ask you, what are you looking for? What is God giving you a glimpse of and saying, “Baby, you can have that too.” You may say, “No, I'm just a part of little Bethlehem. I'm not big enough to be Benjamin, I'm not big enough to be Judah.” But God says, “I want to bring forth greatness out of you.”

January 9, 2016



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Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!

Honoring Those Outside of Our Culture”

Matthew 2:1-12

Pastor James H. Lee

New Covenant Fellowship of Austin

January 3, 2016

Epiphany is, again, the revelation of God to us and then us showing forth our honor to God. Don't take your gifts and belittle them. Do not, as Paul told Timothy, allow anyone to despise you because of your youth. I want to expand that exhortation to include age, gender, location, education, whatever the situation...No!

Now the three left. They didn't know the exact place, but they were at the right place because they were there with the king. And what did they say? "We are looking for the one who was born King of the Jews." Now, if you have a little bit of wisdom, you don't go to a king who is over the whole region and tell that king that you're looking for another king over his region. But they did! Every now and then we have to stand up and ask the right questions so that the status quo just doesn't happen. New revelations can take place; and change can take place.

But they inquired as they were following the stars. And some people say, "Did you talk about astrology and Zoroastrian and all of that in the church?" and I say, "Yes, God is bigger than all of that." Who put the stars in the sky and the galaxy? Our God! God doesn't have to trip on that. You don't have to worry about that; let God be God. Amen!

They were led to the Christ Child, where they honored him with frankincense, gold, and myrrh. What a glorious encounter. I need us to hear the other side of the story. Because sometimes we get inspired in the sanctuary, like a pep talk before a big game. In life or in the game, we get caught off guard by the opposition or that we could possibly suffer for righteousness' sake. Some people are able to push through while others get stuck, discouraged, and dismayed.

Watch what Herod did. He waited for those guys—"Hey, guys, great! Y'all go find the child. When you do, bring word back to me and I'll go honor him, just like y'all are doing." And what did he do? Out of fear he called everyone—the chief priest and the Sadducees. Now, at first glance, whatever. No, he's saying "I'm ruling this; I'm calling the leaders of the Jews, who are under my purview, and asking 'How did you let this happen? Why did I not know about it, and where is this king of the Jews?'" I want us to know, you can walk in sincerity, you can walk in the strength of the Lord, but there are going to be times you are going to suffer for righteousness' sake. When Paul said he was a prisoner, when Paul said he was a servant, when Paul said he was a slave, it wasn't just 'cause life was grand and pretty, but because he was committed.

Now, when I share this, some might say "I didn't come here on Sunday morning to hear that...." I want you to think about the other "S" word. When I was little, we used to be called "Christian soldiers"; it had another feel to it, especially when we thought we were in the army of the Lord. To help advance the Kingdom of God. Even as the angels are bad on our behalf, we were God's human agents. We were ready to serve at God's command. It's amazing to think that God would work through us to impact the Kingdom so that it might advance, that love may advance, light may advance, and transformation may take place. We have to also be ready to know even when we're seeking, and when we're finally doing the right thing in sincerity, that we still may suffer so that the status quo doesn't keep happening, because change needs to take place.

What I love about the text is that on their way to the Savior, they get a word that "When you see him and you honor him, don't go back to the king. Take another route." There's something about having an encounter with God that will cause us to take another route.

That word in the Christian community is called "repent,"

and it will cause us to take a different route.

January 9, 2016



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I am inviting us also to be folks who recognize God revelations are not to tear us down, but rather to help us, protect us, and transform us. Although we are reluctant to admit we need to change, our response ought to be, “With your help, I will repent.” What is God calling you to repent about so that 2016 will be far better than 2015? Amen?

Guys, I want to tell you 2016 is time for playing aside—we’ve got work to do. We’ve got work to do in the community, we’ve got work to do in this church. And we need servant leaders, folks who will put their hand to the plow and won’t turn back, because I can tell you, when you turn back, you can’t plow a straight line—it’s crooked, or it sways.

As I get to the last part, I was talking to this pastor in Senegal, and I just couldn’t understand, so I said, “We’re here in the city and I see all of this, and we drive out here, and I don’t see the progress. Couldn’t we do some things here?” And he said, “Pastor, we try; but when we do, we find ourselves stuck.” Well, get unstuck! And he said, “Pastor, sometimes you have to remove the boulders before you can plow the field.” Immediately I said, “Build a bigger plow and build a stronger blade.” He said, “No, remove the boulders so that you can plow, get things done, not destroy your resources.” So I want to invite us this Epiphany Sunday, consider where your boulders are. “Lord, I’m waiting for a harvest. Help me remove those boulders that are getting in the way of the seeds that I have sown and the harvest that is waiting to come my way.”

Three wise men from the East. They could have had a boulder: Why would I want to go see a king who is a baby? Why would I want to go to Bethlehem? Why would I do this for a child? This Child is a King, and this Child is worthy to be praised. This Child is also the one who brings forth salvation; this Child is also the one who judges in righteousness; this is the One who gave his life. And so what does the text say? They went. I did this the other day, and so I want us to think about when was the last time we got on our knees before God? When was the last time you lay prostrate before God and recognized God’s Almighty power, grace, and mercy, instead of allowing this society and this world to define who God is. You define who God is to you. See, we are blessed to have a personal relationship and then a corporate relationship. I get challenged a lot. How can you do this, do that? Because I serve the True and the Living God. In Glory there won’t be any denominations. In Glory the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb will be there, and everybody will be rejoicing and bowing in God’s presence, in Christ’s presence; and he will be the Light—won’t need a light bulb, LED, or any other thing. Let’s let that light reflect in us.

When I got the email and was reminded that Matthew was going to be baptized, I was excited about James Douglas, but to walk this journey with Matthew and Erin has been great. It culminates today with he and his wife together bringing their baby, and the angels in Heaven are rejoicing! It’s like a touchdown, and if I had my right arm, I’d spike the ball!

Frankincense, myrrh, and gold they present before the King. We know him to be the King of kings and Lord of lords; the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counselor, our All-in-All. Yashueh, Jesus, the One who saves.

Let us pray:

God, for the privilege of worshiping you today, for being in this place in which you’re calling us to greater things, we don’t know why it was our generation that you revealed the mystery, but we’re so glad about it. We’re so glad for your Spirit that abides within us, that leads us, guides us, comforts us, and every now and then convicts us. We thank you because even then it reminds us that we belong to you and that you’re doing a work in us. We pray that you take the Word proclaimed and make it what each person in this house needs it to be for himself or herself, so that out of revelation they might know how much you love us, how much grace and mercy you extend to us, and how much you are waiting to revel and cheer over us. We’re all worried about what we haven’t done, and you’re saying to just go and be and do what it is I’ve called you to do, like no one else can do in this world. God, to you be glory, praise, and honor, for all that you’ve done in the past, all that you’re doing right now, and all that you’re going to be doing in the future. Even when our heart breaks about storms, and theft, and war, we know that true love overcomes hate and that it is also that which removes fear. Help us to walk in your love, in Jesus’ name. Amen.