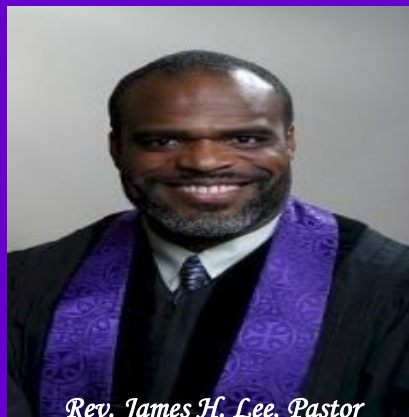
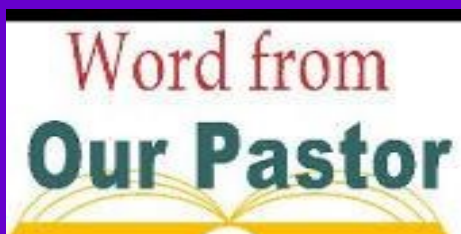


## Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!



*Rev. James H. Lee, Pastor*

Dear NCFA Family and Friends

As I write you, I am thankful for the word from *Acts 11:1-13*. We have an opportunity to hear how God worked through Peter and Cornelius to ensure that a whole household of unacceptable people came to faith. We are also able to see how a person's theology, ideology, and sociology were expanded so that ministry could take place. What understanding is precluding or limiting you from ministering to others or serving a larger context?

What was really profound for me were the words in verse 9, where I heard, *"Do not call what I have created profane."* How often do we judge people and circumstances—judging situations as if we were sovereign and knew everything? Furthermore, how often do we fail to recognize the image of God or the Imago Dei in each other? This is an opportunity for us to explore our behaviors and to expand our thinking and behaviors with others.

It is also important for us to realize that our humanity is at its best when we recognize the Imago Dei in each other or that we are called to be in community with each other. There was a Jewish family in the Northeast that had its window busted out. At first glance there's no real surprise, or maybe there could be; however, the family had a menorah in the window, which was why it was broken out. The rest of the folks in the community demonstrated their humanity by stepping up and joining this family so that every house on the block soon had a menorah in its window. The people stood in solidarity with the Jewish family. It's easy to stand in solidarity with those we know and like. It's more difficult to stand in solidarity with those we do not know and fear. I have much to learn about the Jewish tradition, but I recognize the first Seder night and the beginning of Passover.

This 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is Family-Friendly Sunday for us. Rev. Trish Holland will provide the message at the early service, and Rev. Ellis Oglesby will lead the 10:15 service, when our Youth Choir will sing and Elder Mary Mojica will provide the "Time with Children." I am grateful for their leadership as I will be preaching at First Presbyterian Church, Giddings, TX, as they celebrate their 140th Church Anniversary.

After worship Session will hold its regular monthly meeting, and our Mission & Evangelism team will lead the assembling of "We Care Kits" in Room 7.

Please let me know if you want to participate in the one-day "Preferred Path" training on April 30th at Grace Presbyterian Church. Next week we will determine if we have enough participants.

*<sup>16</sup>And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>17</sup>If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?' <sup>18</sup>When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:16-18)*

God Bless You All

**Pastor James H. Lee**

April 22, 2016



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## Mission Presbytery



*The  
Preferred Path<sup>®</sup>  
Ministry*



*You are invited to participate in the next Preferred Path Core Course officering at Grace Presbyterian Church, where the Rev. Nancy Reeves is the pastor.*

## Preferred Path Core Course

This course provides an introduction to collaboration and conflict resolution in light of biblical principles, and provides practical experience with tools for communicating, building consensus and resolving conflict between individuals and groups.

**Cost:** \$32 and includes lunch. Registration will be paid upon arrival. Go to the following link to register.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040c45a8a82fa75-preferred1>

**Date:** 04/30/2016 (Sat.)

**Time:** 8:30am - 4:30pm CDT

**Location:** 1705 Gattis School Road, Round Rock, TX  
(Grace Presbyterian Church)

## Mission Presbytery

### Special Events

### **!Convencion! - April 24, 2016**

Plan now to attend the Convencion to be held Sunday, April 24 at Iglesia Getsemani, San Benito! This festive event begins at 9:00 AM and continues until 1:00 PM. Worship will be at 11:00 AM, TE Jesse Gonzalez will preach.

### **Church Anniversaries. April 24, 2016**

Celebrating 70 Years! — [Grace Presbyterian Church,](#)

[San Antonio,](#) invites you to help celebrate their 70th Anniversary of Ministry on Sunday, April 24, 2016.

Celebrating 140 years! — [First Presbyterian Church, Giddings,](#) invites you to help celebrate their 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ministry on Sunday, April 24, 2016.

April 22, 2016



NCFA CONNEXION!

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**Thinking with Christ's Mind  
Loving with Christ's Heart  
Serving with Christ's Hands**

Featured below are just some of the areas within NCF where your time, talents, or treasures are currently encouraged:

**\* MISSION & EVANGELISM \***

**(1) We Care Kits** – An ongoing outreach of our church to provide affirmation to our brothers and sisters begging on street corners that God loves them. We are collecting small-sized toiletries (to fit in quart-size bags) such as *soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, wrapped hard candy, 8-oz. water, granola bars, and white crew socks.*

**Contact:** Caly, [calyflower2020@yahoo.com](mailto:calyflower2020@yahoo.com)

**(2) Mobile Loaves & Fishes** – Our 1st-Friday-of-each month truck run provides meals and clothing to our city's homeless folks. To volunteer, confirm before the end of April for the May 6th trip.

**Contacts:** [Bonnie](mailto:Bonnie), [lewser@gmail.com](mailto:lewser@gmail.com); [Jeff](mailto:Jeff), [saddington@gmail.com](mailto:saddington@gmail.com)

**\* CHILDREN & YOUTH \***

***7 weeks to go!***

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL'S "SURF SHACK" – June 13-17**

Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> = the kickstart Beach Party Picnic.

Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> = a VBS/Father's Day celebration during our worship service will culminate the week!

Specific needs include:

- (1) Teachers and helpers in the Nursery and Church School.
- (2) Building props and preparing crafts will begin soon.
- (3) Volunteers willing to support a fantastic VBS experience!

**Contacts:** Elder Danita, [atinad787@gmail.com](mailto:atinad787@gmail.com);

Elder Randy Mojica, [mothachozen@gmail.com](mailto:mothachozen@gmail.com)

**\*CARING AND SHARING \***

(1) Drive a friend to church: Can you help one time?

**Contacts:** Scott, [scotteric@gmail.com](mailto:scotteric@gmail.com); Carol, [saddington@gmail.com](mailto:saddington@gmail.com)

(2) Provide a main dish to store in the church freezer for members or friends going through difficulties? Label contents, date, your name, wrap well (foil, plastic wrap), and leave in the NCF kitchen freezer.

**Contact:** Any Deacon

**\*WORSHIP TEAM \***

Extra hands and voices needed at this time:

1. Set out the Communion elements, or wash the chalices afterwards?

**Contact:** Nancy Harris, [mousiemama51@yahoo.com](mailto:mousiemama51@yahoo.com)

2. Attendance Data Entry– **Contact:** Robert, [rpbooth66@gmail.com](mailto:rpbooth66@gmail.com)

3. Ushering, Greeting— **Contact:** Matthew, [matthewaldas@icloud.com](mailto:matthewaldas@icloud.com)

4. Audio-Visual Help “If Bonnie can do it, so can you!” -BKL

**Contact:** Elder Robert, [rpbooth66@gmail.com](mailto:rpbooth66@gmail.com); [Bonnie](mailto:Bonnie), [lewser@gmail.com](mailto:lewser@gmail.com)

5. Worship Preparation—Can you spare an hour once a month?

**Contact:** Tim Lenz, [running4mexfood@aol.com](mailto:running4mexfood@aol.com)

6. Music— Come sing with the Psalm 150 Praise Team; 9:45am rehearsals.

**Contacts:** Bill, [revbill66@gmail.com](mailto:revbill66@gmail.com); Jimmy, [jimmy\\_bohn@hotmail.com](mailto:jimmy_bohn@hotmail.com)

7. Early Service - 8:30am in the Fellowship Hall - Ask how you can help.

**Contact:** Rev. Trish, [geotriholland@yahoo.com](mailto:geotriholland@yahoo.com)

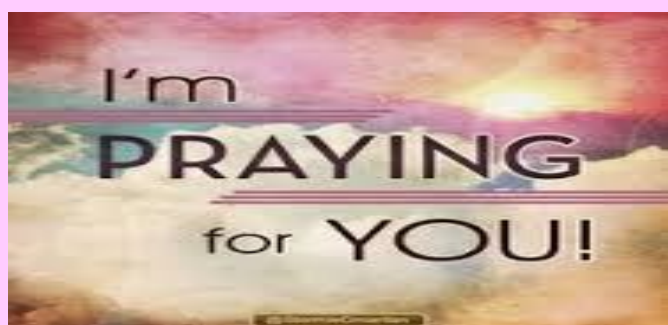


***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

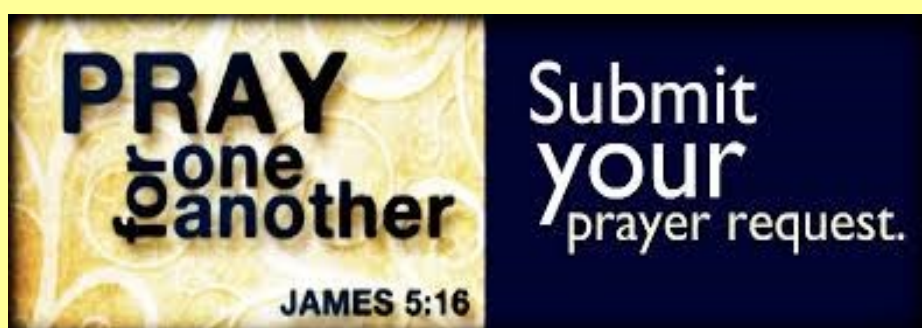


*The LORD is near to all who call on him,  
to all who call on him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)*

- ⇒ Thanksgiving for the life and service of Robert Peña who entered the Church Triumphant on Friday and suffers no longer. Thanksgiving for the care he received from Roxann and her family. Prayers of comfort as they grieve.
- ⇒ Lift up Vi's 88-year-old brother (who never *ever* slows down!) as he faces options for treatment of recently-diagnosed lung cancer.
- ⇒ Prayers for pain relief and healing for Nancy T. after injuring her leg in a fall in her yard. Praise that Lara is feeling much better.
- ⇒ Prayers for Susan V. in Brookdale Rehab Ctr. for two weeks recovering from a fall in which her hip was broken.
- ⇒ Thanksgiving for the blessings of phone and internet connectivity for Jeff while traveling in Turkey and Greece. Praise for the Lord's continued protection from the fear that terrorists try to spread. Traveling mercies for the group's remaining week in Greece.
- ⇒ Praise the Lord! Prayers of comfort for Elizabeth's cousin Pat, whose partner Sarah passed away a week ago. Also lift up Elizabeth's good friend Vera, a former neighbor who is temporarily in a nursing home as she suffers from a brain tumor.
- ⇒ Praises and prayers for Tiffany and Justin's wedding this Saturday: praise that all details are in place, and traveling mercies for guests traveling from across the country.
- ⇒ Thanksgiving for so much to be thankful for in Danita's life. Praise for the answered prayer of her seminary tuition needs being met by scholarship, investors, givers, and other believers who stand in the gap and encourage, support, help, and advise.
- ⇒ Traveling mercies for Maša's trip to Europe and the Middle East in her mathematics/petro-engineering superstar role....Lift up Danita and son Schuyler as they care for little Dario during her absence.
- ⇒ Thanks and praise to God for the mighty works God has accomplished through the Workers2Work ministry that Ellis serves. Thanks for the amazing opportunity to be able to participate in that work.
- ⇒ Blessings for New Covenant Fellowship and the hope that comes from its ministry.
- ⇒ Prayers for the people affected by the recent strong earthquakes in both Ecuador and southern Japan. Thanksgiving that Cathy A.'s friends' families in Ecuador are safe.



***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***



- ⇒ Continued prayers of healing for Cathy A.'s Aunt Pat during her hospitalization.
- ⇒ Thanksgiving for the Pope highlighting the immigrant situation during his recent trip to Greece and for making a powerful statement by taking three Syrian refugee families back with him to Rome for resettling. Prayers for that whole situation, especially for the fearfulness that develops when immigrants enter countries in large numbers, to the extent that people begin to fear traveling abroad. Thanksgiving for the proclamation that we are a "resurrection people" and that God is in control.
- ⇒ Prayers for Lydia's wonderful sermon this morning about the work and plight of the farm workers with whom her family has been involved through the years. (Today is National Farm Workers Sunday.) Also, prayers of healing for Lydia's strep throat and for the upheaval in her life as she makes important decisions.
- ⇒ Praise for the joy of Trish and George's granddaughter Sofia winning first place in two regional track meet races—the 800 meter and the relay.
- ⇒ Prayers for Matthew's aunt who has been suffering from health issues; recent diagnoses include stomach, ovarian, and lung cancers.
- ⇒ Lift up Matthew to keep up his energy and focus to finish seminary strong!
- ⇒ Praise for Kimberly's presence in worship and her ability to resume care of their family while continuing to recover from her autoimmune issues. Thanksgiving for the prayers of this church, for the positive result of her liver biopsy indicating no additional damage, and for the beneficial effects of steroid therapy. Lift up her goal to be healthy again soon so she and Jimmy can become involved with foster care and continue doing things for other people.
- ⇒ Prayers of healing for Jimmy and Kimberly's neighbor Rebecca who they just learned has been suffering severely from Lyme Disease, unable to walk, work, or write (with three young daughters). Prayers they can find ways to be of help to this family.
- ⇒ Lift up New Covenant Fellowship and Pastor James Lee.
- ⇒ Prayers for Azar's daughter Melody with four children, three of whom are in public school and being bullied—ages 2-1/2 to 8. Pray that the Lord will touch the hearts of parents who send children to school with anger, that their spirit of anger be lifted. Pray that the children in our nation's schools who are hiding such abuse from their parents may be made free in the Holy Spirit to tell them. Lift up the bullying children for forgiveness, that the Lord may touch their hearts and bring love to the families in our nation.

***It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.***



April 22, 2016



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# N C F A SUNDAY MORNINGS

## NCFA Sunday Schedule

8:30am - Worship Service  
1507 Wilshire Blvd.

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



## NCFA SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 8:30am -- Wilshire Blvd.

Come rise and shine with us  
at our 8:30am 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 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**

April 22, 2016



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- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | Matthew Castilleja    |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Justin Wallace        |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Gemma Munoz           |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | Jhaliah J'nae Edwards |
|                  | Alida Tallman         |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | Kayla Zajicek         |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> | Abigail Iris Longino  |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> | J.T. Longino          |
|                  | Abraham Agbottah      |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> | Kofi Vida-Torku       |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> | Aquanetta Hicks       |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Wonho Shin            |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> | Lucy Oglesby          |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> | Angel Mojica          |
|                  | Lydia Marion          |
| 27 <sup>th</sup> | Saul Cortez           |

### Session Members

**\*Rev. James Lee**  
Pastor/Moderator  
**\*Elder Kathy Smith**  
Clerk of Session  
**\*Rev. Oliver Smith**  
Administration & Personnel  
**\*Elder Bill Harris**  
Buildings & Grounds  
**\*Elder Randy Mojica**  
Children and Youth  
**\*Elder Ben Hooks**  
Discipleship & Men's/  
Women's Ministry  
**\*Elder Mary Jo Mojica**  
Finance & Stewardship  
**\*Elder Robert Booth**  
Congregational Life/  
Lay Ministry  
**\*Elder Vernon Bailey**  
Missions/Evangelism  
**\*Elder Matthew Aldas**  
Worship & Membership

### Deacons

**Kathryn Aldas**  
**Ashley Phillips**  
**Scott Phillips**  
**Carol Saddington, Chair**  
**Cathy Trifiro**  
**Roxann Vallejo**

April-May 2016

24<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter  
8:30am Early Worship at Wilshire  
*Rev. Trish Holland, preaching*  
9-10am Adult Sunday School  
9:45m Psalm 150 Praise  
Team Rehearsal  
10:15am Worship at Wilshire Blvd.  
*Rev. Ellis Oglesby, preaching*  
Sunday School Ages 3-5  
(Rm. 1); Grades 1-5 (Rm. 7)  
*Session Meeting in Kitchen*  
*Evangelism Meeting in Rm. 7*

26<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm Men's Ministry Dinner,  
7pm Study

27<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm Fellowship Dinner

28<sup>th</sup> 6:30pm-Diabetes Class

30<sup>th</sup> 8:30am Bible Study-Kitchen

1<sup>st</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter  
8:30am Early Worship at Wilshire  
*Elder Danita Nelson, preaching*  
9-10am Adult Sunday School  
9:45m Psalm 150 Praise  
Team Rehearsal  
10:15am Worship at Wilshire Blvd.  
*Pastor James Lee, preaching*  
Sunday School Ages 3-5  
(Rm. 1); Grades 1-5 (Rm. 7)





**NEW COVENANT**  
FELLOWSHIP

**WWW.NCFAUSTIN.ORG**



**Be a part of our  
"Family Album"**

**PORTRAIT  
SIGN-UP**

**NEW COVENANT FELLOWSHIP PICTURE DIRECTORY**

**Please come and be recognized as part of  
the New Covenant Fellowship Church Family by  
having your photograph taken any Sunday before or after  
worship by appointment with Oliver.**

**Signup sheet on back table each Sunday  
or contact Oliver at [mmmoesmith@aol.com](mailto:mmmoesmith@aol.com)**

**Free Appointments**

**Free-Will Offering for Portrait Packages**



**MARCH 31, 2016 THRU MAY 5, 2016**

**6:30 – 8 PM**

**\*\*\*APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup> AND MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> CLASSES WILL BE HELD ON CAMPUS, EXACT LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE.\*\*\***

## NCFA – FELLOWSHIP HALL

**1507 WILSHIRE BLVD., AUSTIN - 78722**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**CALY FERNANDEZ, CHWI/CERTIFIED DIABETES INSTRUCTOR**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

CALY FERNANDEZ AT CALYFLOWER2020@YAHOO.COM



April 22, 2016



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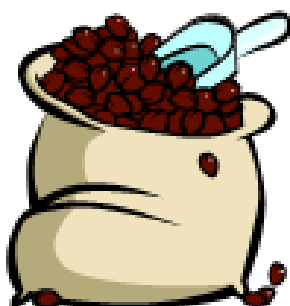


## Café Justo

**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 pound bags. The cost of a 1 pound bag is **\$10.00** and a 5 pound bag is **\$ 40.00**. 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**



April 22, 2016



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**Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!**

***“What Difference Does It Make?”***

***Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30***

**Pastor James H. Lee**

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
April 17, 2016— 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter**

**Revelation 7:9-17**

*<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>singing, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.” <sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” <sup>14</sup>I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. <sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

**John 10:22-30**

*<sup>22</sup>At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. <sup>24</sup>So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; <sup>26</sup>but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. <sup>30</sup>The Father and I are one”.*

Today’s sermon title is ***“What Difference Does It Make?”*** Really, what difference does it make? If you consider the text and all that was going on, there’s a lot that’s happening. And some can say, “Well, why make a big deal of Jesus coming at a certain time...at the time of the festival, the time that’s winter; and why is he walking around Solomon’s portico by the temple? What difference does it make?” What difference does it make in the ***Revelation*** texts that they’re there around the throne and their robes were washed? What difference does it make? What difference does it make when you’re asked the question, “Are you the Messiah? Are you the one?”

April 22, 2016



NCFA CONNEXION!

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***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

***“What Difference Does It Make?”***

***Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30***

**Pastor James H. Lee**

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
April 17, 2016— 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter**

And Jesus says, “What difference does it make? I have already shown you everything you need to see. And yet you choose not to believe.” What difference does it make? You coming here to worship today...what difference does it make? You praying unto our Lord and our God, what difference does it make? You bringing your gifts, your tithes, your offering your selves, and you present them before our Lord and God, what difference does it make?

It makes a great difference! And out there in the world right now there are people who are saying that our faith doesn't matter, that it is not relevant. And I will tell you if it's not relevant to us, it will definitely not be relevant to them. For we have had God reveal to us the love, and had our hearts pricked and our minds touched to understand that God has moved us out of the darkness and translated us into the marvelous light. And yes, there are times we want to close our eyes and say “Ugh” and plug up our ears and say, “I don't want to hear it,” and harden our hearts because we don't want to feel it, and put our hands in our pockets because we don't want to do it. That isn't who God called us to be God called us to be representatives, ambassadors, and agents of reconciliation. And so our worship is to God. And then we are called to live. To live.

So as we work through our sermon today, I want to talk about the **Consecration**, then I want to talk about the **Concerns**, and then lastly the **Celebration**.

**The Consecration:**

The time of Dedication. We just read it, and it's good information. But the time of Dedication was around the festival where they would have known it would have been a time of the Hanukkah. They would have remembered that there was a time when the Syrian king came and desecrated the temple because they were defeated by Egypt and they came. And when they did, taking the blood of a pig and placing it in the temple, it was something powerful. And the Jews at that time, they had a choice: Just let it happen, just let it be. Or something would move them beyond where they were to where God was calling them to be. And it was important for them.

We learn of the Maccabees and the Maccabean revolt: Judah was the oldest of five sons, and his father had told them at the time that they were being told, “You can no longer read the Torah, you can no longer practice your faith, you can no longer have circumcision.” There were some that went to the caves as a way of protection so that they could continue to live out their faith; others were enslaved. When Judas's father died, he started to do what his father did, and that's when the Maccabean revolt came about.



April 22, 2016



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***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

***“What Difference Does It Make?”***

***Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30***

**Pastor James H. Lee**

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
April 17, 2016—4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter**

You can say, “Well, what is significant about that?” Well, this group of nobodies defeated the Syrian army in eight days. Am I advocating violence? No, I’m telling the story. In eight days they defeated them. And then when the defeat came, there was a time of celebration. And guess how long the celebration lasted...8 days. And when the 8 days was happening, they had a menorah there in the temple. At the time there would have only been 7 of these stands (*shows a menorah*), these here. But something happened. When they were able after this revolt to go back and consecrate the temple and everything to get it together, they were only able to find one menorah. And so they found that one, and they put the oil in it. And when the priest came back the next day to fill the oil, having limited oil because they didn’t have enough time to purify it to get it ready, guess what? It was still burning the next day. And the next day...still burning. Next day...still burning. For eight days it was still burning.

Sometimes we get caught up in scarcity and get worried about what we don’t have and what we need to hold onto. We serve a God of abundance. Amen? Eight days it was flowing...eight days. So they remember the Hanukkah. They remember the lights, the eight days. So why this one? Well, the 9th one is so that these could rest and it can serve.

We’re constantly being given symbols of reminding ourselves of not only sanctifying ourselves unto the Lord but also setting aside time for Chadash, a rest for restoration, reflection, and being reminded of who we are and whose we are. Amen?

**Concern:**

The second portion of the text becomes a matter of concern. The concern is, if we read it a little bit differently, this guy has come to town, and he’s like the Pied Piper—you know, it seems like everybody is following him and he’s causing us trouble. So we really need to know, are you the one? Are you the Messiah? Or are you just some rabble-rouser, some maverick, some johnny-come-lately to cause some problems? And Jesus was Jesus. He said, “What does it matter? I have already told you, I’ve already shown you; my works testify of me. They already tell you who I am; but it doesn’t matter because you won’t believe it.”

Do you all know we will see whatever we want to see in any and every situation? You can look at it and say, “Ah, it’s a blessing; it’s beautiful!” Someone else can say, “No, I don’t like that, eww.” “She’s a great person!” “ “I don’t know, I’ve seen (blah blah).” “He’s great!” “Nah, (blah blah).”

***If you look for something bad, you will find it.  
If you look for something good, you will find it.***

April 22, 2016



NCFA CONNEXION!

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***Being Real, Relevant, and Racially Diverse!***

***“What Difference Does It Make?”***

***Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30***

**Pastor James H. Lee**

**New Covenant Fellowship of Austin  
April 17, 2016— 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter**

Instead of looking at some guy who's causing problems, can you look unto him as being the Messiah? The text will let us know and we know in different places (Revelation) where it talked about their minds being blinded or them being blinded, not to know or to understand. And that happens to us as well, doesn't it?

Have you ever been so caught up in something that even when God is telling you “Stand still and watch the salvation of me do my thing,” you're like, “Nah, Lord, I got this. I got to handle this....I know you're sovereign and everything, but I got this one.” And there are times when we need to be reminded that God is God. Amen? And that the ways in which Jesus was living testified to him as being the Messiah, as being our Lord, as being the one who gave his life for us. And even when we hear scriptures: ***“He came to his own and they received him not.”*** I pray that we will continue to receive what the Lord is giving us through his life, through his love, through his leadership. Amen?

The concerns are legitimate, and just to act like they're not, it wouldn't be good stewardship of the text. There are times when people will come and lead others astray. And there are times when people will speak, and in doing so, cause more harm than good. Scriptures remind us we are to test the Scriptures by the Scriptures or the Spirit by the Spirit. And sometimes that even means checking ourselves...but checking. It's a legitimate concern. We always bless You, want to stay open to the Spirit, obedient to our Lord and God. Amen?

**Celebration:**

And now for the celebration. As you read this text in ***Revelation***...somebody used to tell me, ***“I don't like the Old Testament, and I don't like Revelation. In the Old Testament I don't get to see the grace of God and the love of God.”*** I'm like, “Are you serious? As many times as God who is faithful pulled folks who are faithless out? Come on man, really?!” ***“I don't like Revelation.... It's too this or too that....”*** And I am like, “What?!” Even when it seemed like the church, the body, went into glory, there was still opportunity for those who weren't in the faith to still come to faith, even when the light wasn't present! If that is not Grace and Mercy being expressed in ***Revelation***, I don't know what is.

But another celebration—whew!—comes right here in the text. And I love it. You know, one is there, and they're checking everything out. Some celebrating going on, and one guy wants to know, what is this? What's really going on? They've seen these people who had their palm branches. You all remember the palm branches from Palm Sunday? “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! He is our Salvation.” And there they are in Glory with palm branches, as the text would say. And you all know it wasn't just some of the folks. ***It wasn't just y'all, it was all. It wasn't just y'all, but it was all!***

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***“There was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.”*** Does that sound like a Holy Ghost party—a time of celebration? Good news! Some may say, “Why is that good news? I still gotta live in this day.” I’m glad you asked! Sometimes we’ve got to see the picture as it is to come in the here and now. The old leadership would say “you start with the end in mind.” If the end of all of this means I’m going to have on a new robe...I’m going to be in the presence of Almighty God...I’m going to rejoice with other saints... Family members who are there...And tell the story of how we got over?! Oh, man!

But here’s the other thing that’s in the text. When the elder asked who are they and what are they doing. He said, ***“These are they who have come out of the great ordeal.”*** Anybody been in an ordeal or two? Yes. You can say, “Well, which ordeal was it, James, you don’t just say ‘ordeal.’” I’m going to say ordeal, because I know you’ve been through some things in the past, I know you’re going through stuff right now, and I know you will go through things in the future. We will have some ordeals to go through.

But know that we do not go through our ordeals alone.  
Know that our God is with us,  
know that God will not leave us nor will God forsake us.

Even in the toughest of times God has given us the capacity to go through, to overcome, because we are more than conquerors through Christ who loves us. Amen? And so that’s who they were.

Oh man, as they’re were singing ***“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”***...then something else happens. Then they began to sing as they worshipped. ***“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*** When was the last time you recognized God for God’s power? For God’s wisdom? Just being thankful for the blessings that God has bestowed upon us? And the things that God did not give us! Some answered prayers would have messed us up. I’m thankful for God’s wisdom in that capacity.

The other part of the celebration is they give us another imagery of who Jesus is, not only is he the Lamb, but he said he is their shepherd. He’s a shepherd that leads them to water, and to the grassy knolls as we would read and think about ***Psalms 23***. And then also be reminded that “Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” he is there. His rod and his staff are there to comfort us. Reminding us also here in ***John 10*** that he is the good shepherd, not like a hireling that when times get tough, gets up and jets. He’s there to the end.



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***“I am the shepherd; my sheep hear my voice.”*** “Why does it matter that you’re calling them sheep?” Because if you are the shepherd, it means that you are caring for them. “Why does they matter that the sheep know the shepherd’s voice?” I’m glad you asked. If there were all these sheep in one little space and one shepherd said, “Let’s go, sheep”...and you didn’t know your shepherd’s voice, guess where you’d be going? Out. But if you know it’s your shepherd and you know it’s your shepherd’s voice, then you will heed and then you will follow as you go out of the gate. It makes a difference. *It makes a difference.*

And so there is the celebration of him as the shepherd who guides us, who cares for us, who protects us, who is our all in all. ***<sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.***

Here’s the other part of this celebration: ***<sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.***

This church has endured a lot. We’ve had the death of loved ones from last year. But out of hope, there’s a cross. And there’s the shepherd’s cross that CD Weaver made for us. And over here a bigger cross done by Harold and Jan Skaggs as well as Chuck Coffman and the stand that’s there. *“I will cling to the old rugged cross and someday exchange it for a crown.”* That’s a celebration in a time of pain and suffering and sorrow. As our sister was here today weeping at Robert’s death, our hearts are burdened; they break. But there’s also a blessing in knowing that there will be no more suffering...and that his tears of pain will be wiped away. And to know that we who are here are still going to be comforted by other saints who’ve also experienced heartache and pain. Amen?

It’s so very important that we not forget—that’s why *Hebrews* says, ***“Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves.”*** That 25<sup>th</sup> verse is so very important. It’s when we gather here we’re reminded we are the body of Christ. We are reminded that we are united in Him. We are united in one faith, one baptism, one Lord. We are reminded beyond any kind of way that someone would define us that the *Imago Dei* is in each and every one of us. Amen? I see the Imago Dei. I see the Imago Dei. I hope you all see the Imago Dei! Celebration of who God is and what God has done. The image of God, the Imago Dei.

As I go over here to my seat today, there are some other celebrations. Today I’m wearing this stole. It’s a celebration of a covenant relationship that we have with Chiapas. When they kicked the Presbyterian Church USA out of Mexico, we were able to join with a Reformed group who said, “We welcome you.” And we were able to go and have conversation, and it was a wonderful thing. I also have my “T” association thing, and you say, “Man, he is a

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The last thing I have has humbled me so that I've yet to even wear it. When this thing hit me and I couldn't breathe and I had to ask for help, it was the last thing I wanted to do....And while I was a part of a wedding, I had these gentlemen who would get my oxygen for me, stay on top of me—"What do you need? Do you need this or do you need that?" I would grumble, "I don't need this, I don't need that." And other times I was saying, "Thank you, Jesus!" As I was leaving, one of the gentlemen said, "What's really going on?" And I said, "Man, thank you for what you did this week because I normally won't ask for help, even though I've got a lot of people who will help me." And he said, "Well, when you allow us to help, it allows us to be honored, too." He said that he is a Marine. And so, not too long ago I received these (*showing cuff links*). He said, "Based upon the experiences that you have had and the fact that you're staying on the journey, these are your sign of being an honorary Marine – *Semper Fi*." This is Latin for "always faithful," *semper fidelis*.)

Y'all, I hope you are getting your robes fitted. (Mine keeps changing size!) But the celebration is, as I close, every single one of us gets to have a robe! ROBE. And as messy as I am, and as messy as life is, it won't be tainted. It will be washed in the blood of the Lamb. And I can't explain it. Someone asked, "How is it that a brown cow can eat green grass and produce white milk?" I don't know. And how is it that we who are the unrighteous can be declared righteous, and then get a robe, and have that robe be white and washed in the blood and not bleach? I don't know! But I'm celebrating the fact that it is happening! And I'll be in Glory with you and others.

*Let's pray: Lord our God, we thank you that it does matter. It does matter that people stand up and fight when it seems like they're being oppressed. It does matter that you consecrate the things that are holy unto you so that you continue to honor them and bring glory and honor to your name. It does matter, God, that you love us. You called us, you shepherd us, and you know our voice and we know yours. It does matter, God, that we get to know that there are those who have gone before us, and they get to celebrate and be in your presence and worship you, and when they do, unspeakable joy is theirs. But it gives us joy on this side of glory. Bless and keep us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

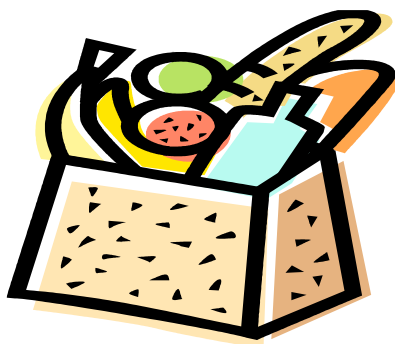
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## We Care Kits

*"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, Trail mix, or peanut butter and crackers

Vienna sausage – 5 ounce size cans

Water bottles – 8 ounce size

**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](mailto:calyflower2020@yahoo.com) or call me at (512) 228-4712.