



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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We are Called to Love and Not to Judge

A few weeks ago I was worshipping at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Phoenix, a church that was planted by my Grandpa many decades ago. I was still grieving the loss of my cousin John, whose memorial service we had attended there the day before. That morning, I was enjoying being surrounded by family and worshipping in a familiar sanctuary that I'd attended my entire life.

I first listened to the Epistle being read from Ephesians 4 which says that we are all called to *"make every effort to maintain the spirit of unity in the bond of peace. Furthermore, there is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all!"* Yes, the Body of Christ, which is the Church, is called to strive to be one, united body of believers! Then I listened to the Gospel reading about when Jesus asked the Pharisees, *"Is it right to heal this man on the Sabbath?"* The Pharisees remained silent and then Jesus chose to heal the man. What I took from the Gospel reading was, "What is more important, to show mercy to those around us or to adhere to the strict religious rules of our time?"

Ironically, several minutes later I went up with my family and relatives, knelt down, extended my hands to receive communion, as I have done there for so many years, and was denied communion by their current pastor. His reasoning (that I heard secondhand) was that it was because I am a pastor within the PC USA denomination. The pain, shock, and heartbreak that I felt for weeks was immense. I have heard painful stories of others who had been denied communion in the past and now I know, first hand, how much it hurts. So I share this with you for a couple of reasons:

1) If you have ever been denied communion before, I want you to know how sorry I am that this has also happened to you. I'm sorry that a Sacrament that Jesus intended to bring us together is being used at times as a way to exclude and/or shame. I'm sorry that what was meant to be a reminder of Jesus' ineffable love towards us sometimes gets distorted into an opportunity to judge others. It's hard for me to fathom how Jesus was willing to give communion to Judas, who was in the process of betraying Him, and yet some still think it's okay for them to use their position to deny communion to others.

2) Please know that our denomination (PC USA), our church, and I all strongly believe in what is known as an "Open Table." Over the past year or so, our denomination has even removed the stipulation that one must be baptized before being able to receive communion. Though we would hope that as many people as possible would be baptized over their lifetimes, we also believe that no one should have to jump through hoops in order to be deemed "worthy" to receive communion. And I would encourage all of us to come before the Lord's Table with a deep appreciation of the great sacrifice that Christ made when He laid down His body and shed His blood for all of humanity. We remember His sacrifice and come into His presence every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Though what happened to me was extremely hurtful and painful, it has reaffirmed why I, as your pastor and as a part of this denomination, welcome everyone to the Lord's Table. I want as many people as possible to remember the great sacrifice that Christ gave, which was the ultimate act of love. I want as many people as possible to experience Christ's presence in their lives, especially during communion. And I want to do whatever I can to bring people together in a spirit of unity. The Lord's Table should be a place of healing and not a place that causes harm, a place to be nourished and not left empty handed.

Your Pastor,
Ryan

PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting of the Property committee will take place after worship on Sunday October 14. We will be finalizing plans for the Fall clean-up on Saturday November 17 and discuss other needed items. We are glad to finally have the vestibule lavatory floor tiled!

MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The next meeting of the Club will be Friday October 19, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the church. Pancakes, camaraderie and completion of some small jobs are the order of the day. So mark your calendar for the meetings to join in the great breakfast, fellowship and work of the church!

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church returns next Sunday, October 14 at 9:30 a.m. Messy Church is a time of intergenerational learning and fellowship, where people of every age can learn about God from each other. This year's focus will be learning about different types of prayer, while doing fun activities that everyone can enjoy. A prayer wall will be created during the first gathering as an interactive way to pray. Please come out next Sunday at 9:30 in Fellowship Hall.

FALL CLEAN-UP DAY – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2018

A clean-up day has been scheduled for Saturday November 17, from 8:30 to 12:00. There should be plenty of leaves to rake and we can clear the brush along the driveway, edge the front sidewalk, cleanup the meditation garden and other garden areas around the church. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to join in for an hour or two for some work, fun and fellowship. Hope to see you there.

CONSECRATION SUNDAY

On November 18, we will celebrate Consecration Sunday at Slackwood. Preaching that day will be the Rev. Paul Dalzell from the Groomsport Presbyterian Church. At a special time during the service, each of us will be asked to consecrate, or dedicate ourselves to our church's ministries and missions. This is a confidential and voluntary commitment

made as we grow in our faith through giving. After the service we will celebrate with a luncheon. Please look for more information to be mailed to you in the upcoming weeks.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

This year's Advent Social will be held on Friday, December 7 at the home of Anand and Lilly Veeraraj. Get the date on your calendars -- specific details will be available later.

FALL IS HERE! TIME FOR THE FALL RUMMAGE SALE!

Clean, crisp air and cool nights.....and our annual fall rummage sale! The dates for the 2018 Fall Rummage Sale are **Friday October 12, and Saturday October 13 (set up on Oct. 10 and 11)**. It's time to clean out your closets, attic or basement and gather those items, clothes, etc. that you no longer use and bring it to the church! Getting rid of old, unused items serves two purposes: It makes you feel good to have less "things" in your house, and provides a new home to those who will need the items. The proceeds of the sale support the mission outreach of the church. Volunteers are needed in a variety of ways..... determine how you can assist in making this a successful effort. Signup sheets will be available in Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday September 23, 2018.

- Take a flyer advertising the sale to give out or post
- Bring items to the church to be placed in the shed
- Save your Halo Farms bags to be used for the sale
- Items can be received at the church:
 - Smaller items any time prior to the sale or the afternoon of **Wednesday October 10 until 6:00 PM and up to 2:00 PM on Thursday October 11.**
 - **PLEASE BE CONSIDERATE OF THE HELPERS AND DO NOT BRING DONATED ITEMS TO THE CHURCH AFTER THE TIMES INDICATED.**
- We cannot accommodate larger items in the storage shed, so please call Bill (609-651-1321) to arrange for a pick up on the Weds/Thurs of the sale
- Help empty the shed – **Wednesday October 10 11:00 AM** we will begin setting up the tables and moving items into fellowship hall. Whenever you can make it after would be helpful. We will begin to sort "White Elephant" items, etc. **until around 6 PM – HELP IS NEEDED:**
 - Help set up for the sale

- **Thursday October 11** beginning at 9:00 AM
- Assist in the sale
 - **Friday October 12**, 9:00-5:00 PM
 - **Saturday October 13**, 8:30-1:00 PM
- Help in the clean up
 - **Saturday October 13** beginning at 1:00 PM

Thanks,
Terrie and Bill Mansmann
Co-chairs

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE
By Cathy Salvatore

THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT
Read: Luke 6: 6-11
Matthew 12: 43

We have become disorganized lost and helpless, therefore, we will not appreciate who Jesus is and what he means to us.

Jesus will rescue us, save us, something that we could never do for ourselves.

Don't let your medicine or material things in this world over rule your life.

What are your attachments in this world that create sin?

- A. Wealth
- B. Pleasure
- C. Power
- D. Honor

These attachments you create to be the center of your life which you feel you cannot live without. These attachments will give you an unclean spirit. Support yourself with the sacraments and attending Sunday services weekly. Find the Lord your satisfaction in this life.

We are fallen people in this corrupted world, but our Lord gives us hope because he speaks with authority. Therefore, we should cling to our Lord not the worldly things in this life.

Cling to those true treasures in heaven.

ACCEPTING OUR DIFFERENCES

As most of us probably do, I often think of that tragic day on September 11, 2001 when our country lost nearly 3,000 people during four terroristic attacks that changed our country and the world forever. We all remember that day ... where we were, how we found out, how we felt, people we knew who were affected ... and we can't help but imagine ourselves or our loved ones being horribly caught in such evil and devastating acts.

Since that day there have been so many incidents of mass, terroristic attacks, all heart-breaking and all evoking unfathomable sorrow. We will never get used to hearing of these events, learning of the pain and loss of so many innocent people who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I always marvel at the stories of those unassuming heroes who were able to muster enough courage to help others, even saving lives, at the risk of losing their own. The man who shielded the wounded woman with his own body, taking a bullet for her at the Las Vegas shooting. The teacher who protected her students during the Newtown, Connecticut massacre only to lose her own life to the shooter. The employee who led strangers down a smoky stairwell to safety during the 9/11 attack, only to return to the building trying to save more, but losing his life for his gallant efforts.

So many heroic acts. People coming together during tragic situations, helping each other, risking their precious lives, and never asking anything in return. And do you know what amazed me the most? The fact that no one seemed to care about the differences that may have existed among them. No one stopped to ask or notice what nationality they were, what religion they practiced, what their profession was, how much money they made, or what political party they belonged to. It just didn't matter. When it comes down to it during uncertain times, many of us are all about helping each other, putting ourselves out there, loving each other ... no questions asked, no judgements, no partiality.

So why do hateful words and accusations, preconceived opinions and labels always seem to get in the way of the tolerance and compassion that Jesus taught us? We all have a little hero in us. Don't wait for a tragedy to put on your cape.

Penny Baumann