

THE STONE NEWS

STONE CHURCH OF WILLOW GLEN, PRESBYTERIAN USA

FEBRUARY 2007



The High School Group, as usual, had a marvelous time on their annual ski trip!

DR. JACK ROGERS TO SPEAK ON HIS BOOK: JESUS, THE BIBLE, AND HOMOSEXUALITY

The Henrietta Perdue Memorial Lecture Series will feature Dr. Jack Rogers speaking on his new book, *Jesus, the Bible, wo Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*, the weekend of February 23-24.



Dr. Rogers will also preach and lead an unscripted adult study discussion on Sunday, February 25.

Evangelical theologian and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Jack Rogers argues unequivocally for equal rights in the church and in society for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or

transgender. Throughout history, he observes, Christianity has moved toward ever greater openness and inclusiveness. He argues that when we interpret the Bible through the lens of Jesus' redemptive life and ministry, we see that the church is called to grant equal rights to all people. His book, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*, describes Rogers' own change of mind and heart on the issue; charts the church's well-documented history of using biblical passages to oppress marginalized groups; argues for a Christ-centered reading of Scripture; debunks oft-repeated stereotypes about gays and lesbians; and concludes with ideas for how the church can heal itself to move forward again.

Lecture titles are "How My Mind Was Changed," (7:30 pm, Fri.), "How the Church Changes Its

Mind" (9 am, Sat.), "How Should We Read the Bible?" (11 am, Sat.), and "The Myths That Cloud People's Minds" (1:30 pm, Sat.).

Friday's lecture is \$10; Saturday's three lectures are \$15; the full event price is \$20. Purchase tickets, as well as the book (\$14), during coffee hour or in the church office. - Pat Magee

FEBRUARY EVENTS

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Miriam's Column

Prescription for February:
Love and Soup!

As Christian Education offers faith-nurturing education for all ages, we realize one of the best ways to care for young people is to support parents and strengthen their relationship, the basis for the family. So we are offering support for all couples during this month of love and Valentines.

Marriage and Family Therapist, Mary Alice Collins, will lead a *Couples Retreat* on Saturday, February 10, from 9 am to noon. Mary Alice observes: "Our lives are often so full that one of our most important relationships, the one with our life partner, gets only the leftover time and energy. This workshop is an invitation to actually focus on the two of you: to spend a few hours

together, remembering why you are in relationship, looking at what you might like to create together, experiencing some exercises and trying out some tools to deepen the level of communication and connection with one another."

I hope, whether you have children at home or are empty-nesters, you will consider giving your relationship the gift of this time together. The *Couples Retreat* will be followed by *Heart-to-Heart Extravaganza*, from 6 to 9 pm, sponsored by the Deacons. What special ways to celebrate and deepen your love! If you haven't already, sign up asap!

Christian Education also seeks to give young people experiences to express their faith through caring for others. Our Middle Schoolers are again coordinating the February 4th *Souper Bowl Sunday*, so we can share our blessings with the hungry

in our community. The group joins Christian youth across the country in collecting cans of soup and dollars from worshippers as they arrive that day.

This effort, started by one church youth group, has collected a total of \$33 million since 1990! 2006 was a record year, reporting \$4.7 million given to local hunger programs across the country. Please support the Middle Schoolers on February 4, as well as the ongoing collection of food on the first Sunday of each month with which they also assist.

Let's enrich life in February with Love and Soup!

God bless,
Miriam Kishi,
Christian Education Associate

PS: Save these dates for Vacation Church School: June 18-22!

Church Library Adds Many New Titles, including Videotapes

Starting this month, Stone's church library will be staffed after worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. Then either Sue Evans or I will be on hand until at least 11 am to help you find things.

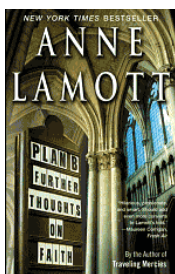
On most Sundays the library will be open for self-service use until noon. When groups need to meet in the room, we will try to have it open for library use until 11:15 am.

Here are new books for young folks:

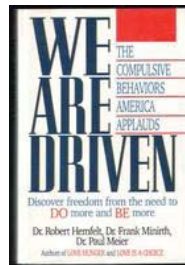
- ☛ *Living Descendants: From the Days of the Dinosaurs* by Scott Weidensaul (YA 590 Wei)
- ☛ *Wildlife Explorer*, vols 1 & 2 (YA 590 Wil), given by Kathryn Stutz

Here are new books for adults:

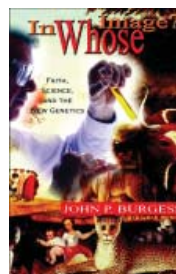
- ☛ *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith* by Anne Lamott (813.54 Lam)



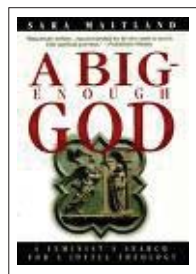
- ☛ *We Are Driven: The Compulsive Behaviors America Applauds* by Dr. Robert Hemfelt, Dr. Frank Minirth and Dr. Paul Meier (650 Hem)



- ☛ *In Whose Image? Faith, Science & the New Genetics* ed. by John P. Burgess (291.1 Bur) given by Pat Magee



- ☛ *A Big-Enough God: A Feminist's Search for a Joyful Theology* by Sara Maitland (231.7 Mai)



Here are new books and videotapes in special collections:

- ☛ *The Window of Childhood: Glimpses of Wonder & Courage* by Dr. Olson Huff (Spec Needs 649 Huf), gift of Ruth McCreath

The following tapes are gifts from Pat Magee. Our collection contains many special Stone Church concerts & lectures.

- ☛ *Evolution and the Emergence of Consciousness* by Dr. Philip Clayton 2005 (Videotape #33)
- ☛ *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality* by J. Philip Newell 2006 (Videotape #34)
- ☛ *The Historic Jesus Then and Now* by John Dominic Crossan 2006 (Videotape #35)

Please come by and see how nicely our library has adapted to the Lincoln House living room.

And look for new books on our book cart in the Social Hall!

- Sue Williams, Library Coordinator

Sunday Adult Study

All Sunday Adult Study Classes meet at 11 am in the Fireside Room.

February 4 - 18: Faith Journeys at Stone Church

Each Sunday, a different member of Stone Church will discuss their personal faith journey, what brought them to Stone; how they have grown at Stone, their hopes, and the spiritual struggles they face today.

February 25: Discussion with Jack Rogers, Henrietta Perdue Lecturer

Dr. Jack Rogers, author of *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*, will preach this morning and be available at the 11 am adult study hour for an open, free-wheeling discussion.

March 4 & 11: The Church and Homosexuality

Prompted by Dr. Jack Rogers' lectures on his book, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*, we will explore past, present and future attitudes of "the church" (the Christian church universal, the Presbyterian Church USA, and Stone Church) toward homosexuality, in general, and gay and lesbian persons, in particular.

March 18: The Second Holy Land: A Pilgrimage Through Turkey

Join Pat and Sally Magee as they present a slide show summary of their 17-day trip through Turkey with New Testament scholars, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.



Nancy's Column

A Note from Our
Choir Director

Now that we have had a few moments to breathe after our busy Advent season with the choir, I am dropping in to say hello. These past several months have been busy in the music area of Stone, and I am glad to be a part of this new growth as the new choir director.

Some of our music program highlights: the addition of a number of new members to the choir, the formation of a new handbell choir under the direction of Jean Raby, the new tradition of a children's pageant led ably by Bill Downes and Della Smith, and many wonderful anthems, as well as the presentation of Henry Mollicone's *A Christmas Celebration* sung enthusiastically by the choir.

In addition, Walter and Debbie Roach have created beautiful risers for the church that give the choir a place to sing in a joined formation. These risers made a wonderful difference for us as we prepared the Advent music, and your positive comments have encouraged us to continue to use them for this season as well.

We are happy to hear from members of the congregation when they enjoy one of our anthems; thanks for telling us. My goal as Choir Director is for the choir to present in worship a wide variety of styles and moods with texts that befit the lessons of the particular Sunday, and to help the choir enrich its sound and its community. I hope the choir continues to be part of the process that makes the worship design meaningful to all of us.

Looking ahead to the upcoming months, we will be presenting anthems in a wide variety of styles and moods, from the classics to contemporary, even a bit of jazz and gospel! For our special music this Palm Sunday, we will be presenting the sublime Faure *Requiem*, one of the masterpieces in the choral literature.

The choir now numbers close to 40 singers. Maybe you would like to join us? If you have been hesitating, this is a great time to jump in. We rehearse from 7:30-9 pm on Wednesday nights, and we invite you to raise your voice with us this winter and spring as a member of the Stone Church Choir.

Nancy Kromm, Choir Director



Happy faces at the Spaghetti Dinner! Over 100 people turned out for this fun- and food-filled evening.

Session Beat

At its January meeting, Session heard good news about the church's financial health and adopted the budget for 2007. Mel Goertz reported that Stone finished the 2006 budget year with \$30,000 income over budget, which enabled the Church & World Board to replace about \$12,000 previously cut from contributions to the Presbytery of San Jose for mission support.

The budget adopted for 2007 projected a total income of \$434,405 and pledge income of \$380,000. All Session members joined in being grateful for the generosity and support of the members and friends of this church.

Deborah Crim reported for the Worship committee on work to rectify problems with the sound system. Session approved the purchase of additional components for the system and expressed deep gratitude to Bob Johnson for the time and skill he contributes to the care and maintenance of the system, and to Bob and Karen for their contribution of equipment. Bob emphasized that anyone working with the system needs training, so training is underway for a cadre of persons.

Parish Nurse Mary Johnson, who received training through the PC (USA) Parish Nurse program, spoke about Health Ministries at Stone, particularly areas where the program might be expanded. Mary currently does regular blood pressure checks and flu shots and is available to any member of the church for consultation. She envisioned adding home visits about safety issues; working with parishioners on medication scheduling and interactions or on health risk assessment; Health Fairs; and Services of Healing. Session voted to establish a health ministries task force as an initial step. - Alice Thorn, Clerk of Session



Welcome to New Member Lea!

Stone Church welcomed new member, Lea Lawrence, on Sunday, January 21.

Lea is a native Californian, but grew up in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. A graduate of the University of Nebraska (go Huskers!), she moved to Portland, Oregon, to teach elementary school. She met her husband, Kent, when he was a pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Portland, and gave up teaching to raise their two daughters, Anne and Edlyn.

In 1975, the family moved to Pasadena where Kent served as pastor at Westminster Presbyterian for 20 years. During that time, Lea served as

deacon and elder at Westminster and as a leader in Presbyterian Women (congregation, presbytery and synod), Church Women United, Pasadena Ecumenical Council, San Gabriel Presbytery and with school and community organizations. From 1986-95, she was office manager for the Mary Magdalene Project, a residential program for former street prostitutes.

Lea and Kent spent 1995-96 in New Zealand serving a country parish before moving to Los Gatos where Kent was interim pastor at Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos.

Along with many of our members, Lea and Kent live at El Sombroso Oaks, a retirement community for PC(USA) pastors and spouses. They have two grandchildren, William (3) and Julia (1), and celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary last June.

Lea has continued her leadership in PW with the Presbytery of San Jose and as Synod of the Pacific Representative to the Churchwide Coordinating Team (2002-5) and chair of the Plenary Planning Team for the PW 2006 Churchwide Gathering. Before September she hopes to read, do jigsaw puzzles, visit family and travel some blue-line highways before responsibilities for the 2008 General Assembly require her attention.

B&F Says "Blessings Have Been Fulfilled"

The Budget and Finance Board is happy to report that Stone Church ended 2006 filled with the blessings of your generosity. Our pledge income was almost exactly on budget, and almost all other income categories were on or ahead of budget. This allowed us to fully fund our mission giving for 2006 and reduce our capital debt by a significant amount.

In addition, as was reported last

month, we have exceeded the one million dollar mark in our capital campaign collections. That, along with a healthy budget for 2007, should go a long way toward maintaining our ministry at Stone Church.

The budget for 2007, as approved by Session, shows a 15% increase in our overall giving commitment. For a copy of the budget, please contact Mel Goertz, Budget and Finance Board Moderator.



Some of our wonderful Seniors at the recent Deacons' Senior Tea: clockwise from top left: Bob and Hazel James, Jeanette Clemenco, Mary Margaret Teel, Bill and Connie Gum, Ed Clemenco.



News from PW

Happy Valentine Day, Lincoln's Birthday, and Washington's Birthday - what a busy and notable month in the midst of dreary winter.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Valentine Tea, February 17, from 1 - 3 pm, in the Social Hall. Miriam Rowan will graciously provide the program.

We continue to save soup labels and are adding General Mills cereal box tops: both are used to provide funds for schools. You can leave them in the PW box in the office. Marilyn Gardner is the faithful person in charge.

Here is PW's February Calendar:

Amethyst Circle meets 1 pm, Wed., Feb. 7, Church Library.

Emerald Circle meets 9:30 am, Thurs., Feb. 1, Ruth White's home.

Sapphire Circle meets 7:30 pm, Mon., Feb. 12, Sally Magee's home.

Focus Group meets 9:30 am, Tues., Feb. 6, Elizabeth Shandera's home.

Book Group I meets at a time to be announced at Elizabeth Shandera's

home (reading *Warriors Don't Cry* by M. P. Beals). Contact Carolyn Clendenning for information.

Book Group II meets 2:30 pm, Mon., Feb. 19, Rhonda Lakatos' home (reading *Seneca Falls Inheritance* by Miriam Grace Mondredo).

Lunch Bunch meets 11:30 am, Tues., Feb. 13, Taiwan Restaurant.

Prayer Shawl Group I meets 4 pm, Thurs., Feb. 22, Fireside Room.

Prayer Shawl Group II meets 6:30 pm, Tues., Feb. 27, Fireside Room.

Bible Study with the Rev. Marge Palmer meets 9:30 am, Thurs., Feb. 22, Church Library.

- Catherine Amos

Church & World Board Looks at Foster Care, Water, CROP Walk

Needs are Met Before We Ask!

At the January C&W meeting, we discussed the predicament of young adults in our community who at age 18 are suddenly "released from the system" of foster care and in need of transitional housing. We also discussed how Stone Church might be a support. The very next day, at another meeting, Elizabeth Shandera mentioned that she has welcomed such a young person into her home.

Elizabeth was introduced to Rozina Abriha, a 19-year-old from Ethiopia, through Julie Jackson, a case manager for the Transitional Housing Program at InnVision. At 14 years of age, Rozina came to the USA with her mother and stepfather; at 16 she became a foster child; and at 18 she was released from her foster home. Rozina currently attends Mission College and is preparing for a career in nursing.

We should all give a heartfelt "Thank You" to Elizabeth for her big, open heart in welcoming Rozina.

If you would also like to help, you can contact Julie Jackson at InnVision.

Budget Review Brings Good News

C&W is thankful that the \$12,000 cut from our budget to General Assembly was made up in December. So our total to GA was \$24,000. In addition, our giving to *One Great*

Hour of Sharing, Peacemaking, Pentecost, and Christmas Joy offerings came to more than \$13,000. Thank you, our church family, for your generosity.



Rainbow & Family Flags Are Here

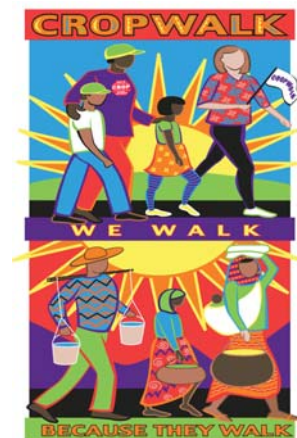
We have received new Rainbow and Family flags to replace the flags "removed" from the outside wall of the Education Wing facing Lincoln Ave. They will be re-hung in a way that will be more difficult to remove.



Eco-Faithfulness: World Water

We tend to take clean water for granted, but a billion people around the world lack access to it, and each day over 10,000 people, most of them children, die of waterborne disease. Stop by the C&W table February 11 during coffee hour to learn about the issue and what we can do to improve the water situation in God's world

for all of God's people. You'll be able to see a \$12 water pasteurization system that works in areas of the world that don't have electricity or firewood, take a pledge to raise your appreciation of water, and contribute to sharing this limited resource in a better way.



Leader Needed for CROP Walk

Sunday, April 29, marks the 30th anniversary of the South Bay CROP Hunger Walk. Last year \$50,000 was raised with over 380 walkers. Stone Church was 4th in the group of 12 churches who raised the most money and 6th in the top 12 in numbers of walkers participating.

A leader is needed for this very, very worthwhile event; please contact Bea to help.

- Bea Groppuso & Rhonda Lakatos

Annual Women's Retreat Features Program on Sacred Art of Listening

With the holidays behind us and the renewed activity of spring still distant, we have entered into a quiet time, a time to slow down and listen to our families, ourselves and God. But do we really know how to listen? In this world that celebrates busyness, it is easy to lose the knack of listening. Our annual Women's Retreat, set for March 23 - 25 at the St. Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista, will focus on the sacred art of listening. The retreat will provide opportunities for spiritual rejuvenation, the renewal of old friendships and perhaps the creation of new connections with other Stone Church women.

As in previous years, a balance of time will be given for reflection, conversation and play. And just when all

the listening might make us want to sing and shout, our talent show will provide the perfect opportunity!

The weekend will begin with social time and dinner on Friday. Saturday will include free time, time for crafts and the talent show. We will conclude Sunday after breakfast and a time for worship in the beautiful chapel.

The cost of the retreat is \$195 and includes two nights' accommodations and five meals. Spaces are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, so please register as soon as possible.

Sign-up during coffee hour on February 18 and 25, or contact registrar Jan Keifer. Contact Colleen Blackburn or Lynn Stutz with any other questions. We hope to see you there!

Couples Retreat/Heart-to-Heart Extravaganza

Two very special events for couples and families are planned for Saturday, February 10.

From 9 am to noon, a *Couples Retreat* will be led by Marriage and Family Therapist, Mary Alice Collins.

Then, from 6 to 9 pm, the Deacons will host the *Heart-to-Heart Extravaganza*. At this new family event, a romantic dinner for couples is served in the Social Hall, while a separate dinner and activities for children take place in the nearby Fireside Room.

The Extravaganza is \$40 for the whole family. If you are also attending the morning retreat, the cost for both is \$55. If you attend only the retreat, the cost is \$20 per couple.

For more information, contact Anne Storer.

Men's Book Group Picks Spring Reads

The Men's Book Group has chosen four books to read this spring:

- *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality* by Jack Rogers is the February selection, in preparation for the Henrietta Perdue Lectures;
- *Skinny Dip*, a lighthearted mystery by Carl Hiaasen, will be read for March;
- *The Cruellest Miles* by Gay and Laney Salisbury is the story of the Alaskan epidemic that led to the Iditarod Race, and is the April selection;
- *State of Denial* by Bob Woodward will complete this series in May.

The group meets on the third Monday of each month. Bill Ribble will be the host on February 19. Other hosts will be announced in the Sunday bulletin and in the church's weekly update. All men of the congregation are cordially invited to join!



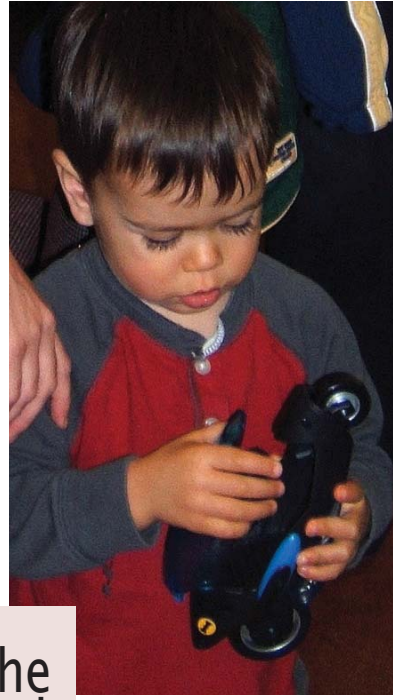
Handbell Choir Begins Practice!

Rehearsals have started for our adult handbell choir (pictured above: Kerry House-Nelson, Fred and Lizanne Oliver, Janice Goertz, Sheryl Turner, Bill Downes, Katherine Webb Calhoun). We rehearse on Thursdays from 7 to 8:30 pm in room 6 (downstairs). High school and middle school youth who read music are also welcome. Contact Jean Raby if you are interested in joining.

Men's Winemaking Group to Start Again

Another note for the men of the congregation: if any of you are interested in making wine this spring, contact Bill Ribble as soon as possible.





We had fun at the Spaghetti Dinner!



Crab Feed



Don't forget the "All-You-Can-Eat" Crab Feed, a fundraiser for the Men's Mission Workgroup, in the Social Hall on Saturday, February 3, from 6 until 8 pm.



One of our lovely families at the Spaghetti Dinner!

Fat Tuesday Gala



It's time again to enjoy an evening of luscious desserts and the unique talents of our fellow church members!

On Fat Tuesday, this year February 20, Derk Johnson will again be *Master Of Merriment* at our annual Fat Tuesday Gala of Desserts and Talents!

Plan to arrive around 6 pm ~ your only *fee* is a delicious dessert to share. Entertainment will start around 6:30 and end about 8:30, with children going first, since it's a school night.

Contact Derk Johnson if you have a talent to share.

Bart Ehrman to Lecture on Christian Origins

The End That Never Came and the Christianities That Were Lost

Dr. Bart Ehrman, Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will present a free lecture at 4:30 pm, Sunday, March 4, at the First Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Avenue.

This is the fifth annual lecture on Christian Origins organized by the United Disciples Fellowship in partnership with the First Congregational Church.

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