

THE STONE NEWS

STONE CHURCH OF WILLOW GLEN, PRESBYTERIAN USA

MARCH 2010



Photos from Ken Henry's recent Study Leave at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Top left: the welcome sign. Bottom left: An overhead carving as you enter the Chapel. Above: The Chapel. Right: Ken in front of Stitt Library.

LEARNING TO PRAY IN PUBLIC: A MEDITATION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

by Ken Henry

You're about to dig into a beautiful dinner – the table is set, and everyone's waiting for someone to pick up a fork and say, "It all looks good, let's eat!" – when it dawns on you, a church-going person, that someone ought to say a blessing first. So you ask:

"Shouldn't we pray? Who would like to pray?"

An awkward silence follows your request. Everyone suddenly begins staring intently at their plates or at the table decoration. It's a reflex we all learned in elementary school. When a teacher asked a question we couldn't or didn't want to answer, we looked at our desk, kept our head down, and hoped the teacher would call on someone else.

By asking for prayer, it's as if you've posed a dangerously personal and probing question, like asking people to tell you how much money they make or to jump off a cliff – but it's only a prayer, and like a flu shot, it will be over in a moment and won't hurt that much.

But now that you've asked such a question, it's as if you've laid an egg right in the middle of the table, and now everyone is waiting – waiting for someone brave enough to pray.

In this scenario, prayer may feel more like an obligation than a gift from God – more like something Martha Stewart says about table etiquette than something Jesus asks us to do. The problem is we're not quite sure how to pray, so when we're asked to give a public invocation at the start of a meeting or at dinner time, we balk. We hesitate. But then, if we really wanted to cause a scene, we could cite Matthew 6:1 in defense of not praying, for it is in this passage that Jesus clearly warns:

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Adding to our rhetorical arsenal of justifications for not praying aloud, Jesus continues in verses 5 and 6:

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners [and at the dinner table with hungry guests all around], so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your

Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

I've given plenty of justification for not praying in public, but I'm fairly sure this was not Jesus' point. The essential question seems to be: do we pray at all?

Indeed, in the secret place of our hearts, when no one is looking, do we talk with God? After a day of work and family obligations – driving home in the cloister of our car, or anticipating the front door opening to a tired spouse or kids bounding in from school – do we find ourselves praying? Do we shut our eyes? Do we fold our hands? Do we say, "Lord, it's been a while, but I figure it's time you and I had a talk?" All this said: do we pray?

When our head hits the pillow at night ... on a lonely walk through the neighborhood ... whenever we find ourselves alone – do we reach out to God in prayer?

If this is something we regularly do, in such a secret place as the heart, we already realize that the act of praying, either publicly or privately, is never showy or self-indulgent. Rather, all prayer is about drawing attention, not to us, but to the God who walks with us – even through the valley of the shadow of death – and loves us. (cont. on page 4)



ODE TO FRED

On a recent Sunday, the Church School children honored our wonderful Dumpster Diver, Fred Groppuso, with this poem.

Fred is our hero, he is the king,
 He does his work without asking for a thing.
 He has taught us about recycle, reduce and reuse,
 He's so wonderful he should be on the news.

He turns all that recyclable
 Into something that is remarkable,
 Quarters for our tower,
 That bring so many others power,
 To support the Heifer project - purchase a cow.
 Over the years he has raised over \$1,400 - WOW!

His environmental attitude he will never loose,
 A better *Dumpster Diver* we could not choose!
 But wait - there is more to this man,
 He does God's work whenever he can.

He collects food for the hungry and the poor,
 He always asks if he could do more.
 Hooray for Fred, our Dumpster Diver extraordinaire!
 We hope you now know how much we care.

CONNECT WITH OUR KIDS

by Mary Jo Blazek,
 Children's Ministry Coordinator

Stone has openings for teachers in our wonderful Church School!

Each commitment lasts six weeks, and I will provide curriculum and

prep work. Don't worry if you can't make all the dates - we can fill in for you. Come join us!

Church School starts after the choir's anthem and ends at 10:55, just in time for Adult Education.

Feb. 21 - March 28: Here's your chance to learn about the Beatitudes!

April 11 - May 16: Learn about

prayer and thanksgiving.

May 23 - June 12: Start with Pentecost and end with Proverbs.

June 21 - June 25: Come and help with Vacation Church School!

There is no Church School on April 4, Easter Sunday.

If you would like to help, please contact Mary Jo Blazek at the Church Office.

ADULT ED CLASSES LOOK AT “THE WAY TO GOD,” ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PROPHETS, AND THE PROMISED LAND

Stone Church provides stimulating and varied Adult Education classes every Sunday morning at 11:15 am in the Fireside Room. Everyone is welcome!

March 7: Is Jesus the Only Way to God? Leaders: Ken Henry, Parish Associates

Ken and Stone’s Parish Associates will attempt to help us understand



Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” (John 10:6)

We will explore the exclusive tone of Jesus’ pronouncement, while also discussing if an all-powerful and loving God would ever judge other expressions of faith as inadequate and misguided.

March 14: San José Economic Development Leader: Kim Walesh

Kim Walesh, Chief Strategist for the City of San José, will provide an overview of the structure and performance of the San José/Silicon Valley economy, key forces of change affecting the region’s future, and the City of San José’s Economic Strategy.



Conversation will explore how we as Christians might frame and address key work, financial, and quality-of-life issues facing residents.

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March 21, 28: Social Justice and the Prophets [Amos] Leader: Pat Magee

This is the first of a series of short classes on the Old Testament prophets and their call for social justice.

In the 7th century BC, Amos denounced Israel, as well as its neighbors, for reliance upon military might, grave injustice in social dealings, abhorrent immorality, and shallow, meaningless piety.

April 11, 18, 25: The Bible and the “Too Much” Promised Land Leader: Bill Lytle

Everyone hopes to see a just and peaceful solution to the Israeli/Palestinian problem. How scripture is interpreted and understood has played a determining role in that problem.

In this three-week study, we will follow the development of Christian thought and action regarding the Promised Land, how this related to Jewish concerns for the region, and where things stand today.

There is no Adult Education class on April 4, Easter Sunday. - Pat Magee

A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY: WORKING IN OUR OUTSTANDING CHURCH LIBRARY

Help wanted! The library would like one or two more volunteers to join our happy group on the first and third Tuesday mornings. The work is clerical: writing, cutting, taping, gluing, shelving, etc. The pay is in appreciation and friendship. You can try it with no obligation. - Sue Williams, Library Coordinator

In our special sections:



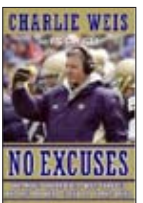
The Rising of Bread for the World by Arthur Simon (Soc Iss-Hunger 261.8 Sim)

100 Ways to Save the World by Johan Tell (Ecol 363.7

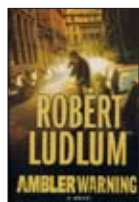


Tel), given by Stone Works

No Excuses: One Man’s Incredible Rise through the NFL by Charlie Weis (Biog WEIS), given by Jay and Sue Evans

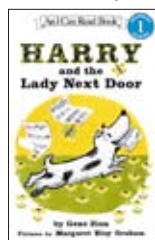


The Ambler Warning by Robert Ludlum (F Lud)



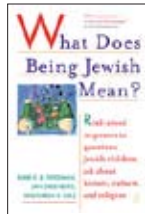
Senior Services Directory 2009/10 by Council on Aging Silicon Valley (Spec Needs-A 362 Cou)

For our younger members:



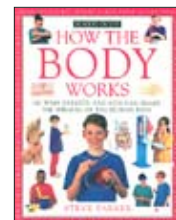
Harry and the Lady Next Door by Gene Zion (1st Bks Zio)

What Does Being Jewish Mean? by E. B. Freedman et al



(YA 296 Fre)

How the Body Works by Steve Parker, Reader’s Digest (YA 612 Par)



Busy Construction Site by Gaby Goldsack, lift-the-flap (J 690 Gol)



Wee Sing for Christmas; Wee Sing Children’s Songs & Fingerplays; Wee Sing Sing-Alongs; Wee Sing Games, Games, all by Pamela Beall and Susan Nipp (J 780 Bea)

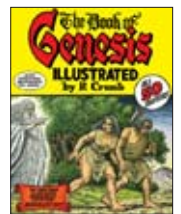


New on our adult side:

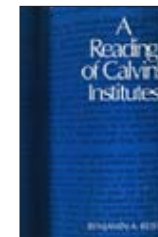


Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin by Ashley Montagu (152.1 Mon)

The Book of Genesis Illustrated by R. Crumb (222 Cru)



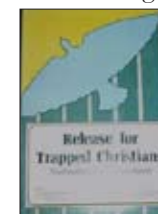
A Reading of Calvin’s Institutes by Benjamin Reist (230 Cal), given by Rebecca Kuiken



Who is Jesus? Answers To Your Questions About the Historical Jesus by John Dominic Crossan and Richard Watts (232.9

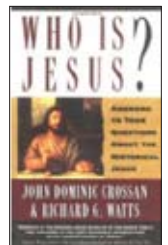


Cro), given by Pat Magee



Coping with America by Peter Trudgill (917.3 Tru)

Release for Trapped Christians: To New Freedom through Prayer by Flora Slosson Wuellner (248.4 Wue), given by Betty Moran



STONE WORKS PROVIDES MISSION OPPORTUNITIES LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

The Stone Works Committee continues to make us mindful of the needs of others, here and throughout the world.



One Great Hour of Sharing

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." - John 21:17b

In the PCUSA's annual *One Great Hour of Sharing*, a tradition initiated in the USA as an ecumenical effort after World War II, we celebrate the Christian spirit of prayerfully caring for and sharing God's blessings with those in need here at home and abroad.

The funds are spent almost equally on three programs: the Presbyterian Hunger Program, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), and the Self-Development of People. All of these ministries converged in Haiti after the recent earthquake.



A makeshift trauma center established by "Hope for Haiti" provides care for the thousands of earthquake victims in Port au Prince.

PDA almost immediately sent \$100,000 from *One Great Hour of Sharing* funds to support the initial crisis response. [More than \$2.8 million has currently been donated to the organization's Haiti account.] PDA has committed an additional \$1 million to Haiti, also through OGHs. With its partnerships with ACT International and Church World Service, PDA is also helping to distribute baby kits and hygiene kits.



One of thousands of collapsed buildings in Port au Prince testifies to the devastation caused by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.

Members of Stone Church have also responded with typical generosity to the devastation by spontaneously contributing locally and nationally. [At press time, we had donated \$3,915.]

The rescue and recovery stage is complete, but financial support for the hard work ahead is still needed to remedy the chronic problems of poverty, underdevelopment, political upheaval, health crises, severe environmental degradation, and an annual barrage of hurricanes. Self-sufficiency is the goal.

The need is dire elsewhere, as well. We're still helping post-tsunami victims in India, displaced persons in Somalia, war victims in Iraq, as well as tornado, hurricane, and fire damage right here in the US. And there are over one hundred other worthwhile, necessary projects.

This year's theme, *Feed My Sheep*, is a simple call that we instinctively understand means to advocate and care for those unable to do so themselves.

On Palm Sunday, March 28, Stone Church will collect the offering for *One Great Hour of Sharing*. Even though we are coping with hard times ourselves, we must prayerfully help those in even worse circumstances than our own. Let us give generously!

Photos by Tiffany Kuehner, Hope for Haiti (courtesy of Rob Maggs, PCUSA Board of Pensions)

Furniture Bank Comes to San José

To everyone who offered furniture that was not needed for the Muiruri family's apartment, there is a wonderful use for some, if not all, of your items.

The *National Furniture Bank* has opened a branch in San José. This organization's mission is to receive furniture in good condition through donations from individuals, hotels and stores and to give it to poor people at no or nominal cost.

To shop at the bank, clients must be referred by case managers of social service agencies. The Muiruris, with their Catholic Charities case manager, may use the bank when the rest of the family arrives and they move to a larger apartment.

The bank needs donations and can pick up useful items in good condition - sofas, chairs, coffee tables, book cases, dining room tables and chairs, beds, lamps.

The bank also needs volunteers on Saturday mornings to help distribute furniture and to pick up donated items.

If you have donations or want to help, contact Kevin Polk.

They work only on weekends, so be patient for a response.

If you have questions, please contact Maureen Ryan.

THE GENEROSITY OF STONE CHURCH

Fred Groppuso and Maureen Ryan made this report on the generosity of our congregation in February:

- ◆ **"Communion Sunday" Food Donations:** 121.5 pounds
- ◆ **Money from Recycling for Heifer:** \$37.50
- ◆ **Clothing Donations:** 14 bags clothes, 9 bag toiletries/misc.
- ◆ **Haiti Relief Donations direct to Stone [at press time]:** \$3,915

KEN HENRY'S COLUMN: ASH WEDNESDAY MEDITATION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

So, when we are asked to pray in public - to give an invocation at a graduation - to offer a blessing at a meal - someone might have assumed we were good at it - that we were a good public speaker. However, in truth, prayer is a very *selfless* act. One cannot get a gold or silver or bronze medal in prayer.

The theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, suggested years ago that prayer is a kind of *forgetfulness*, and I think he's right. In other words, for Bonhoeffer, prayer is an act in which we *forget* our own self interests and offer whatever we're about to do to God. Thus, prayer is the discipline of intentionally *forgetting* the importance we place on all of our plans and schemes. After all, God may have something else in mind for us.

And so, as we embark on the season of Lent, a season often thought of in terms of what one gives up, we begin by giving up the idea that prayer is reserved for professionals ... we give up the idea that prayer is only for those spiritually and uniquely gifted at it ... we give up the idea that prayer relies on the ability to be loquacious and longwinded ... instead, we humbly turn to Jesus Christ, who taught his disciples to pray: *Our Father, who art in heaven ...*

'Tis March already, so we begin to look for daffodils, trees starting to bud, and other heralds of spring. Our climate is so wonderful!

Some people give up indulgences for Lent, others do additional good works, but however you observe the season, make it a time for reflection and meditation.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

This month is shaping up to be a busy one: in addition to our regularly scheduled activities, *PW in the Presbytery* has a luncheon meeting at noon, on March 13, at Santa Teresa Hills Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Dr. Jim Bennett from Santa Clara University as speaker (a Presbyterian at a Jesuit institution?).



On March 14, we celebrate *Gifts of Women Sunday*, when the Rev. Julie Kim will lead Worship.

Have you ever wondered if *PW* makes a profit on their *Fair Trade*

Sales, since this type of product usually costs more at local stores? Yes, there is a small markup, which is used to support the mission of PCUSA.

Wherever you shop, look for the *Fair Trade* symbol.

In our ongoing coupon ministry, we are targeting Kimberly-Clark products this month, for example Kleenex.

Don't forget about the S.M.A.R.T. cards that provide 1½% of your total bill to our sponsored schools. Dorothy Stevens has more information.

Since 2001, we have supported the fight against malaria in Africa through *PW's Mother's Day cards*. The program has expanded and is now called *Healthy Women Healthy Families Mother's Day Project*. We shall have cards available beginning Sunday, April 18.

For more information, contact Gail Bingham of the PCUSA.

Mark your calendars for the *PW in the Presbytery's Spiritual Nurture Retreat* on May 1 at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Aptos. There will be more information about this event next month.

PW Schedule for March:

Amethyst Circle, 1 pm, March 3, Church Library

Emerald Circle, 9:30 am, March 4, Joyce Degan's home

Sapphire Circle, 7:30 pm, March 8, Claudia Hamm's home

Lunch Bunch, 11:30 am, March 9, Taiwan Restaurant

Coordinating Team, 9:30 am, March 11, Social Hall

PW in the Presbytery, noon, March 13, Santa Teresa Hills (includes lunch)

Gifts of Women Sunday, March 14, Rev. Julie Kim preaching

Book Group II, 2:30 pm, March 15, Charlotte Dickson's home, reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Focus Group, 9:30 am, March 16, Liz Shandera's home

Fair Trade Sales, 10:30 am, March 21, Social Hall

Book Group I, 1 pm, March 22, Liz Shandera's home, reading *Gardens of Water* by Alan Drew

Bible Study, 9:30 am, March 25, Church Library with Rev. Marge Palmer

Prayer Shawl Ministry, 4pm, March 25, Fireside Room - Catherine Amos

The Men's Ministry of Stone Church includes a mission work team, a book group, and a flying group.

MEN'S MINISTRY

For more information about any of these groups, contact Parish Associate David McCreath.

Men's Mission Team Plans Worktrip to Westminster Woods

The Men's Mission Team is planning a worktrip to Westminster Woods from March 19 to 21.

At this time of year, the group will probably be doing work to prepare for the camp's summer season and/or doing repair work from this very rainy winter.

For more information, or to sign up, contact Leland Wong.



Semi-annual Men's Group Book Sale, Sunday, April 25

Join us after worship on Sunday, April 25, for the Men's Group Book Sale, benefiting various youth and adult mission projects.

You will find many treasures, including best sellers and classics, as well as some very esoteric selections.

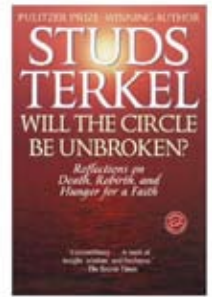
The books sell for just \$1 for paperbacks and \$2 for hardcovers.

Your donations for the sale are greatly appreciated - look for a large box marked *Men's Book Sale* in the Social Hall in March.

Men's Book Group - March Meeting and Book Selection

The Men's Book Group meets Monday, March 15, at 7:30, to discuss their March selection, *Will The Circle Be Unbroken? Reflections on Death, Rebirth, and Hunger for a Faith* by Studs Terkel. One review begins with these words:

"Mustering more spunk and battery juice than his overworked tape recorder, 88-year-old Studs Terkel cranks out another eclectic treasury of oral histories in *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?*"



This time, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Good War* takes on death, a universal experience that solicits plenty of speculation, caution, and emotion from his 60-plus interviewees. Regular folks - ranging from the deeply religious to the deeply atheistic - share their life stories and their hopes or suspicions about the afterlife."

The host for the evening is Rod Thorn.

All men of the church are invited.

- Leland Wong, David McCreath and Bill Ribble

MUSIC AND MEDITATION: LENTEN TAIZÉ SERVICES

*I have calmed and quieted my soul ...
hope in the Lord from this time on and
forevermore.* - Psalm 131

Would you like to hear God? Try out the Stone Church Taizé Services this Lenten season.

People come seeking different things: for the quiet space to pray, to hear beautiful chants (to which you are welcome to sing along), for a time of refuge. Others say it fills your soul and allows your inner life to blossom.

For me, the repetitive meditative singing calms my mind and is a wonderful expression of community prayer.

Whatever your reason, come see what God has to say to you!

Just as you might *map quest* a new location to which you are traveling, you might prepare yourself for a Taizé service by exploring these websites:



Silence means leaving to God what is beyond my reach and capacity. A moment of silence, even very short, is like a holy stop, a sabbatical rest, a truce of worries.

- from the Taizé website

◆ To see how this form of worship connects us with other parts of

the world and to even learn Taizé songs, visit the Taizé website:

www.taize.fr/en

Be sure to explore the MP3 & podcasts tab for beautiful chants.

◆ To see what Taizé looks like at Stone, visit the Stone Church website for pictures and a video www.stonechurch.org/taize/index.php

◆ From this website, you can also join our Taizé yahoo group to get an email reminder a day ahead of the service, or just go to: groups.yahoo.com/group/stonechurchtaize/join

Taizé Services are held every Tuesday during Lent (March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30), and the Tuesday after Easter (April 6), from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

- Heather Henry

WALTER HUDSON LEADS STUDY ON "SAVING JESUS FROM THE CHURCH"



The ten-week Sunday evening study, based on Robin Meyers' book, *Saving Jesus from the Church*, with Walter Hudson as leader, continues through April 18.

While subtitled *How to Stop Worshiping Christ and Start Following Jesus*, the study book is not a "how-to book."

Instead, Meyers surveys the state of the church and contemporary Christianity – conservative and liberal – and doesn't think much of it is in sync with the message of Jesus.

His bottom line analysis: the church has overemphasized belief, creeds, and worship, rather than the action, contemplation, and justice that would indicate you are following Jesus.

Meyers designs each chapter using the classical *two-way* construction (sample titles: *Jesus the Teacher, Not the Savior;*

The Cross as Futility, Not Forgiveness) and argues with a passion and persuasiveness that is engaging and troubling.

Meyers is clearly building on the insights of Borg, Crossan, Fox, and other progressives, as he prophetically and pastorally weaves a reorientation of being Christian and being Church.

The class meets in the Fireside Room from 7 to 8:30 pm.

Study books are available after Worship on Sunday mornings for \$20.

- Pat Magee

SESSION WELCOMES NEW MEMBER, GIVES THANKS FOR PARISH ASSOCIATES

At its regular meeting on Feb. 16, Session welcomed into membership Joy Cox, who has been worshipping at Stone and singing in the choir.

Clerk of Session Alice Thorn reported on the *Annual Statistics Report* sent to the PCUSA. Stone's membership declined from the end of 2008 to the end of 2009 – from 351 to 336. The Clerk mentioned having difficulty answering this particular question: How many members live away from home while attending college? Session noted this as a concern about members of that age group.

In his Pastor's Report, Ken Henry followed up with discussion about youth ministry, asking what forms it

might take in the future. He also gave Session members written information about the current Middle School and High School youth programs.

Session renewed agreements with Stone's three Parish Associates – Marge Palmer, David McCreath and Dale Bracey – and expressed profound gratitude for the work of each one.

Session created a new subcommittee of the Stewardship Committee, for promotion and education for Planned Giving and Endowments.

Fifteen people have offered to help with loans for refinancing the Lincoln House mortgage. The Budget and Finance Committee may have to draw straws to choose participants.

Guy Lohman reported for the Stewardship Committee that the church has received \$451,881 in pledges.

Jonathan Miller reported for the Christian Education Committee a concern about the need for more Church School volunteers. CE is also forming a new Adult Education subcommittee, looking for a broader base of class topics and more input into choices. Pat Magee was thanked for the energy he has put into Adult Ed over the years.

The Fellowship & Renewal Committee announced that Family Camp will be held this year at Big Basin, the weekend of Aug. 13-15. Brian Sailor has graciously offered to organize the event.

- Alice Thorn, Clerk of Session

We Extend a Loving and Warm Welcome to these Newest Members of Stone Church!



Joy
Cox

My husband and I moved to San José two years ago for his job (as a CAD engineer).

I grew up in Michigan and Wisconsin,

but my husband and I have lived in California since 1975, when he first got out of college.

We have two grown children: Emily, who is a computer engineer in Minneapolis, and Ben, who is in medical school at NYU, in New York City.

I worked as a computer programmer for 25 years, but I am now retired. I fill

my days with volunteer work and caring for our two small dogs.

I volunteer about 10 hours a week for the American Cancer Society, driving patients to their medical appointments. I do some volunteer database work for Planned Parenthood.

I participate in two crochet groups at senior centers (Camden and Milpitas), where we crochet chemo hats, lap blankets for veterans, baby blankets, etc. I also sew fabric bags that clip onto walkers or wheelchairs.

I have taken the AARP/IRS classes for being a volunteer tax counselor, so now, during tax season, I volunteer 10 hours a week at the Milpitas senior center helping

low-income elderly people file tax forms.

For fun, I play violin (not very well) in the orchestra at the Mountain View senior center. I play piano fairly well. I enjoy playing word games like Scrabble and Upwords.

I learned about Stone Church about six months ago, and I immediately joined the choir and the handbell choir. Music is a source of great pleasure and satisfaction for me. I have been to Presbyterian Women's Tuesday Lunch Bunch a few times and to a couple of PW luncheons.

I look forward to being a part of the Stone Church community for the rest of my life. Thank you for welcoming me to your church.



Glen
and
Norah
Casner

Glen and Norah Casner are new not only to Stone Church, but also to Northern California.

After not only being born in - but also living in - Southern California, they moved to Santa Clara on Oct. 1 of last year.

Two of their four children live in Sunnyvale, and four of their five grandchildren also live in the area.

Glen and Norah transferred their

membership from Crestline Presbyterian Church in Crestline, California, located in the mountains above San Bernardino. They are finding it much easier not to shovel snow, as they have for the past 44 years.

Getting used to living in the city is more of a challenge, however - particularly driving in heavy traffic.

"Thanks to the children giving us a GPS, we are not getting lost so often," Norah mentioned.

The Casners will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary this June. They are planning a driving trip in April to visit their daughter, in Richmond, Virginia, and son, in Neenah, Wisconsin, as well as family and friends in between.

Traveling has long been a pleasure for the Casners, who have had the opportu-

nity to visit a number of the families of the high school age students from other countries who have lived with them.

"At last count, we have had about 37 students, for varying lengths of time, from a few weeks to a year. We now have children who call us their American grandparents, in several countries," Norah noted.

After visiting several area Presbyterian churches, the Casners came to Stone and soon felt they had found their church home.

"People are so friendly, and so helpful, and we are eager to become a part of the church community."

Glen has joined the choir, and Norah the Amethyst Circle.

They both look forward to joining in other church activities, as well.



Michelle
Vasquez

I was born in Monterey and raised in Salinas, when Salinas still resembled Steinbeck country - a countryside of beautiful green fields running up against beautiful hills.

Growing up, I attended Northminster Presbyterian Church, where my brothers and I were involved with choirs and after-school programs. My favorite activity at that time was participating in handbell choir!

After I got married, my husband and I moved around quite a bit. I became very involved with Solana Beach Pres. Church in Southern California and Genesis Presbyterian Church in Colorado. I was honored to become an Elder for youth and children's ministries at Genesis.

On moving back to San José, my life went through a whirlwind of change.

Unfortunately, my husband made some choices that led to our divorce. However, once I got through the heart-wrenching process of separation and divorce, it was very good for my life.

I have now been in a relationship for almost three years with an incredible man, Brandon Walters, who loves and supports me. He was baptized in the Presbyterian church, grew up in Boulder Creek, and graduated from Bellarmine

and Stanford.

We live in Willow Glen with our two "babies" - two cockapoos named Pig-Tails and Sugar.

Regarding my career, I have over 15 years of experience in the field of early childhood education. I've also been a retail manager, managed a gym, and worked as a personal trainer and yoga instructor. I am currently in transition and thinking about pursuing my dream of being a full-time student and graduating from college.

I look forward to becoming more involved in Stone Church and seeing where I might find ways to contribute to the lives of others.

I also am excited about establishing new friendships with all of the people I will be meeting at the church.

KATE & ROSALEEN ATTEND APCE CONFERENCE

Stone Church is fortunate to have in its congregation several members of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE), a highly productive group.



Two members, Kate Wheatley (left) and Rosaleen Zisch (below), recently attended the annual APCE conference in Nashville. A highlight of the event was a concert by Amy Grant, whose music left a memorable message about love and family.



Rosaleen, as the San José Presbytery representative for POINT (*Presbyterians Organized in Nurture and Teaching*), saw samples of new publications by the PCUSA. You can also view these online at: www.pcusa.org/webelieve/faithquestions

Meeting authors is another fun feature of the conference.

Author Rebecca Barnes-Davies signed her new book, *50 Ways to Help Save the Earth: How You and Your Church Can Make a Difference*.

And yes, it does sound like something that Stone Church could have written!

- Rosaleen Zisch

HIGH SCHOOL GROUP LOOKS AT JOBS & MORE

The High School Youth Group has the following activities planned for the spring and summer.

March 7, 14: Preparing for Job Interviews

- ◆ Physical and mental preparation
- ◆ Practice interviews
- ◆ How to develop answers from a single question
- ◆ Resumes
- ◆ Answering the final question: Do you have anything to add?
- ◆ Review

May 2, 9, 16: "Baking Cookies" Fundraiser for Youth Mission Trip

June 6 - 11: Youth Mission Work Trip to Zephyr Point Conference Center, Lake Tahoe [See the article below for more details on the trip.]

August 27 - 29: Camping Trip to Sunset Beach

Contact Lawrence Summers to find out more about this fun-filled and hard-working group.

CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS TO MISSION!

Imagine that it's early June, and you are out of school or longingly thinking about vacation plans. Don't just hang around wondering what to do with yourself!



Pack up your gear - a shovel, work gloves, and swim suit - and join us for the Youth Mission Work Trip to Zephyr Point Conference Center, at Lake Tahoe, the week of June 1 - 6.

Yes, that's right! We are going to Lake Tahoe this year (hooray!) to help with construction needs at the center. In today's economy, what better service opportunity could you find than to join a team from Stone Church doing what we do best

- working together to help others?

You will have a special opportunity to be an agent of change, while having a great time cooking meals and living in community together. All we need is for you to have a willing heart and the desire to make a difference by being in service to others. Muscles are welcome, as well as friends from outside our own church!

Kate Wheatley, Lawrence Summers, and Art Holtz are the work trip leaders this year. Join us for a fun-filled week of work, hanging out with friends, and developing new relationships.

See you in June for an experience that is sure to change your life. And don't forget your work gloves!

For questions and comments, contact Kate Wheatley. Blessings and blisters be with you!

HEALTH MINISTRY NEWS

Health Education Programs

Your Health Ministry Committee has been working with the Adult Ed team to schedule programs as a regular part of Sunday morning adult study. These programs begin on May 30 and June 6 (specific topics will be finalized soon). We would like suggestions from the congregation for future programs - please contact Mary Johnson, Alice Bailey, or Carrie Giorgianni. Some of the topics we are exploring are weight loss, nutrition, diabetes, heart disease, depression, raising stress-free kids, and making family time in a busy world.

Spring Red Cross Blood Drive

The committee is also planning to hold another Red Cross Blood Drive in the spring. The drive we held in October was very successful, and many of you said you appreciated the convenience of giving blood at the church. Watch for more details.

Reverse 911 Notification

Register for Santa Clara County's reverse 911 notification system, AlertSCC, which sends text/voice messages to home phones, cell phones, computers, and TTY/TDD devices to give information and instructions in emergency situations, such as:

- ◆ Wildfire evacuations
- ◆ Shelter and transportation information following a major disaster
- ◆ Public safety incidents affecting your neighborhood

Sign up online at www.alertscc.com

- Carrie Giorgianni & Virginia Holtz

SPRING FLING

Stone Church Deacons are planning a *Spring Fling*, 2 - 4 pm, April 18, in the Social Hall. *Portraits of the Past*, a group from History San José, will model vintage fashions. Transportation will be provided. - Claire Ribble

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