Pastor's Perspective - October 2017

*Genesis 14:19-20 Abraham and King/Priest Melchizedek*

It is very early in the stories of God’s people that the tithe appears. In this text, it comes with a blessing from a Canaanite King and Priest – Malki-Tzedek (Melchizedek). It comes with the recognition that God’s hand has restored Abram’s family and property in the midst of warfare. God has blessed Abraham with deliverance. Abraham now expresses his thanks to God, Most High (El Elyon) with a gift of one-tenth of what he as returned with from war, to the King/Priest. Later, in the book of Leviticus, this practice becomes the law of God.

Yes, the “T” word as many of my colleagues like to call it. It is a euphemism because they fear the open use of the word and the practice in their congregational leadership. Few church members want to be told what to give. They would be so offended that they might leave the congregation. We wouldn’t want to risk that! So the “T” word lies in the biblical texts largely undisturbed.

Ah, but I am a trouble maker! At least with regard to the call of God in community this fall. Do I want to force everyone at Centennial to tithe? Do I want to put the “fear of God” in them with a big guilt trip? Hardly. But I do want and hope to help us delve into this ancient practice that was once understood to be commanded by God, and urged by our own Father in Faith, John Wesley, to make it a freely chosen discipline of our personal discipleship and our covenant to be in full community with one another.

There is much to exploring the tithe when we blow the ancient dust off and bring it into the full light of post-modern life. Let’s explore it together this year in our Stewardship focus with open hearts and minds that we might discover together what God intends for God’s people. Stewardship Sundays will be our fall communion Sundays. Let’s bring hears full of the knowledge of God’s blessings and ready to give in grateful response.

Giving with you,
Pastor Renae
What is Social Justice?

Word Search

Read the article on page (3), and find the words in blue in the word search below.
Today I was interviewed by a sociology student who wanted to know more about “social justice.” I was happy to talk to her. My Catholic tradition considers social justice as a central element of faith, public witness, and as integral to Catholic Social Teaching. In our conversation I drew on an article I’d written a few years back: “What the Heck is ‘Social Justice’?” (Sojourners, February 2007).

A starting question when talking about social justice is: What’s the difference between justice and charity?

Justice is the moral code that guides a fair and equitable society. When an individual acts on behalf of justice, he or she stands up for what is right. Charity is a basic sense of generosity and goodwill toward others, especially the suffering. Individual charity is when one responds to the more immediate needs of others -- volunteering in a women’s shelter, for example. [See also An Active Faith by Yonce Shelton for more on charity and justice.]

The goal of social charity and social justice is furthering the common good. Social justice addresses the effects of social sin, while social justice addresses the causes of such sins. Brazilian Catholic Archbishop Hélder Câmara famously said, "When I feed the poor, they call me a saint; when I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist." His phrase indicates the societal pressure to separate charity and justice. The two cannot be separated. It would be like taking the heart out of a body -- neither would live for long.

Social charity is sometimes called compassionate solidarity. A church’s decision to buy only fair trade coffee might be considered an act of social charity. It is a communal economic act that addresses the immediate needs of those who are oppressed by an unjust economic system. However, it doesn’t fundamentally change or challenge the unjust structure.

So just what is the definition of social justice?
The principle of social justice, according to Catholic social teaching, requires the individual Christian to act in an organized manner with others to hold social institutions accountable -- whether government or private -- to the common good. The “common good” comprises the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily," according to Pope Paul VI. However, social justice can become hollow if it is not constantly in touch with real people’s experiences.

How does one “do” social justice?
Social justice issues are determined by “discerning the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3), a careful process of social analysis. First, we listen to and observe the experiences of those closest to the problem. Second, together with those closest to the problem, we look at the context. What’s the history and what are the root causes? Are there political and/or cultural forces at play? We take the expanded information (experience plus context) and examine it in light of biblical values and Christian teaching. What would Jesus do in a situation like this? Third, we ask: What action might successfully make this situation more just? Finally, we take the action and evaluate the results. The evaluation takes us back to step one.

The theology of social justice cannot be separated from the full scope of Christian spiritual and moral development. But theology is always incarnated in the real lives and experiences of people. If it’s too abstract, then it becomes useless to the living breathing walk of faith that every Christian must make.

First published in Sojourner Magazine. To read more, visit: https://sojo.net

How to Talk With Your Children About Disasters in the News

Submitted By: Brenda Cunningham
Written By: Rachael Boyer, World Vision

When a major disaster hits, it can take over the news. Disturbing images and graphic news coverage can be troubling for empathetic adults. But it can be scary — deeply distressing — for young children.

Experts agree that parents should shield children from watching disturbing live news coverage. But how do you talk with them about something difficult they’ve seen or heard in the news? How do you prepare them for what they might hear at school, or while talking with their friends?

The World Vision media and communications team has a lot of experience researching and covering disasters and their effects on children. The team also includes parents and people who care about children. After all, that’s why we do the work we do.

Here are our team’s best tips for talking with your children about natural disasters and emergencies in the news:

Tip #1: Find out what they know

Begin by asking an open-ended question like: “Tell me what you know about...?” Then, follow up with something like: “How do you feel about...?” Or, “Why do you think that happened?” You may find out that your child knows more than you think, or that they heard or imagined something inaccurately.

Tip #2: Explain the situation at an age-appropriate level

Use words and examples they’ll understand to explain what happened, but keep it simple and don’t over-share. You don’t have to have all the answers. If you’re not sure why something happened, it’s okay to say you don’t know. But if you’re worried about the situation, discuss your own fears and thoughts with another grown up, not with a child. You could also teach your child Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” (NIV)

Tip #3: Help your child feel safe

Reassure, give extra hugs, and show your children how you’re helping to keep them safe. For example, if there was a massive earthquake somewhere, and there could be an earthquake where you live, show your children your emergency supplies and evacuation plan. Or if there was a tornado, and there aren’t tornadoes in your area, get out a map to show them how far away it was. This is also a great time to pray together, give fears to God, and ask for comfort and protection.

Tip #4: Draw it out

Offer crayons and paper. Some children might not want to talk about something scary they’re thinking about, but it might be easier for them to draw about it. Children’s counselors frequently use this technique, which we also find helpful at the Child-Friendly Spaces we set up after disasters.

Tip #5: Give them a way to help

Mister Rogers talked on his show about how his mother told him to “Look for the helpers. You can always find people helping.” Children may be reassured to see emergency aid workers and good Samaritans helping those in need. You can model generosity and be a good Samaritan too. Invite your children to do something to help those affected by the disaster. It could be as simple as saying a prayer together, asking God to comfort disaster survivors. Or your children could donate some allowance money, fundraise, or gather supplies.

Article published on: https://www.worldvision.org/
By: Michael Cunningham

Promoting Racial Justice in Our Church and Community

In light of the recent heightened tensions surrounding issues of race and justice, on April 30th, acting on the approval of the Church Council, our church family participated in an intensive five-hour conversation on race and justice. The conversation was facilitated by two United Methodist pastors, Reverends Sun Hee Kim and Dale Weatherspoon.

The purpose was to create a safe and respectful environment where listening and conversation could take place in order to build an understanding and hopefully take the first steps in moving forward to address issues of race and racism in our church and community.

The workshop was structured around addressing racism on three separate but interrelated levels:

- Personal
- Systemic or institutional
- Community

The flow was designed to have us first look at how each of us communicates and the influence that culture plays in our communication styles. From that point forward the workshop provided information, tools, and sharing in small groups to address racism at each of the above levels. The Conversation was designed so that the last segment focused on racism and cultural competence in our local faith community and the community we desire to serve.

The Conversation was well attended with 57 adults in attendance. As a follow-up the facilitators were asked for their feedback and recommendations for next steps. Their recommendations are as follows:

“We were impressed by the turnout. It was very well organized. I really appreciated the openness of the participants and the opportunity to break out in cultural groups and report back to others. I/we felt a lot of energy in the room. Thus, I am not surprised by the willingness and energy to continue to move forward. I/we will be praying for you as you take the next steps. With passion, leadership and trust in the Holy Spirit and that of the congregation, I am sure Centennial will bear fruit in the church and the community as it moves forward with more cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.”

To assist our church in moving forward they provided numerous resources including a list of books to increase our knowledge and understanding of the impact of race and racism in our country. One of the books is a New York Times Bestseller entitled America’s Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America.

The book is written by Jim Wallis who is a bestselling author, activist, preacher, teacher and pastor. He is also the founder and leader of Sojourners, a magazine, movement, and global network whose mission is to put faith into action for social justice (www.sojo.net). Unfortunately, it is important to also note that he is white.

In the book’s introduction, which addresses why in 21st century America there is still a need to address issues of race and justice, he writes the following:

“Are we hiding behind untruths that help make us more comfortable, or are we willing to seek the truth, even if that is uncomfortable? And if the untruths are, more deeply idols, they also separate us from God—which is, obviously highly important for those of us who are people of faith.... The title of this book, America’s Original Sin, is itself unsettling and, for many, provocative....We first used the phrase in a 1987 cover story for Sojourners magazine. The language of “America’s original sin” helped me understand that the historical racism against America’s indigenous people and enslaved
Promoting Racial Justice in Our Church and Community - Continued

Africans was indeed a sin, and one upon which this country was founded. This helps to explain a lot, because if we are able to recognize that the sin still lingers, we can better understand issues before us today and deal with them more deeply, honestly, and even spiritually—which is essential if we are to make progress toward real solutions.

Jim Wallis has also graciously developed a six-part discussion guide for the book. The guide is entitled Repenting of America’s Original Sin. For the next six months, through articles in the newsletter, the guide will be used to help us explore what it will take to achieve racial justice, healing, and reconciliation in our church, community, and across our country.

The guide is divided into six (6) sessions, each focused on one of the major themes or topics in the book. Each month there will be selections from the book, scripture passages and discussion questions. You will not need to have read the book to benefit from the series, the pertinent sections will be summarized. But I do encourage you to purchase the book. It is well worth reading and is available from Amazon.

May you prayerfully consider participating in this in this critical next step. I leave you with this verse from John 8:32 in which Jesus says, “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

(For more information on Jim Wallis and Sojourner magazine go to www.sojo.net.)

Centennial’s Music Corner

By: Rick Schlosser

Centennial’s Handbell Ensemble starts its new year on Thursday, October 5th at 6:00 p.m. Did you know that this will be Loretta’s 29th year directing our Handbell Ensemble? Thank you to Loretta for her faithfulness and for all she does for our church family.

Thank you to our faithful returning Chancel Choir members and a very special welcome to our new members! How wonderful to have so many new voices and such a full rich sound! It is never too late to join us! If you are interested in making a joyful noise, praising our Creator, improving your health and wellness, and just having a fun energizing time, please see Rick Schlosser.
Welcome October and fall; a favorite time of year! We are well underway in our new 2017-18 school year. We have many returning families as well as new ones. The children are getting used to their new routine and so are their families.

We are in the midst of our first fundraiser, Mixed Bag Designs, a wonderful, trendy line of reusable bags. They are strong, durable and very pretty, too. We have catalogs in the church office or you can call the preschool at 453-0976. All orders must be in by October 3rd.

A big thank you to the Sacramento City Fire Dept. All 3 classes visited Station 13 in September to receive some hands on learning about safety. It’s always a great field trip for everyone and coincides with our Safety Week at school. Even the parents learned something. The children’s favorite is always, hands down, getting to use the fire hose!

At the end of October, all three classes will visit Roemer’s Pumpkin Patch for a hay ride, a corn maze and, of course, some important pumpkin choosing!

The end of the month brings Halloween parties with the children coming to school in costume and trick or treating to Hollywood Hardware, and the Centennial church office. Such a fun-filled month is ahead for us!

Blessings,
Denise Tessman

UMW Book Club - October 2017 Selection

By: Callie Smith

We are reading the psychological thriller, The Woman In Cabin 10, by Ruth Ware for the month of October.

Published in 2016 it was named one of the best mysteries and thrillers that year by the Washington Post and cited as a “must be read” by Goodreads and the New York Post.

The novel is about a young journalist taking a trip on a luxury liner and sees a woman fall overboard and hears the splash as her body makes contact with the ocean, or, was it all just a "dream!"

Read the book and join us for the discussion on Monday, October 9th at noon. We will meet at the home of Callie Smith. Bring your brown bag lunch.

Centennial’s 2018 Mission and Ministry Fair is Sunday, October 1st @ Noon in the Fellowship Hall. Join us and learn more mission and ministry at Centennial UMC.
Greetings, Centennial! Our church has moved to a new kind of church record database and community solution called **Realm®**. Since July, we have steadily introduced Centennial UMC team leaders and team members to the new system. In November, access to Realm will be available to all Centennial UMC members with active email addresses on file with the church office.

**What is Realm? Realm is a real ministry tool.**

Realm is an online ministry tool designed for real time connection. It helps our church connect with you and you connect with us. If you consider yourself part of this church family, you’ll love it. Realm allows you to manage your personal information and who is allowed to see it, control your giving, and keep in touch with the groups that matter to you.

**Why use Realm? Realm strengthens church connections.**

Being the church doesn’t just happen at the church. Realm helps us serve you better and leads this church well between Sundays. Everyone can be connected from anywhere at any time, right from our mobile devices. It engages everyone in the life of our church by supporting the healthy relationships essential to our church’s mission. We’ll stay organized, and you’ll stay informed about all of the opportunities for fellowship. When we share life together, we will grow together.

**What about my privacy? Realm is safe, private, and secure.**

Your privacy is one of our greatest concerns. Realm is only made up of the people in the church, it’s not like a social network that’s open to everyone. Realm keeps your data safe and gives you control over what information you share and who can see it.

**What about giving? Realm gives you control over your giving.**

Giving should be easy, and Realm places giving right in the palm of your hands. You may set up recurring gifts and view your giving history. Realm automatically records all electronic gifts and adds them to your giving record making it easy for you to give, and easy for our Finance team to track. In 2018, Centennial will launch Realm’s online giving so that you may give by debit or credit card.

**How do I start? Follow a few simple steps.**

1. Find your Realm invitation sent to your personal email account’s Inbox (coming in November to all members). Follow the instructions in the email to setup your login information.

2. Log into Realm using the login and password you created in Step 1. (FYI: You can use Realm on your computer, tablet or smartphone. To use your smartphone go to [http://onelink.to/connectapp](http://onelink.to/connectapp) to download the Realm mobile application.)
3. Check to make sure that we have your address and other personal information entered correctly under My Profile. If anything is incorrect, you can change it.

4. Click News, Messages, Events, Groups and Directory to view news items, church/group events, messages from your group(s) or group leader(s) and the church's online directory*.

*Note: People currently listed in the online directory are those who are listed in our former database as wanting to be included in the Church Directory. If a person’s contact information is viewable in our new online Church Directory within Realm, his/her privacy settings are currently set to allow their information to be seen. This may change as CUMC members customize their privacy settings.

If you do not see a person’s contact information and/or their name listed in the online Church Directory within Realm, the church staff did not have a previous stipulation that he/she wanted to be listed in the Church Directory -- OR -- he/she has logged into Realm and opted to set their security setting to disallow viewing of their name or contact information.

In next month’s newsletter, we'll talk how the CUMC family and community can communicate within Realm.

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Did You Know...

The West Sacramento Community Orchestra is having two (2) concerts during the month of October:

- Sunday, October 15th at the West Sacramento Civic Center, 1110 West Capitol Ave., West Sacramento @ 3:00 pm.

- Tuesday, October 17th at Centennial UMC in the Fellowship @ 7:30 pm.

For more information, visit: [www.westsacramentocommunityorchestra.blogspot.com](http://www.westsacramentocommunityorchestra.blogspot.com)

Tickets to see Rev. Dr. William Barber speak on November 3rd at the St. Mark’s UMC’s Moon Lecture Series are sold out. Dr. Barber was a notable speaker at the 2016 Democratic Convention and is the President of Repairers of the Breach, The Poor People’s Campaign, Chair of the Political Action Committee of the NAACP Board, and is the Pastor of Greenleaf Christian church in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Videos of Dr. Barbers lecturers are available at: [http://www.breachrepairers.org/](http://www.breachrepairers.org/)

Moon Lecture series tickets are still available for Chairman David Archambault II, Tribal Chairman of Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Nancy Giles, CBS Sunday Morning contributor and B.D. Wong, award winning actor, Activist and the winner of GLAAD Davidson/Valenti award. For more information, visit: [https://www.stmarksumc.com/event/moon-lectures](https://www.stmarksumc.com/event/moon-lectures)
Keith Atwater 10/05
Marge Borger 10/06
Jean Chew 10/30
Lee Deter 10/13
Hudson Fahrenholz 10/03
Elizabeth Finau 10/16
Emosi Finau 10/07
Donald Goering 10/06
Beverly Green 10/23
Brian Hing 10/26
Amanaki Hopoi 10/07
Lavinia Hopoi 10/17
Cindy Kazee 10/06
Jimmy Klewer 10/29
Elijah Kurucake 10/31
Elaine Lederer 10/12
Esther Leweniqila 10/10
Juita Lumuni 10/09
Tom Manning 10/19
Kasa Matau 10/13
Titi Nabunitukuni 10/14
Alisi Naulivou 10/08
George Newton 10/20
Marilyn Parker 10/19
Jonasa Rakaseta 10/21
Judie Streeter 10/04
Tevita Takeiikata 10/02
Dick Toothaker 10/11
Gavin Veiga 10/14
Sosefo Velasquez 10/04
Sammy Viriviri 10/30

Privacy Notice: Due to privacy and data security concerns, some members have asked that we do NOT publish the day of his/her birth.

If you do NOT want your birth date listed in the newsletter, but just your name listed, please call or email the Church Office to notify us.

RECURRING MONTHLY GATHERINGS

- **Fijian Prayer & Bible Study** meets every Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:30 pm - 10:00 pm at members homes. Contact Virisila Batiratu or Sireli Rokoyawa for a schedule of locations.
- **Fijian Choir Rehearsal** meets every Saturday from 7:00 - 8:00 pm in the Fireside Room.
- **Fijian UMW Ladies Circle** meets every 2nd Saturday from 10:00 am - Noon in the Fireside Room.
- **Tongan Devotion Group** meets every Tuesday and Friday from 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm in the Fireside Room. (Choir precedes devotion.)
- **Men’s Accountability Group** meets every other Tuesday. Contact Ken Iritani or Mark Hanzlik for details.
- **The Trowel Group** meets the second Saturday of each month for fellowship.
- **Contact Tom and Shirley Manning for details.**
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry** meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm in Room 7.
- **Church Council** meets every 2nd Tuesday from 7:00 - 8:30 pm in Room 7.
- **Finance Committee** meets every 3rd Sunday from Noon - 1:00 pm in Room 7.
- **Trustee Committee** meets every 2nd Sunday from Noon - 1:00 pm in Room 7.
- **Youth & Young Adult Ministry** meets every Sunday in Thee Place at 4:00 pm.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous Speakers Bureau** meets every second Saturday from 5:30 pm - 9:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Holly Park Neighborhood Association** meets every second Monday from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm in the Fireside Room.
- **West Sacramento Community Orchestra** meets every Tuesday from 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Food Addicts** meet Wednesday from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm in the Fireside Room.
- **Zumba** meets every Saturday from 8:00 am - 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall.

**Note:** If your committee meeting isn’t noted here, please email the Church Office to give us your **schedule for the year**.

centennialumc@centenniaumc.com
October 2017

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month | Lupus Awareness Month | AIDS Awareness Month

- UMW Esther Friendship Circle - Wednesday, October 4th at 10 a.m. at Clover Lawton’s home.
- UMW Northern Lights - resumes Monday, October 2nd at 2:00 pm at Jane Rosenberger’s home.
- UMW Fijian Women’s Circle - Sunday, October 22nd after worship service.
- District Leadership Training Event - Friday, October 20th at Loomis UMC
- UMW Conference - Annual Celebration - Saturday, October 21st at Loomis UMC

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We are many—one in Christ... a church that embraces diversity.