

SonTreasure Island VBS! July 14-18

We are almost ready for our trip to an island with treasure more precious than gold and more lasting than diamonds! Our SonTreasure Island VBS at Emmanuel is Monday, July 14, through Friday, July 18, 9am-12:30pm each day. We're looking forward to a week filled with songs, skits, crafts, wet Wednesday and other outdoor games.

When it all wraps up on Friday at 12:30, we'll need help taking down the sets. With lots of volunteers we can get the job done quickly. Email Doug Gonce, director of children's ministry, at DougG@epconline.org if you can be there that afternoon. Even an hour would be a blessing!

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to be a part

of the VBS team. Leaders and helpers like you help make VBS week amazing and this year is sure to be another fun, meaningful experience for all. We are currently making good use of the materials you have donated to create an island atmosphere in the sanctuary and classrooms.

We ask for your prayers for a safe, fun week for the volunteers and kids, that brings us all closer to God.

NOTE: On Sunday, July 20, the kids and volunteers will be singing a VBS song in the sanctuary and need to be at church by 9:15am.



Pastor Graham Baird to Speak at CARP Annual Carpinteria Retreat, Sept. 12-14

The Reverend Graham Baird, who recently published his first book, *One Hundred Years of Ministry: A Practical Guide for Pastors and Church Leaders*, which discusses the leadership legacy of his family and of which he is the fourth generation to become a pastor, will lead the Carpinteria retreat this year. Most recently, Baird was senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Colorado Springs, but his passion is for spreading God's love and meeting people where they are at through church planting.

Prior to moving to Colorado, Baird founded Highlands Church in Paso Robles, CA, where he met Pastor Dan Stevens, who was living there at the time. Pastor Dan said that some of the things he appreciates about Baird are that "He always made me think. He was always challenging, but he was always gracious." Baird and his wife, Star, are currently planting a new church in Camarillo, called Mission Street Church, which will begin services this fall.

Baird is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and is currently earning his Doctorate from Fuller Seminary. A dynamic speaker, he is a widely sought-after nationally and in 1990 won the National Oratory

Championship.

Along with highlights from the speaker, the weekend will feature lots of activities for the entire family. There will be arts and crafts for the kids, and Dave Hagy and Randy Kappen will teach anyone who would like to learn how to surf—or at least how to go out and have some fun with the waves on surfboards! Emmanuel will continue its tradition of gathering at Foster Freeze for ice cream after the Saturday evening service, and communion will be served Sunday morning. Pastor Baird will preach at both services.

We have reserved, individual campsites available and we were able to secure the Raccoon group campsite that accommodates 40 campers. Registration begins on Sunday, July 20. Look for the table on the patio after the services, to register and for more information. Carp is one of the best ways to connect with others from Emmanuel and everyone is welcome to attend whether for the day or for the entire weekend!



Meet Elder, Mike Byrne

This month we introduce you to Mike Byrne.
Where were you born and raised?

I was born and raised in Panorama City, in the San Fernando Valley. I moved to Santa Clarita with my family just after high school and then moved to Thousand Oaks when my wife, Sue, and I bought a house here.

Tell us about your family...

My wife, Sue and I met at CSUN while enrolled in the Environmental and Occupational Health Program. Sue and I were engaged, married and bought our house in Thousand Oaks, all in 1992-93. We began attending Emmanuel in 1995, we both began attending the new member's class, which was led by Pastor Dana. However, I didn't last too long, and attended only a few classes. Sue kept attending and became a member in March of 1996. I owe much to my wonderful wife, including starting me on my faith journey.

In 1997 we made one of the best decisions in our lives, to start a family! Our daughter, Audrey, turns 16 the end of July, and our son, Connor is 13. They are wonderful kids! Sue and I are very thankful to the many people of Emmanuel that have nurtured, taught, and given guidance to them over the years; they have blessed our entire family!

It is at Emmanuel that my faith really took root and grew. I took two big steps in 2009, becoming both baptized and a member.

What is your profession and education background?

I earned my B.S. in Environmental and Occupational Health from CSUN in 1991 and began working for the Los Angeles County Environmental Health Department. In 1998, I was hired by the Ventura County Environmental Health Division as a supervisor for their food safety program.

What special interests do you have?

My hobby and special interest (as well as favorite way to get exercise) is disc (Frisbee) golf. I've been an avid player since 1984, and played professionally since 1987. I'm very involved with the Conejo Disc Golf Club, where I've been the club President and liaison with the Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD) for 5 years. I helped design, coordinate volunteers for, and set up Thousand Oaks' first permanent public disc golf course. "Rabbit Flats" is adjacent to Horizon Hills, at the rear of the Thousand Oaks Community Park. When I'm not working, doing things with the



family, or at church, you stand a good chance of finding me there playing disc golf or watering trees. However, I have recently spent a lot of time at Sapwi Trails (formerly Lang Ranch) Community Park walking the many acres, and working with the CRPD in designing another disc golf course.

What activities are you involved in at Emmanuel?

My whole family is very active at Emmanuel. Audrey enjoys the High School Discipleship Class, and has been a puppeteer in the children's puppet ministries for 5 years. Audrey and Connor always look forward to Youth Group, summer camp at Forest Home, and helping with VBS. We also all lend a hand cleaning up after communion; Sue coordinates the communion "elements" and volunteers at the church library. She is an active participant in MOTS and Beyond as well.

Sue and I have ushered for several years. I am on the rotation to open and close the church campus for Sunday services. Over the years many have thanked me as I blow leaves off the walkways, but it really is my pleasure giving back. The good Lord and the Emmanuel family have blessed my family and me dearly!

I also enjoy helping with men's ministries, especially with the Men's Breakfast! It's hard to beat great coffee, food, friends, and an inspirational speaker!

What is your favorite thing about Emmanuel?

There are so many wonderful things about Emmanuel: the fabulous people, Bible study groups, youth programs, but for me there is really one thing that is above all the rest: the sermon. I long to be a better person, father, and spouse; and to that end, I feel it is most important to hear and gain a good understanding of God's word, teachings, and wisdom.

How long have you been an elder?

I've been an Elder only since May of this year and really look forward to serving, and I am confident that I will be very blessed by serving in this manner.

Continued on Page 3

Be a Part of 'Adventures with Jesus'

As a Teacher or Helper... Just Once a Month or More!

There are opportunities to get involved in one of the most significant and vibrant ministries at Emmanuel. Children's ministry needs a few more volunteer teachers and helpers for its 'Adventures with Jesus' program in the nursery, pre-K, and elementary grades 1-3 and 4-5.

We hope you will join in on the excitement of Sunday mornings as we gather together to learn about the promises of Christ and how to live like Him. We do

this through Bible stories, worship (including both live music and powerful videos), prayer, great active teaching, and wonderful activities that we can all enjoy as we come closer to Jesus.

If you would like to be a teacher or helper and can sign up for one Sunday a month or more, please contact Doug Gonce, Children's Ministry Director at DougG@epconline.org or Rachel Del Dosso, Nursery & Childcare Coordinator at RachelD.EPC@gmail.com.

Next Steps - Congregational Meeting, Sunday, July 13, 11am

Your elders took two very important steps toward a new pastor at the session meeting on June 24th.

One, they approved the Mission Study.

The Mission Study now goes to a committee of Presbytery, the Church Development Committee (CDC) for its approval and is ready to be presented to you on July 13th at the scheduled congregational meeting. The newly completed study is also ready to guide us in the selection of our new Pastor.

Two, they nominated a slate of Emmanuel members for

the Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC)

This slate of officers will be presented to you, the congregation, for election on July 13th at the same congregational meeting.

Working with the Santa Barbara Presbytery, the DPNC selects the Designated Pastor from several candidates. The chosen candidate will be presented to the congregation for your vote. This person, if elected, serves for not less than two and not more than four years, and is then eligible to become the called Pastor.

Save the Date! - Women's Event in August

Emmanuel's *Sisters in Spirit* ministry invites you to hold Saturday, August 16 at 10am for fellowship and spiritual refreshment with popular Christian speaker, Rita Warren. Sign-ups for this FREE event, "How God Can Help You Make the Most of Every Day!", begin Sunday, July 13.

Elder, Mike Byrne - *Continued from Page 2*

What would you like us to know about your faith journey?

I feel that God has already made my heart stronger, literally, to prepare me for this new role. In March, while attending my first Session meeting as an Elder-elect, I recall thinking to myself, "Maybe I should ask someone to take me to the hospital." as I was feeling a significant tightness in my chest. But I had an appointment the following day for an angiogram, so I held off. Well, thankfully a 99% Coronary artery was found and repaired with a stent. My recovery had a bump in the road when the artery in my leg where the doctor went in for the angiogram decided to balloon up, but that is a story for another day.

Do you have any specific hopes for Emmanuel's future?

For years I have prayed that God's will be done for Emmanuel, and I believe it has been and will continue to be so. I feel that our church is going to grow and thrive even if our country is in a post-Christendom period. Our community, not just this church, is full of wonderful people with good hearts with a desire to help others. I look forward to seeing my friends here, and to making many new friends here, for years to come.

A Sacred Space

By Rachel Del Dosso

Recently, I read a book called *Listening to Children on the Spiritual Journey- A Guide for Those Who Teach and Nurture*, by Catherine Stonehouse and Scottie May. This book emphasized the importance of guiding our children into knowing God, and experiencing his love, rather than simply learning about Him.

This past year, the goal of our Early Childhood Ministry has been to teach children about their heavenly father, the kind, gentle, perfect God who created everything, including each of them, who cares for each of them and loves them unconditionally. We have been teaching simple lessons each week, singing songs together, making crafts and doing activities to drive home this message. It has been a great time of joy and growth in the lives of the children. However, the fast, fun pace of it all leaves little time for children to reflect and wonder about this amazing God.

The authors argue that children also need a quiet place to be with God- whatever that looks like for them. They also reasoned that children are capable of having authentic faith and a growing relationship with Jesus. I agree with them, after all, Jesus said *"Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children"* (Matthew 19:14).

So, I am working on creating a space within the Early Childhood Education Area that will allow children to take part in what has been called Reflective Engagement. Reflective Engagement starts with "creating a calm, quiet yet engaging place—free from most distractions—where children can be with



God. The purpose of the space is regularly articulated to the children, planting in their hearts and minds the fact that God desires to be with them and that they can talk to God who will listen and will speak to them". Following the lesson, "children have time and opportunity to choose how they want to respond". Our job is to set the stage, and "God's presence will be real and the Spirit will be the teacher, revealing to each child what he or she most needs to hear from God" (Stonehouse & May).

To create this space, I will be transforming an extra room that is within the Nursery into a "Sacred Space". It will be a cozy environment with deep indigo walls, twinkle lights and couches. There will be soft worship music, easels to paint or draw on, and even ribbons for dancing. We will allow children to go into this space following the lesson if they want to, and they will be able to reflect on the story however they choose.

I am eager to see the ways that God moves in the hearts of our children, and I am looking forward to learning from their questions and their faith! It is such a privilege to be able to teach children about our wonderful God! Thank you to all of our volunteers and donors who make our program run so smoothly, your contributions are greatly appreciated.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 7/4 Happy 4th of July
Church Office Closed
- 7/5 Hurricane Harbor
Middle & High School
All day
- 7/13 Congregational Meeting
DPNC approval & Mission
Study presented
11AM, Sanctuary
- 7/14-18 SonTreasure Island VBS
9AM-12:15PM Daily
- 7/27-8/1 High School students
at Forest Home Camp

August

- 8/1 Parent's Night Out
5-9PM, EPC Nursery
- 8/8 Youth Sleepover
7PM-7AM, Youth Wing
- 8/16 Sisters in Spirit
Women's Ministry Event
Guest speaker, Rita Warren
10AM, Fireside Room

Weekly & Bi-Monthly Groups
ROMEOS - (Retired Older Men Eating Out), Thursdays 8AM at the Newbury Park IHOP
Mom's In Prayer, 8:30AM, every Friday, Youth Room
 Returns in the fall
Women's Bible Study
 Wednesdays at 9:30AM, Room 5/6
MOPS and Mom's Next - Mothers of Preschoolers & Elementary age, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 9:15AM
 Returning in September
MOTS - Moms of Teens and Beyond, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 12PM, Youth Room
 Returns in the fall