

Oak Leaf Newsletter
May & June 2017
Mother's Day
Memorial Day

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National Association
Of Congregational
Christian Churches



Congregational Church of the Oaks
841 Rosita Road, Del Rey Oaks, CA

Pastor

Bob's

Minute



Recently I wrote that, while Jesus is the only Way, it's still true that people come to faith in Jesus in different ways. Let me share some similar insights from a book called *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*, by James Martin.

He describes six paths to Christ: the path of belief, the path of independence, the path of disbelief, the path of return, the path of exploration, the path of confusion. He has learned that it is always God Who takes the initiative, and He can meet us on any of those paths. "God meets you where you are," Father Martin points out.

How does Jesus meet us? He uses our deepest desires. And the deepest desire of all, the one behind all the others, is our inborn desire for God. Martin notes the suspicion that "there is something missing in life. . . . We all feel that restlessness, the nagging feeling that there must be something more. . . ." Martin observes, "Sometimes you experience a desire for God in very common situations: standing silently in the snowy woods on a winter's day, finding yourself moved to tears during a movie, recognizing a strange sense of connection during a church service—and feeling an inexpressible longing to savor this feeling and understand what it is."

"Also in the broad category of longing," Martin says, "are more intense experiences. Sometimes we feel an almost mystical sense of longing for God, or having a connection to God, which can be triggered by unexpected circumstances. . . . In such uncommon longings, hidden in plain sight in our lives, does God call us." Martin continues: "Similar to these longings are times that might be best described not as ineffable desires or strong connections, but times when one is lifted up or feels a sense of exaltation or happiness." Moreover, "Sometimes we feel that we are tantalizingly close to understanding what this world is all about. . . . Feelings of clarity may be similar to feelings of exaltation."

Other "holy desires," as Martin calls them, include a desire to follow God, a desire for holiness, and a vulnerability that can come upon us, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal our true desires to us. "During a serious illness, a family crisis, the loss of a job, or the

death of a loved one, many people will say they turn to God in new ways. More skeptical minds may chalk this up to desperation. . . . But in general, we do not turn to God in suffering because we suddenly become irrational. Rather, God is able to reach *us* because our defenses are lowered. The barriers that we erected to keep out God . . . are set aside. . . . We are not less rational. We are more open."

Even committed believers can experience these mysterious longings, these "holy desires." May they always bring us closer to our God.

From the Pen

Of our

Moderator



First a message of thanks to the congregation for your donations to the Gathering for Homeless Women on the Monterey Peninsula. I have delivered three loads of clothes, food and personal care items. Also we are building a monetary fund with donations to our "money jar" in the fellowship room. All this help is needed. The organization has opened a facility on Eldorado Street where more in-depth help for jobs, shelter, health and other problems is available. The Gathering has received several large grants this year so hopefully even more can be done.

My slight contacts with the homeless women problem in our area started me thinking. What is it actually like to have no place of real shelter each and every day and night? So last Friday I decided to be homeless. My original idea to find a large cardboard box and shopping cart de-escalated rapidly to being homeless living in my car. I got up and after feeding the kitty went and sat in my car. I had packed water, a banana and a couple protein bars and \$20 - my budget for the day's expenses. There being no way to make coffee or toast in my car home, I drove to the nearest place to get breakfast. This being Pebble Beach Market/Deli a breakfast sandwich and coffee blew a huge hole in my budget. Lesson No. 1 - no dining in resort areas. I ate breakfast at the beach which should have been pleasant but a nearly gale-force and cold wind kept me inside my car home with windows shut. Then I spilled half

my coffee on me. Time Out No. 1 to get a change of clothes. But where would I change? Must find the public bathrooms in area. Google must have it but I turned off my cell phone. Too expensive for my "present" circumstances.

Next I decided to limit my geographical area to Pacific Grove - mainly to save on gas-and the town is compact enough you can walk to many places. Also they have a nice public library with posh armchairs to sit and read, computers, many books and magazines and good bathrooms. So I settled in there for what seemed like a good long while. To my surprise it was just 10:30a.m! I walked around the downtown for a while and then back to my car home where I ate my banana and read the throwaway paper. In the afternoon I walked to Lover's Point and along PG's lovely waterfront. The pink ice plant is in spectacular bloom now. I spent time at Safeway getting food for dinner while trying to stay on budget. Time Out No. 2 to feed the kitty and pick up another blanket, toothbrush and jar of peanut butter. Then back to beach to wait for sunset. Not a spectacular one behind the approaching marine layer of fog. Finally darkness settled in and the real feelings of aloneness, insecurity and worthlessness settled in also. I felt them even in my pretend status. Throw in mental health issues, alcoholism, family estrangement and abandonment, and just plain poverty and it would seem to be a hill too high to climb. The saving grace of course is that God is with us and will watch over us if we ask him. Not a tough decision to make out there in the dark.

My final message. Homelessness is hard and I was not good at it. All choices are hard ones. But any help, no matter how minor is appreciated. Even a smile or prayer from a stranger helps. I'm praying for all those homeless men and women out there in the dark. God be with you.

Opportunities for stewardship

We have a bin in the narthex where you can make the following donations at any time. Teachers and our preschool downstairs (school supplies and diapers and wipes.) Food for the Salvation Army. Clothing, toiletries, blankets, etc. for the "Gathering for Women" and help fill our jar in the social hall.

Judy's Garden



When I approach Mother's Day, I always remember my grandmother's love and my mother's strength. As a child, I didn't realize the trials they endured during those difficult years of food stamps and rations. As a mother, you are focused on nursing your child, both with food and learning. I was fortunate enough to have both. I remember being a young mother and being protective of my own son, Joseph. I was learning what to do and what not to do. Dr. Spock was out and common sense was in. You would think that common sense is second nature, but as always, it is just another lesson for a new mom to learn. The one thing a young child does is put things in their mouth, food, toys, dirt, whatever. I know this, so I was always aware that what I would give my son would ultimately wind up in his mouth. I was told that this is how they learn, which is perhaps true in this case: We were shopping in the grocery store one day and Joe spotted a vending machine. Generally I don't allow him to have a jaw breaker to chew on but being the tired new mom that I was, I figured it would keep him busy and quiet while we shopped for food. He chewed and chewed and chewed which is not unusual with those large jaw breakers. But my mom instincts kicked in and I asked him if he was having trouble chewing? Joseph opened his mouth and out bounced this ball across the isles. To my sorrow, I realized I had fed my son one of those very colorful "bouncy balls". Needless to say we both learned something that day. I never again let Joseph have anything from a vending machine and Joseph didn't always do what I said (double-edged sword which can backfire when they become a teenager). Well, maybe his lesson is not one I intended to teach but every new mom makes mistakes. On a side note, I want to thank all the moms and influential women (family, friends, teachers, medical, and community personnel) for your loving intentions and lessons learned. It takes a village to raise a child. Thank you, village, for raising me and my son. You are priceless.



In honor of my Father.



Where is God for you right now?

Where is God for you right now? How often does He make His appearance known to you? With Mother's Day soon here I look back over my childhood years and can now reflect on all the wonderful things God did for me. His love came to me through my mother, His protection kept me out of harm's way, and His just hand made me pay the price when I well deserved it. I did grow up in a loving home. My parents were not outwardly religious, as my father always asked, "Where did his three sons get so much religion?" From early on I was always taught love and respect to all. My church life was filled by being God's servant to all. Respect their beliefs and don't push my beliefs on others. After all isn't that what God has been telling us from the beginning of time?

Throughout my life God, through the Holy Spirit, has been whittling away at the dark side of my heart and filling it more and more with His love and compassion. Because I am human, every now and then the dark side makes an appearance, only to have the Holy Spirit grab hold and knock me down. The Holy Spirit has put such a hold on me I can't help but get choked up every time I see God's loving hand at work.

We take a lot for granted, especially those who don't know God, and just write off special events as something wonderful that happened. When something wonderful and special happens, take a moment and reflect on the wondrous power of God and the Holy Spirit. The more you do the more you give the Holy Spirit an avenue to move in and take up residency in your heart. I give you this little warning: "Be prepared." The more you let the Holy Spirit into your life the less you will have for anything else. My mother always taught me the more you give love away the more it comes right back at you.

John 3:6,8. ...but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. Go and share His love throughout the world.

Play
Learn
Grow



Preschool with Mrs. Liz

Enrollment continues to be strong. We have already filled up our fall toddler room and our 3 & 4 year old room only has 2 slots available with anticipation of filling those 2 slots from our waiting list. Preparations are well underway for our June 11 graduation. We've been able to purchase a new storage shed and replace old worn out toys. We would like to announce the part time hiring of our newest staff, Mrs. Melissa Keeven. It is especially nice to have a member of the Church of the Oaks on staff. Welcome Melissa.

In his service,
Elizabeth Valadez



Women's Guild

In June we are hosting two church events. The first is a potluck dinner, June 4 at 6:00. Four members from the NACCC Philippine Mission will be visiting. I am sure they will have interesting stories to share. See Connie if you are able to help bring food. Thank you, Virginia, for giving them a place to rest their heads for the night. Gail and Jackie will be showing them the sights of Monterey. The following Sunday we are celebrating our preschool graduation, providing cake and punch after church. See Jackie to offer your assistance.

Christmas in July? No? How many times have you gone to the store to see Christmas decoration and cards on display in July? Well if that doesn't get to you, how about Christmas in May? Yep! Our Women's Guild has already started getting ready for our annual bazaar, November 18. This year we are focusing more on hand-made gifts and we spent last Saturday morning wrapping gifts.

Jackie Little
Guild President



I cannot think of another person more Christ-like on earth than a mother. If we set our standard for measuring someone up to being Christ-like by their love and forgiveness and willingness to give their life for another person,

there is no other person that even comes close to measuring up than a mother. Who else do you know that is willing to give her own life to that of her child? I am talking from the moment of conception as that child begins to grow within her. Just as God has put Himself in each of us through the Holy Spirit, thus making us a part of Him, a mother gives part of her to her child and that child gives part of himself right back. I feel confident in saying that everyone will agree that the glow of a baby is one of the most precious gifts, and I am not just talking about human beings. Look how we all are in awe over a baby tiger cub, panda cub, etc. All one has to do is watch Dan Green of KSBW News and the closing segments on animal stories. I also feel confident all will agree with me that a mother has such a glow about her, a glow that has come from her child growing inside. Both have such a godly glow about them. From that moment of conception to her last breath on earth her child will experience a love only seconded by the love God gives us all, for we are all His children as He is in us as we are in Him.

This Mother's Day may you all feel the love and blessing God has given you and the love and honor we, your sons and daughters, give you. Thank you, Mom, for giving me birth and raising me in the presence of our Lord so that I may honor and serve Him and you all the days of my life. God bless

Armed force Day

May 20



May is Armed Forces Month and the third Sunday in May is the day we celebrate those men and women who are willing to serve and willing to put their lives on the line so that we may enjoy the freedoms we have, especially the freedom to worship a God of love, mercy, forgiveness, and peace.

While we celebrate those who wear the uniform, let us not forget to celebrate those who do not. Let us not forget the stay-at-home spouse, who when their loved one is deployed becomes all to the family left behind; mother, father, provider, disciplinarian, healer, bill payer, and fixer of all things. And at the end of the day you tolerate their stories 100 times over, the same stories told over and over again. You deal with them when they are broken, not in spirit but in body. You are their heroes, because you love them and it is impossible for you to understand what they are feeling. God bless you, their heroes, because you love them.



The reality of Christ's Ascension is so important that the creeds of Christianity all affirm, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, that "He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." The denial of the

Ascension is as grave a departure from Christian teaching as is denial of Christ's Resurrection.

Christ's bodily Ascension foreshadows our own entrance into Heaven not simply as souls, after our death, but as glorified bodies, after the resurrection of the dead at the Final Judgment. In redeeming mankind, Christ not only offered salvation to our souls but began the restoration of the material world itself to the glory that God intended before Adam's fall.



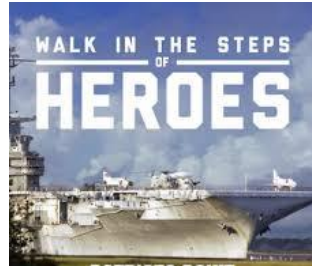
This, as in years past the last Sunday of May, we will honor those members of our armed forces who gave their lives so that we may continue to enjoy our freedom and all the wonderful things that come along with our freedom. They also gave

their lives in hopes that others throughout the world will be able to enjoy the freedom we enjoy and not have to live in constant fear of things so evil or watching their world around them destroyed.

In honor of this Memorial Day I would like to share with you an excerpt from a speech my brother, Major Little, gave at a Memorial Day service. On this day they were honoring nine service members who had passed away.

“How is it you relate to old war stories? How is it that we as old soldiers relate to a world that forgets who the heroes are; every man and woman that signs on the dotted line to wear a uniform falls into that category. They choose at that very moment to be like Christ and to die, if necessary, for you. And while they may not be called to do so, they have made the choice to do so. So as we honor those who are the greatest of heroes, it makes no difference if they stood in front of a machine gun, attacked the enemy, or fought any enemy, they were prepared to die for you.

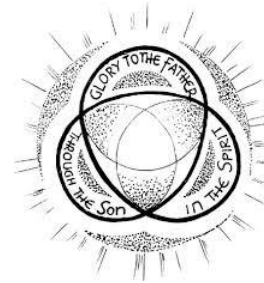
Rest now, my soldier, from the hills you protected, from the seas you guarded, from the skies that you kept safe for us that we might live here. My friends, to be born in freedom is an accident, to live in freedom is a privilege, but to die in freedom is a responsibility.” God bless our men and women in the military, past, present, and future.



Pentecost, which shares roots with the Jewish holiday of Shavu'ot, isn't associated with feasts or elaborate traditions. Generally, it is a holiday marked in liturgical churches. Because, the holiday's liturgical color is red, to symbolize the apostles' "tongues of fire" and also the blood of martyrs, sometimes

Christians will dress in red or decorate churches with red. Many churches hold baptisms and confirmations on that day, as well.

At his Last Supper, Jesus legendarily instructed his 12 disciples to go out into the world to minister and heal the sick on their own. It was at that point that they became "apostles." Fifty days after Jesus' death, as the story goes, the Holy Spirit (part of the Holy Trinity — God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) descended onto the apostles, making them speak in foreign tongues. PBS News



Trinity Sunday

June 11

Unlike other festivals in the church's liturgical calendar, Trinity Sunday centers on a *doctrine* of the church, rather than an *event*. It celebrates the unfathomable mystery of God's being as Holy Trinity. It is a day of adoration and praise of the one, eternal, incomprehensible God. Trinity Sunday, in a sense, synthesizes all we have celebrated over the past months which have centered on God's mighty acts.

The triune God is the basis of all we are and do as Christians. In the name of this triune God we are baptized. As the baptized ones we bear the name of the triune God in our being. We are of the family of the triune God. We affirm this parentage when, in reciting the creeds, we say what we believe. Our discipleship is rooted in the mighty acts of this triune God who is active in redeeming the world. The triune God is the basis of all our prayers — we pray *to* God the Father, *through* Jesus Christ, *by* the Holy Spirit. The Trinity holds central place in our faith. ...

Presbyterian Church (USA)



The reason we celebrate Flag Day is because it's the day that marks the adoption of the flag of the United States. This happened on June 14,

1777 by resolution of the Second Continental Congress where John Adams spoke about the flag. He said, *“Resolved, that the flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.”* Flag Day is also a special day for the United States Army because they celebrate their birthday on June 14. 98.1 The Hawk

It is the right of every American to proudly display the Flag of the United States at their home, their business, and elsewhere. When you "SHOW YOUR COLORS" you tell the world that you are proud to live in the "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave."

"The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing.

US Code, Title 36, Chapter 10, § 176. (j) Military Times



We had an interesting discussion in Adult Bible Study about the relationship between Jesus and his Father in Heaven. I brought up an idea that really didn't have anything to do with the lesson, but as I address Father's Day it seems to fit.

While I'm not an English major I have always been taught that as a sign of respect I addressed my male parent as father. Throughout the Bible our Heavenly Father is always addressed as Father. So the point I made was the relationship between Jesus and his Father was much more than father and son. In Mark 14:36 Jesus calls out to "ABBA (Dad), Father" because God was in fact Jesus' Dad and Father is a sign of respect. To me dad implies a more closer father son relationship. Dad is the figurehead you look up too. He is always there, he is the head of the family, he is the bread winner, our guiding principle, and the disciplinarian when needed. A sons first hero and a daughter's first love. Dads will always be a father, but fathers will not always be a dad. So my prayer for you this Father's Day is, Dad, may you always know the respect that Jesus showed His Father.

WORSHIP SERVICES, BIBLE STUDY, AND MEETINGS

Bible Study
Sundays, 9:00 a.m.
Adults & Children
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Worship Services
Sundays, 10:30 a.m.
Fellowship, 11:30 a.m.

Communion Service
1st Sundays

Executive Council
meets 2nd Tuesdays at
7:00 p.m.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Help enhance our worship experience by bringing flowers in honor of someone or in memory of someone. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board.

FELLOWSHIP

Social Hour:

Sundays following worship.

If you enjoy the social hour and can help bring refreshments please sign up in the social hall as we have lots of vacancies.

Monthly Potlucks:

Start back up September 11th with our annual BBQ.

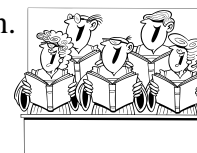
SHARING GOD'S LOVE & MESSAGE

Lectors

May: Judy Willis
June: Josh Converse
July: Les Willis

Choir Practice

Sundays, noon.
New voices
welcomed.



Oak Leaf Newsletter

Contact Deacon Bill if you have questions about the newsletter or would like to have input. Space is limited but I will get your articles in at some point. Thanks for what you have given me so far. If you would like the newsletter mailed to family or friends give Bill their name and address.

GROUP SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Women's Guild

Meeting, Prayer, Fellowship

Women meet the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m.



Men's Religious Studies

2nd & 4th Saturdays, 9:00 to 10:30 a. m. here at the church.

If you have joys to share with God and be thankful for or concerns you would like God to help you with let your prayer groups know and they will lift them up to God in prayer.

FINANIAL STATUS

Financial status: Calendar year, 2017.

Estimated income 2017:	\$101,940.00
Total income received to date:	\$ 35,480.00
Anticipated expenditures 2017:	\$101,940.00
Total expenditures to date:	\$ 29,466.00



It's a blessing to see our income is greater than our expenditures. May God continue to bless you for your donations. While we look good today let's not backslide. We want to insure we are covered for those unanticipated expenditures and we are sending Bob & Connie to the National NACCC Conference in Georgia in June. Hopefully we will be able to increase our Outreach Ministry, which we have fallen short of in years past.

Church of the Oaks Prayer List

Updated May 9, 2017

Rafat Ajir	Louie Gompers	Leslie McCormick
Bruce Amor	Doc Hackney	Mary Miller
Dorothy Briggs	Shirley Hackney	Clint Selleck

Pat Carroll
Jimmy Flavin
Mackenzie Doss

Pat Knox
Jackie Little
Aimee Cuda

Linda Urrey
Opal Yassany

Pat Knox asks for prayer for her brother, David, so that he will know his life is valuable to God, so that he will have hope.

Pray for John Knox to have relief from his very severe back pain.

Reverend Parshall's great-grandson Josiah continues to need our prayers.

Traveling mercies: Pastor Bob and Connie will go to Georgia in June, and to South Africa in July. Virginia McCormick and her grandchildren will also travel to South Africa in July.

Praise the Lord that Tom and Catherine Terry are back home after an enjoyable visit to Italy and England. Catherine asks that we pray for her children and grandchildren to know the Lord.

Thank God for Del Rey Oaks Christian Preschool, and pray for its continued success. Pray that Donna Chadwick, a substitute teacher at our preschool, has a good vacation, and thank God that our own member Melissa Keeven is working as Donna's substitute.

Melissa requests prayer for her father, Ken Bench, who was recently hospitalized for vertigo.

Thank the Lord that Doc, Shirley, and Marissa Hackney were all in church last Sunday. Doc and Shirley are recovering from illness, and Doc recently had surgery. Pray for comfort for Doc, whose mother died right away after he returned home from visiting her in Kentucky.

Please pray for Brian, Elize, and Cooper Hellam to make a successful transition from their home and jobs and preschool in Sacramento to a new home and new jobs and preschool in Seattle.

Linda Urrey needs prayer. She has been having an unpleasant reaction to prescribed medication.