



Our Vision

Rio Rancho United Methodist Church

“Rio Rancho UMC is a body of Christ led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, meeting the needs of God’s people through open hearts, open minds, and open arms.”

December 10, 2017 Volume 12, issue 25



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Editor’s Note

Do you have an upcoming event and you would like it inserted in the Sunday Bulletin? If so, e-mail:

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or call Jane Weaver at

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Sorrow Will Turn Into Joy

One thing that I respect about the ancient Hebrew prophets is their unwavering honesty. Many times, God addressed the people regarding their sin, but sometimes the cries and needs of the people were presented to God. At first one might think that this bantering between humanity and God is not right and even considered blasphemous.

Isaiah challenges God in the lament found in Isaiah 63-64. In speaking with God, Isaiah says, “Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people” (Isa. 64:9 NRSV).

I say thank you to Isaiah. I have felt this way on many occasions. I sometimes ask myself, “What have I done God? Why don’t you answer my prayers?” The question of whether we will ever experience true forgiveness is always on the front burner. We wonder, “How much longer will we have to pay for what we have done?” We cry out to God and hear nothing but a deafening silence.

The ancient Hebrews knew the feeling of hopelessness very well. They understood what it was like to lose homes, family members, health, etc. Their plight was not so different than ours. We often feel lost and misunderstood by our creator. We feel as if we have nowhere else to turn. Our hope has left us. Our God is gone.

This season of Advent reminds us not to give up hope. God is still present in the middle of the struggle. Just as Isaiah petitioned God, we can do the same thing. We recall that in this season of introspection, look within ourselves and have an honest dialogue with God. We are allowed to hold God accountable for His silence. God is big enough to handle our sorrows.

The Divine presence is so great that sadness becomes joy. King David reminded us that “You (God) have turned my mourning into dancing; You have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever” (Psalm 30:11-12 NRSV).

Moving past the gloom and despair of chaos into the creation of joy is the spirit of Advent.

We celebrate the expectation of the miracle which set the world on its ear. God broke the deafening silence and entered this world in the form of a baby. This incredible event, while at first delivered in a very obscure and remote way, would grow to be the center of our hope. Our redemption started with the cries of a baby. The cries went unnoticed. This miracle of light broke through the darkness in our souls to restore us to wholeness.

This season is about how we moved from darkness to light. We remember who we used to be and give thanks that we are no longer the person of our past. We experienced redemption and, with the blessings of God, we will never be the same.

As we begin our season of Advent, let us remember to lay all of our cards on the table with God. Let us talk to our creator about everything that keeps us from worshipping fully and freely.

We should be as honest as the prophets; sparing nothing from God. Our dialogue can be rich and authentic and sometimes frightening even to ourselves. Go ahead, take the journey.

God can handle it.

Blessings, Pastor Joe

Prayer Corner

Sunday, December 10, 2017

A prayer to light lamp of peace in America this Advent season

We wait for the light, O God. As the season of Advent begins, the natural world goes underground, hidden and silent, preparing the way for its promised rebirth. Now the darkness comes early and stays longer, reminding us again what a difference light and brightness make, not only in the world around us, but the world within us as well.

As people who walk in darkness, we ask that in times of despair, you keep bright the stars of memory: those times when we know what is good and right in your world; the mountain-top moments of spiritual courage, when, standing in the light of grace, we know that we must do our part in bringing peace to this world you love, and by looking beyond ourselves, we can make sense of our lives and our place in these complicated times.

Headlines and breaking news reports hit us like enemy fire from the dark places of the human heart. Border wars and tribal disputes, religious conflicts and political standoffs threaten to drown out the words sung long ago by angels on a hillside, the same song we ourselves hear played over the sound systems in malls and sung by choirs and carolers these 2,000 years later.

As we hold in our hearts the names of those in our families and neighborhoods who live lives of quiet desperation, may we hold in our hearts the names of places where death walks the streets like an unholy ghost; places where displacement, hunger, despair, and the politics of fear tear families and cultures apart; places where war is always business as usual: Turkey. Yemen. Niger. Kinshasa. South Sudan. The Ukraine. Ankara. Syria. Myanmar. Kurdistan. North Korea. Somalia.

We think of children left homeless in the wake of wars and famine and natural disasters; the two out of three children in the world who are malnourished; children born to addicted parents; children and teenagers who are victims of gang wars and senseless shootings; children born in places we wouldn't be caught dead; children whose nightmares come in the daytime.

As we enter the time of giving and holiday living, may we not be so charmed by the glitter of things that we feed the greed in ourselves at the expense of simple goodness and responsible wealth. Calm our busy race through Advent. Let us not be so reckless with holiday spending that we compromise the holiday spirit. Remind us to be still. To anticipate. To look within. And to look up.

Light the lamp of peace among the people of this country. Soften our judgments with empathy. Teach us to be less aware of our differences and more aware of our common humanity. Hold our tongues when our tempers flare. Help us not only to recognize but to celebrate how far and wide your mercy flows, how inclusive your love. Remind us that your house has many rooms and that you are called by many names.

Let us see the light. Share the light. Be the light.

The Historical Santa Claus

The name Santa Claus comes from Saint Nicholas, a saint in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Nicholas was born in the third century in the village of Patara. Nicholas was instructed in the faith by his parents and his uncle, the Bishop of Patara. His wealthy parents died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used all of his considerable inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering around him. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra, a city on the southeastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas was well known throughout the land for his generosity to people in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Legend tells of a poor man with three daughters whom Bishop Nicholas knew. In Roman times a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value—a dowry. The larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man had no money for a dowry, so his daughters could not marry and were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Thanks to Bishop Nicholas's anonymous generosity, three bags of gold appeared mysteriously in the poor man's home on three separate occasions, just in time to provide dowries for the girls. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas.

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas was exiled and imprisoned, suffering for his faith. When Constantine became emperor of Rome, Bishop Nicholas was released along with hundreds of other Christians. Legend says that he attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Bishop Nicholas died in Myra on December 6 of the year 343 and was buried in his cathedral church. By the reign of Emperor Justinian in the middle of the Sixth Century, Bishop Nicholas was famous and the emperor dedicated a church in Constantinople to him.



St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Icon

Activities and Events

Youth Dinner Schedule

- 12/10 Potluck and Caroling
- 12/17 Happy Birthday Jesus Party
- 12/24 No Evening Youth Group Meeting
- 12/31 No Evening Youth Group Meeting

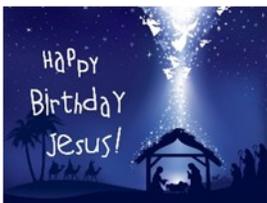


We are taking orders for Poinsettias. Order forms are on the welcome table in the Narthex. Poinsettias can be purchased in honor or memory of someone or in the spirit of Christmas. Each plant is \$10.00. We will use them to decorate the Church for the Christmas season. You can take your plant home after service on Christmas Eve.

Munchie Potluck & Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 10th



This is a fun evening of fellowship, munchies and Christmas caroling. The fun will start at 5:00 PM in the fellowship hall. Bring your favorite Christmas munchies to share! We need 10 to 12 people to decorate a table (based on a Christmas carol), then we will all see if we can guess the Christmas carol. If you would like to decorate a table, please see Kim Peterson by December 3rd.



The Happy Birthday Jesus party for the youth group will be held on Sunday, December 17th. All youth families will get an invitation in the mail the first week of December with the important details and location/map. Please see Kim Peterson if you have questions or do not receive your invitation.



Our Noon Year's Eve party will start at 10 AM, with worship in the fellowship hall on December 31st. Following worship, we will have a potluck and ring in the New Year, followed by some awesome games. Please bring a potluck dish to share and join in the celebration!



Roadrunner Food Bank Service Project

The youth will be going to the Roadrunner Food Bank on Friday, January 5th. We will meet at the Church at 12:15 and return about 4:30. Remember to eat lunch before coming, wear close toed shoes and a shirt with sleeves. Any adults wishing to join is are welcome!



Chile Cook-Off & Auction

Mark you calendars...
It's coming...

Sunday, January

21st

We will start the day with one worship service at 10 AM, followed by our chili cook-off and auction. We will need chili chefs & tasters/judges! Watch for more details coming soon, or contact Kim Peterson with questions.

FAMOUS QUOTATIONS

When you make a mistake, don't look back at it long. Take the reason of the thing into your mind and then look forward. Mistakes are lessons of wisdom. The past cannot be changed. The future is yet in your power.

Hugh White

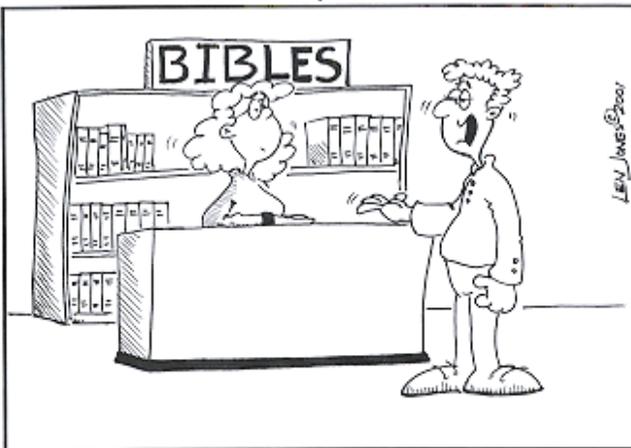
The holiest of all holidays are these kept by ourselves in silence and apart, the secret anniversaries of the heart.

H.W. Longfellow

To see the other side, to defend another people, not despite our tradition but because of it, is the heart of pluralism. We have to save each other. It's the only way to save ourselves.

Eboo Patel

ALTAR EGO by Len Jones



"What I really need is a translation that won't leave me feeling guilty, convicted, or in need of making some kind of decision."

December Anniversaries

And Birthdays

Anniversaries

BERDIN, Sam & Dorothy	12/16
MORYOSEF, Dory	12/16
LEWIS, Shelley	12/17
MACDONALD, Joe & Cazandra	12/19
GALLAHER, Walt & Betty	12/26

Birthdays

ANDERSON, Marcia	12/03
SHEPHERD, Betty	12/04
SORENSEN, Dennis	12/07
WISE JR, Tony	12/07
SECHREST, Mamie	12/09
COOLEY, Star	12/10
CHAVEZ, Pat	12/11
MCCONNELL, Lee	12/13
MOELLER, Jeff	12/14
KOFCHUR, Phoenix	12/17
ROGGE, Pam	12/21
BAIR, Ken	12/26
SEEFELDT, Susan	12/26
BRUNK, Judy	12/28
HILBORN, Symphany	12/28
LEGGIERO, Theresa	12/30
MCCONNELL, James	12/30
VEACH, Rebecca	12/30
HOLLAND (WEST), Megan	12/31

