

Cranes For Peace

33,000
paper cranes
swaying in the breeze

prayers on wings
crying one wish
“Peace to the World”

for 33 victims
a thousand each
one wish

the crane
symbol of life
peace and hope

origami cranes
embracing every fold
taught to Japanese children
according to tradition

Ben Gieske



“This is our cry.
This is our prayer.
Peace in the world.”

...But It Is Christ Who Lives in Me...

¹⁹For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; ²⁰and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

St. Paul to the Galatians



Meditation: God's Grace

Katia requested that I write a meditation about God's grace from Galatians 2:19-21 for this edition of *Wanderings*.

Scripture portrays God as the One who continually reaches out to human beings with mercy and grace. God's response to our brokenness, violence and sinfulness is the offer of healing love. The healing love is a gift that comes to us as we follow the path that Jesus taught us—the path of love, compassion, generosity, justice, peace-making.

When we make our lives about the same things that Jesus' life was about a transformation is worked in our lives and we discover that the Spirit is indeed at work in our lives.

The ritual of adult baptism takes up the language of Galatians by reminding us that we are symbolically dying (drowning) to a way of life that is characterized by selfishness, conceit,

vengeance, sin and rising to a new life characterized by the teaching and example of Jesus. It's this possibility of transformation of new life that is so exciting about the faith.

What if this is true, that we really can have new life in the midst of the one we are living now?

Well, in the words of the old truck commercial, "This changes everything." We can live more hopeful, honest lives. Our faith gives encouragement to engage this world, trying to make things better, and believing they can be better.

There are two ways to go through life. One way is hopeless -- seeing this world as something to be escaped. The other is to have transformational hope that when the world has done its worst there is still something God can do.

One of my closest friends told me

about his brother who has struggled with mental illness all his life. Part of his illness is never to take any chances.

Then one day, out of the blue the brother says, "I've been thinking about buying a farm. What do you think about that?"

My friend thought he had misheard his brother. "He never buys anything!"

They went out to look at the farm he wanted to buy out in Texas. What did it look like? A lot of hard work! But, he said, "For the first time, my brother had a little glimmer in his eyes that said, 'I could do that!'"

Most folks told them that the farm was a waste of money but my friend told his brother to go for it, wondering if he would be able to overcome his fear and really do it.

He did purchase the small farm, and now he and his 81 year old father are

God's response to our brokenness, violence and sinfulness is the offer of healing love.



Meditation: God's Grace *(continued)*

finding a relationship for the first time. The father should have been with his son more often throughout his life but he couldn't figure out how to relate to him. Now the 50 year old son and the 81 year old father are going to the farm on weekends so the father can teach his son how to make fence, to get rid of brush, and grow new life.

They are having life that they missed in their earlier years.

What if we could move beyond our fears and truly embrace the ways of living that Jesus taught us? Couldn't

What if we could move beyond our fears and truly embrace the ways of living that Jesus taught us?

we all find new life, restored relationships, hope?

What if it's true that the central claim of the Christian faith is that God is merciful and we

can have new life? It might mean some adjustment in our attitudes so we could say:

Don't ever give up on anyone you love. Don't ever say people can't change. Don't ever say the world is so messed up that it will never get better. Don't ever say you can't change because the Spirit is alive and at work in your life and can drive out your fears and give

you the power of transformation.

Rev. Dr. David Clark



From the Editor's Ipad...



To allow slowly as time goes by the emergence of Christ through us, as St. Paul declares, brings hope to our world. Hope is just that certainty that no matter the darkness, loneliness or unknowing, God is ever present among us.

To recognize that God reaches us through our hands, eyes, ears, feet, laughter, minds and souls brings hope to our world. Hope is just that certainty that though our journeys diverge, God blesses our choices and fills our lives with unending graces.

To realize that our self is but a part of God's spirit and that whatever change happens in us creates many unseen ripples brings hope to our world. Hope is just that certainty in God's constant interaction with the creation with an unwavering love.

Hope...

An immense wild word for our world today that peeks at us in the beautiful sunrises, sunsets, trees, flowers, butterflies and the twinkle in the eye, the shake of the hands, the embrace of loved ones, the hug of our children, the laughter in the contentment and peace.

Hope...

A word that the world most needs today as we tread the dark grounds of pain, exclusivity, and hatred. As we become even more aware of the suffering of our fellow humans on either side of the opposition, hope of a new dawn of love and peace keeps burning in our bosoms.

Let us not cease to hope...

Katia Hage

The Inward Journey: Desert Silence

*"To the desert go prophets and hermits;
through desert go pilgrims and exiles.
Here the leaders of the great religions
have sought the therapeutic and spiritual
values of retreat, not to escape but to find
reality."*

— Paul Shepard, *Man in the Landscape: A Historic View of the Esthetics of Nature*

This is the group that went on the "thin places" retreat to Joshua Tree on April 12, 2014.

It was amazing!



The Outward Journey: Get On The Bus

On June 4th, Rosemary Touhy sent out an invitation to bring together all those who would like to help with the GET ON THE BUS program for July 18th, for an overnight ride to take children to visit their mothers in prison in Dublin, near Oakland, as well as for the "Father's Day" bus going to the men's prison in Folsom on July 25th & 26th. Women of Faith, with the generosity of RUCC members, made fleece blankets for the children on the long trip to Folsom. These blankets were tailored to the age and sex of each child. They are as treasured as a reminder of a very special day, almost as much as the teddy bears the children receive from their fathers.

Mary Melcher and Diana Sommer helped hand write notes to put in the "Stay Connected" bags:

"We hope you had a great day with your dad. We thought about you today. Love, The Redlands United Church of Christ."

These bags were given to the children on the ride home from Folsom Prison to encourage them to stay in touch and

write to their fathers.

A fundraising event facilitated by Heather King took place at the Gourmet Pizza with a wonderful turn around.

Beki Holt and Susie Jacobsen helped put together snack and Stay Connected bags.

One of the families who went to Dublin called to say how wonderful it was to see their mother. She said the trip went great.

The bus to Folsom Prison which was only supposed to be picking up one chaperone at RUCC - found around 20 people at church. We never met more grateful families than we met tonight. One nine year old thanked us several times.

It is so beautiful when many hands and hearts come together to reunite, uplift and give hope to those who have made the wrong step and fallen down. May God bless all those who came together in action and prayers to bring the love of God ever closer to the heart of God's children.



For children growing up with one of their parents in prison, trips to visit mom or dad behind bars can be costly and therefore rare. Non-profit organization 'Get on the Bus' is working to strengthen these relationships between the incarcerated and their children by offering free buses for the kids to visit their parents in California prisons.

The most recent trip was organized last Saturday to Folsom State Prison, where the young children, hugged, kissed and played with their locked-up parents during visiting hours. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2708541/Visit-kids-cures-Folsom-prisoners-blues-Non-profit-offering-free-bus-rides-parents-bars.html#ixzz3CSbIRP2D>

Community Garden



*With rake and seeds and sower,
And hoe and line and reel,
When the meadows shrill with
"peeping"
And the old world wakes from sleeping,
Who wouldn't be a grower
That has any heart to feel?
~Frederick Frye Rockwell,
"Invitation," Around the
Year in the Garden, 1913*

Covenants

When Dave asked me to speak about covenants, I started to think about what to say, and I think maybe a story about why we came up with this was in order so here it is to the best of my recollection. Before this church came about we were in the Congregational Church. We were for the most part all workers in the church, in the Sunday School, deacons, choir and various committee heads.

All Congregational churches got to vote on whether to join the United Church of Christ or to remain as strictly congregational. The vote had come up before and was defeated and now it was to come up again. Part of us really wanted to be a part of the UCC and we were so confident that this time people would vote to join. The rule in the Congregational Church was that if you joined you would be considered a voting member as long as you did not ask to be removed from the roll, even if you had not darkened the door for years or contributed to the running of the church.

The day for the vote arrived and the church was full of people, people we had never seen before who had been called by a woman that was very against the UCC. The vote was taken and we lost again. I can remember many of us were sitting there stunned, after the service, still sitting in our seats when our minister, Bruce Van Blair came out and his words were, "They did not kill God."

When we began to talk with one another, we had planned to have a victory party that night and now we were so down that we decided to get together anyway and lick our wounds together. So at this party we were sitting around thinking what to do next and someone said, "Why don't we start our own church? Bruce what would it take to start a church?" He told us and we were off and running planning for

what our church would be like. Both of our ministers went with us: Bruce Van Blair and Rich Blakley.

Bruce told us about this wonderful covenant concept that was in place in the Church of the Savior in Washington D.C. We would write a covenant each year that was written to God and each other. This must be done every year or you would not be considered a member, and would have no vote. You could still attend but you would not be able to vote. We would put everything into this covenant. Do you intend to grow spiritually? Then what was your plan? Do you want to know more about things like Bible Study or prayer or maybe you had another idea. This was important because the minister was the only person who would read this and they could plan programs accordingly.

The next part could be where do you want to work in the church? Where were your interests? Did you want to plan parties and work with food? If so, you joined that group. If your interest was music, that group, and etc. Bruce emphasized to us how important it was to tithe our talents as well as our money.

Money would be a part of it. You would say what your giving would be and the budget would be made from this. He encouraged us to go to the biblical teachings of tithing. I was familiar with this because this was the concept that I had grown up with. When I was a little girl," in the dark ages" I got an allowance of .25 cents a week. My mother showed me how to figure 10% of that and this is what I took to Sunday School. However, I was a new widow now, with 5 children to support, whose income had just been cut by 2/3. I was scared enough about single parenting. I had never been the

"We would write a covenant each year that was written to God and each other. "

"And you know what I have never missed the money. "

Covenants

strong parent with disciple and now I had to be scared about my giving too. Bruce told us if we were too scared to start with 10% then start with five. Next he made the most remarkable comment. He said if we ever missed the money, he would make it up. Wow! I could not imagine the thought of Bruce making up my commitment! My Mother's voice came to mind, how she said, "the first 10% of your income does not belong to you, it belongs to God." Ok, I would try it and go for the gusto of the whole 10% of my net income. And you know what I have never missed the money. Eventually I tithed on my gross income.

This was my remembrance of the covenant. However, I have never seen another person's covenant. I heard Abdul Ehteshami's covenant because the family agreed to have it read at his memorial service. He was a very deep thinker and a beautiful writer and wrote the most beautiful covenant. I assure you mine was not like that. They can be however you want to make them. The important thing is that you write one that reflects you.

Thank You.

Gal Glanville



"They can be however you want to make them. The important thing is that you write one that reflects you."

Poetic Moments

Library Chair

Burgundy brocade with Fleur-de-lis, curved arms trimmed in gold

Holds her and Stephanie, the fiery cat. She pores over *Rapunzel*

Rapunzel, let down your golden hair.

Hers is dark brown. A long braid,

Hangs to her waist.

Dreams

Of escaping this castle.

Twelve foot stone walls circle a moat.

(She made up the moat.)

Ten-years-old, no siblings,

She longs to touch orange blossoms beyond the fortress –

To make friends with trolls and ghosts,

Maybe a magician or two.

Inside, a full library to explore.

Thinks the chair reads over her shoulder and climbs

The polished cherry ladder. Each morning a new book

Appears.

Today, she reads out loud:

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,

By the shining Big-Sea-Water,

Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,

Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.

(C) Cindy Rinne (Published by the *Wild Lemon Project*)

Sacred Hoop

Petroglyph whale emerges
with lightning snake inside.

What are these memories?

Select a thread lick the tip
right through the eye
up down pierce cotton fabric
repair the tear in my dress.

My friends heard the rain
a thousand-year rain
droplets not pricking the skin.
We fetched smooth stones



from rushing waters,
radial pattern on uneven
ground.

Asked permission of the plant
before plucking leaves.
Struck a match.
Bundled white sage
smoked crackled.
Vision blurred
in purification scent.

Stepping into the stitched circle,
chose west quadrant –

The Way of the Teacher.

Beneath my feet
Coast Live Oak dug deep
roots
slender and pointed acorns
with thin cap.

Our sacred circle guarded by a
warrior.

She chanted to eagle, deer, and bear
toward the four winds –
above on below the earth.
What did the Shaman see?

I held a wrapped stone sought wisdom.
God said my path is clear.
I am already on it.
Mended by earth and sky
inside the Medicine
Wheel.

(c) Cindy Rinne (Published by *Tin Cannon*)

RUCC Community: In and Out



The more we get together...



Art For Heaven's Sake

The Art For Heaven's Sake Committee is pleased to announce the two featured artists for the 35th annual show, October 17, 18 and 19.

Michael Bedoya, abstract painter

Christ Bulot, Assemblage artist

Stay tuned for more information on these fine local artists!



Children Migration (www.ucc.org/justice/getting-to-the-root-of-it)

Here is an extract of an article from the UCC, on July 9th, 2014 on why children are crossing the USA southern border. At the end is a list of ways to help support this vulnerable group. Janet Wilson will work with Dave and others who are interested to come up with ways that we, as a peace and justice seeking church, can help with this ministry.

The current crisis of “unaccompanied children” has reframed our public discourse on immigration. Since last October, U.S. authorities have apprehended an estimated 52,000 young people crossing the border from Mexico without a parent or responsible adult. This is twice as many in the first half of this year as the total number in 2013, and three times the number in 2011. Add an additional 39,000 women with children taken into custody this year, and it is clear why the numbers have overwhelmed an immigration system not prepared to take care of and process so many children.

These children, crossing the border in places like Tucson, Arizona, and Laredo and McAllen, Texas, mostly arrive in desperate condition. Hungry, tired, and scared, they willingly reach out to authorities for help, hoping to find the U.S. to be the land of opportunity they—or their parents—imagined it to be when they set out from home. The children, hardly able to plead their case or fully explain their circumstances, have found their reception far from inviting however. Stories of overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and abuse in the government’s temporary holding facilities first drew public attention to the crisis of these unaccompanied minors. But it was the scene, in the days surrounding the Fourth of July, of the mayor and angry citizens of Murrieta, California driving back buses of women and children headed for a federal processing center that was as shocking to many viewers as it was surely distressing to the young migrants in limbo. Is this how the U.S., founded as a nation of immigrants, would now treat these “huddled masses yearning to breathe free”?

Concern for the children has been met by a mix of sympathy and criticism for the border control and immigration system that obviously lack the resources and capacity to adequately handle the situation. As the numbers crossing the border continue to increase, the debate over immigration has swirled inside Washington, and across the social divides separating Americans’ opinions and perceptions of the situation. Recognizing both the urgent human needs at stake, as well as the political risks involved in responding to the crisis, the Obama Administration has scrambled to find solutions to what has become as much as a humanitarian catastrophe as a legal dilemma over the fate of the unaccompanied children.

A Faith Response

In the absence of meaningful immigration reform, which the UCC has long supported, and with a system focused more on homeland security than reconciling policy with humanitarian concerns and migrant/immigrant realities, what is being done on this side of the border to address the problem is piecemeal. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is tasked with caring for the children and families while they are awaiting the immigration process, has sought additional funds and partners to address needs for things like food, supervision and legal aid. Some children are being moved to shelters in places like Dallas County, Texas that have offered assistance. Meanwhile many churches and aid groups have also responded with resources and hospitality.

In the Rio Grande Valley around McAllen, Texas, Catholic Charities has coordinated efforts in the faith community to provide food, clothing, medicine and other goods. United Church News reports that churches in the Southern California-Nevada Conference participated in a faith delegation organized to assess the conditions of children being housed at the naval base in Ventura, County. Other UCC congregations along the border and across the country are also collecting donations of baby supplies, toys and other children’s needs.

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As the Redlands United Church of Christ,
we are called by God

to follow the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

We are an Open and Affirming community of faith,
who value all people as the family of God.

We love, nurture, support, and give hope
to one another on the journey of faith,
seeking God's will for our lives.

Led by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to serve,
and to help heal the hurts of humanity and the world
with caring justice to the glory of God.

