



The Connection

High Street Community Church

June 2009

“By Faith _____”

“By faith...” is not a statement meant to describe only the people listed in Hebrews 11. It is meant for us too. What is faith? It’s an action word. A fruit, born out of a relationship with the Living God. It’s the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb 11:1). The person living by faith is one who “believes that God truly exists and that God ‘cares enough to respond to those who seek Him’ (Heb 11:6 the Message). What does this mean? It means we are called to “live by faith” not just study and talk about it (Rom 1:5,17; 2Cor 5:7; Gal 3:11; Phil 2:17; 1Thess 1:3). Faith without living evidence is dead faith, or no faith at all (James 2:26). And faith always needs testing and refining to reveal its authenticity (1Peter 1:6-9).

I believe God is inviting us to deepen our faith. He has graciously brought us through His refining fire these past several years to prove our faith and prepare us for the work He has for us. Some have said, “the church is dying”. Are we? What would you have said to Gideon as his army was whittled from 20,000 to 300 (Judges 6)? Or to Abraham who considered his body “as good as dead” (Rom 4) and waited in faith for 13 years for a miracle? Or the widow of Zerephath who was asked to give away the last of the oil and flour she had left instead of using it for the last meal she and her son would eat (1Kings 17:7-15)? Or Mary who was asked to believe the impossibility of carrying God incarnate knowing no one would believe her story (Luke 1,2)? Could it be that God is asking us to trust Him with all our hearts and not lean on our own strength or understanding?

Faith is not merely giving intellectual assent to the promise and life with God – ‘even the demons believe’ there is one God (Jas 2). Faith is living what we say we believe. And God uses life and life-circumstances to invite us into this “lived experience” of faith. Even atheists recognize that faith must be a lived experience.

“Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher who popularized the ‘God is dead’ movement, once wrote in a letter to a friend ‘If these Christians want me to believe in their god, they’ll have to sing better songs, they’ll have to look more like people who have been saved, they’ll have to wear on their countenance the joy of the beatitudes. I could believe in a god who dances.” (K.Gire – Divine Embrace)

So how do we live this faith-infused –life? Imperfectly, but not by our own power but by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is lived in the reality of our daily life circumstances. God, I believe has asked us to step out of the boat with no visible means of support. Either God holds us up or we drown. God has brought us to dwell among the hungry multitudes of Santa Cruz County and the world and asked us to share our lives and resources that are woefully inadequate. As a congregation we listened for God’s leading. He has shown us the needs around us. As a leadership team we prayerfully discerned that God is leading us to step out when the conventional wisdom of “sight” and circumstances say “don’t do it. Stay in the boat!” Indicators we’ve witnessed of God’s invitation to “step out of the boat” are:

1. The unusual way God led us to the Wessels and even opened their hearts to leaving a comfortable position and place to join us in the midst of what feels like uncertainty.
2. And the encouraging responses from many of our church family urging us to trust that God is in this.

Is it scary? Yes! Will it take a miracle? Yes! But isn’t that what “walking by faith” is all about anyway? How does one feed 10-15, 000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish? By faith? Yes, it means living in such a way that God gets the glory for the great things He has done for us and through us. It is not about the great things we have done for Him.

Seekers on High

To all Seekers: On June 7th, we will have Seekers at 9:45 a.m. before the combined service at 11 a.m. Beginning June 14th, Seekers Class will combine with the other Sunday classes for the summer. Come and join the family for fellowship, learning, and growth in all areas! You will be enriched and encouraged! See you there!

International Students, Inc. Santa Cruz

Yikes! Quite scary to ponder my achievements in the half century I've been given! No novel written (yet)... not even full-time job status (yet)...BUT I have the steady love of my family and collected a vast array of amazing and wonderful friends along the way, like these. I'm thankful! (read more at www.isiwebnet.net/sites/PeggyPollard/50)

"Good friends are like stars, you don't always see them but you know they are there." email from , a Peking University professor family.

"I can surely say that you've been spreading love around in this world with the things that you do as a part of ISI.. " UCSC grad student from India Peggy

Engineers, managers, tech industry advisors wanted as panelists in career seminars -- Coach how to prepare, apply and interview for jobs. Location: UCSC Engineering school, TIME to be scheduled. Contact Peggy.

NEXT ISI EVENTS

6/11 ISI Graduation Beach Bonfire
6/25-7/1 ISI National Conference, Colorado Springs
7/12 ISI Volunteer training

Thanks for partnering with us to influence the lives of these strategic future leaders of many nations around the world.

Peggy Pollard, staff, International Students, Inc. Santa Cruz

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Mission News: O'Herins

Thank you for your continued prayers for us. God is at work in and through us.

Our recent news is that we just celebrated graduation with a number of our former students of linguistics at Biola University. It was good to gather with their families and rejoice together at all God has taught them and at His faithfulness over the years. We are proud of the quality work and perseverance of these grads, both those who received their B.A.s and those who completed Master's Degree programs. It is exciting to see how the Lord is leading each one in His work.

This weekend we received by mail a letter of commendation and a certificate from Wycliffe Bible Translators, marking 25 years of service with the organization, and thanking us for our work and faithfulness. It has not been the translation work we expected for most of the time, but it has been good, and God has used the time and blessed us throughout it. We give Him the praise and glory for the gifts of service and the strength to endure.

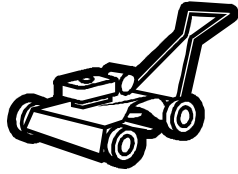
Now we are gearing up for a busy summer.

Julie and I travel to Boston June 1-5 for Kevin's graduation from Harvard. We return home on the same flight as Kevin and Alice. 2 weeks after that they will be getting married.

I am keeping busy with my new role. I recently finished the project of writing learning outcomes for a class that is part of the preparation for translators. The class has been taught for over 20 years at different SIL schools, but there was never a formalized set of things the students were expected to know and be able to do. I worked with a number of specialists in this field to develop the list, and we have had very positive feedback on it. Please pray for a similar project in another subject, that I (and the specialists in this area) would have great wisdom. It is turning out to be more difficult to express the desired outcomes for this course in concrete and specific statements.

June 27th Work Day!

We are having another work day on Saturday, June 27th, from 8:30-2p.m. We will be working solely on landscaping and grounds. Please bring gloves, rakes, weed eaters, pruning shears, and other landscaping tools. See you there!



Property Update

Apartment: The work for dividing the large bedroom into 2 rooms is completed.

Fireside: The wayne coating is up, the wallpaper is down, and the walls have been primed and textured. The carpet is on its way.

Parking lots: The property team plans to pave all parking lots in the beginning of July.

Continuation of article on p. 1....

“Walking by faith” forces us to walk closer to Jesus. More dependently, more humbly, and more desperately. I am absolutely convinced that as we live this life of faith, by the grace of God, the Friedrick Nietzsche’s of our world will witness a miracle-working God. The One true and living God. Yahweh. The “God who dances”. They will hear us “singing better songs”, and see us “wearing on our countenances the joy of the beatitudes”. This is, as Todd reminded us, letting our light shine before the world. And this, in the words of Jesus, will cause those around us to “praise your Father in heaven (Mt 5: 14-16).

In the years ahead, when we look back at what God in Jesus has wrought through this little congregation there will be great rejoicing and God will be glorified. And who knows what kind of eternal fruit that will bear?

So, may it be said of our congregation – “there is a people who believe God exists and have “sold all they have” to walk by faith following Jesus. May it always be said that “by faith, the body of Christ at 850 High Street are God’s graced dance partners”. May that be our reputation before our watching world. To quote an old Celtic prayer “May all we do and say be for the glory and service of our Lord”. Make it so, Lord, make it so. Amen and amen!

You are loved,

High Street Family Graduates

Post-Graduate Degrees

Name	School/Program
Christy Pierce	UCSC Physics PhD
Ginny Bradshaw	SJ State (Graduate degree in Occupational Therapy)

Undergraduate Degrees

Alyssa Gintert	APU
Noelle Devine	Vanguard University
Logan Vanderpool	Cal Poly
Katie Davis	APU
Will Rogan	UCSC
Jeremy Wong	UCSC
Cynthia Tam	UCSC
Gabriel Lueng	UCSC
Brian Bui	UCSC
Tim Cheung	UCSC
Myra Cheng	UCSC
Krystle Chipman	UCSC
Kenneth Maldonado	UCSC
Grace Chien	UCSC
Michael Palomares	UCSC
Brian Yu	UCSC
Tess McFife	UCSC

High School Graduates

Kaja Vaughan
Annie Williams
Riley Sisk
Johnny Halbleib
Morgan Rollo
Sean Forbes
Dominic Boegel
Kelsey Johnson
Annie Hamdani

Middle School Graduates

Stephen Burchell
Kristina Davis
Jenny Delucchi
Ubirani Getz Ferreira
Abigail Gargett
Bliss Houle
Heather Mackenzie
Jessica Pappas
Thatcher Sammet
Erika Tinetti

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Connection
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**Lead Pastor: Don Ferris; Youth Pastor: Todd Trowbridge; Youth Assistant: Melinda Bernal;
Worship Leaders: Sheryl Ayers and Brett & Lisa Fowler
Administrative Assistant: Dorothy Stowe**

What is this Summer all about?

It is a call to leave the familiar security of our “nets and boats” to follow Jesus into a wonderful adventure of faith and community. As a congregation we’ve been through a lot over the past several years. Dear friends have left and new friends have come. If we are serious about displaying the glory of God as a “Family of Friends Following Jesus”, then we need to be intentional about building some family relationships and memories. This summer is a great time to start!

Beginning June 14th the summer Sundays will be designed to facilitate this desired goal. We will share worship as an intergenerational family of God at **9:30 a.m.**

We will follow these worship times with a variety of “deepening” opportunities – discussion time, “this is my story” times, all-church shared meals, special activities, invite someone to share a meal, shared activities – picnic, biking, boating, tennis, table games, etc.

I would urge each of us to pray that God would surprise us this summer. That God would enlarge our vision of who we are as a congregation and how God desires to use each of us in His Body here at High Street.

- ◊ **Please consider** reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 and Romans 12:1-13 and using these Scriptures to guide your prayer for us as the body of Christ this summer.
- ◊ **Please ask** God to direct you as to how He would desire to use you this summer in encouraging this body to more deeply fall in love with Jesus and to more fully love each other.
- ◊ **Please consider** doing something with someone in our church family outside of the normal church setting. Some examples: invite someone(s) to your house, to go to the aquarium, to do an activity, get small group to read and discuss Leighton Ford’s *The Attentive Life*, or read and discuss Ken Gire’s *Divine Embrace*, *The Grace Awakening* by Chuck Swindoll, *The Chronicles of Narnia* or the *Weight of Glory* by C.S. Lewis, *Desiring God* by John Piper, or go to a movie and then discuss it over coffee and dessert, or do a Bible study, or prayer group....
- ◊ **Please come each Sunday** prepared to engage with the Holy Spirit in answer to Jesus’ prayer for us in John 17.
- ◊ **And most of all** pray, pray, pray that God would be please to bless us in the following as we exercise our faith.

I am excitedly looking forward to what God will do in us and through us this summer for His glory, for our joy and for the sake of the world.