



# First Pres Challenger

WORSHIP *grow*  
SERVE

Equipping the Family of God at First Presbyterian Church, Fresno

May 2010

## What Do You See? By Terry Jaurena

I have been serving this body of Christ since August of 1993 as your Mission Director. This is my seventeenth year on staff with the responsibility of engaging our members in God's mission purposes within our city and around the world.

I've been here long enough to see Greg Ehlert go to the Urbana Mission Conference in 1993 (along with thirteen other college students from this church) and to watch him be ordained and installed as a minister of the Word and Sacrament here in 2008.

I've been here long enough to remember when there wasn't a Pink House or a Fresno Institute for Urban Leadership and I've seen those ministries grow and flourish and shape many lives.

It's been my joy and privilege to meet with, introduce you to and attempt to provide support and encouragement for mission partners who amaze, encourage and challenge me as they seek to be faithful messengers of the Good News in places near and far.

There have been many exciting programs, possibilities and adventures over these seventeen years, far too many to list them all. But I must tell you that I see God doing something right now that is, well, abundantly more than I could have asked or imagined. "What?" you ask.

God has so moved in the hearts of a group of mission directors/pastors in this city and their churches that we are actually working together to be a blessing to a specific place in the world, a place

of tremendous need. "Where?" you ask. **Swaziland.**

It started a few years ago as a prayer after some of my mission director friends hosted World Vision's AIDS Experience in Fresno. "What next Lord?" was the prayer. And the answer has come, "work together. Pick a place in the world, go and see, come back and tell and then trust Me to show you how you can be a blessing.

They are Matt Cook from Campus Bible Church, Jon Annin from Clovis Hills Church, and Patrick Dill from The Well. And then, I'm not even sure how this happened, except that it was God at work, there are five from First Pres — yes, five — Steve Skibbie and Ronnie Samuelian, as well as Jamie, Mindy and Bekah Franklin.

This Vision Trip is the first step in what we intend to be a long term commitment to children, communities, and churches on the front lines of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Swaziland. We intend this to be another long obedience in the same location in sweet partnership with several other churches.

Please pray not only for First Pres' five people on the trip, but for the Church in Fresno's eight as they travel and see and learn and experience Swaziland together.

Pray for this crazy partnership, asking for God's hand to guide, direct and protect us all as we seek to be a blessing together in Swaziland and in Fresno.

Matt Cook has already set up a blog site for the trip. It can be found at [www.fresnohope.com](http://www.fresnohope.com).

If you desire to contribute towards the travel expenses for our five, we would not hinder you. If you use an offering envelope you can simply write Swaziland Trip on the blank line and designate your amount. Or you can write it in the memo section of your check and send it my attention at the church office.

On May 16 eight people from three different churches in Fresno will travel first to South Africa and then to Swaziland. World Vision staff will be their guides and hosts.

They will have the chance to see first hand how we in Fresno might partner with a specific community or group of communities to reach their goals to improve the health, education, economic and spiritual state of their communities. It's called an Area Development Project.

Who are the eight people?

**Mission Director,  
Mission Director,  
What do you see?  
God doing something  
Amazing to me**

# Enjoying Choir, Remembering Connie By the Chancel Choir

*Editor's note: Recently, the Chancel Choir was asked to write something they enjoyed about choir. Their love for the Lord and for each other was revealed in their responses.*

Several choir members stated that God spoke to them through the music we sing in the choir. One member said, "The music is wrapped, rolled, and prepared, and when it is presented to me it is ready to speak to my heart."

Another choir member stated, "God touches my soul through the prayerful anthems we sing." One member simply loves the choir and the music we sing.

Louise Armstrong said, "the uplifting lyrics come back to me time and again, and I love being with talented musicians. The words of our music often impact me more than the sermon." Rod Lyon agreed that he loved being part of a community that shares a love of music. This serves both the church and Rod at the same time.

Sharon Robert simply loves the music itself—the melodies and harmonies minister to her. She said, "I love the perfection of music, like math, and the ability to express ourselves through it. God is truly the maestro."

Roxanne Cousins agreed with Sharon. She said, "One of the best things about choir is that in the process of practicing the music, my heart and soul get a chance to marinate in the profound truth that is present in the music."

Nancy Crump finds the music we sing to be inspirational. She said, "It is a joy to minister to the congregation through our music and enjoy Julie's excellent direction." Felicia Kellenberger loves singing hymns of praise to God, sharing prayer concerns with the choir, and being directed by Julie Carter.

Cathy Crosby appreciates the beautiful, meaningful music. She humbly stated, "I appreciate my fellow voices, who help me learn the music, improve my performance, and mask my boo-boos and musical ignorance." Walter Saul reminded us that God has blessed us with this choir. We have a choir that is "enfolded into true worship through extraordinary music making that does not steal from God's glory."

And one choir member said, "Being part of the choir is so rejuvenating that I can't think of a better way to start each week. The fellowship and genuine caring for each member is so strengthening, and carries over through whatever the week may bring."

*Yes, the choir members do indeed share fellowship and genuine caring for each other. In addition to writing about the choir, the choir wrote down precious memories about our dear organist, Connie Ellenberger.*

Walter Saul said, "Her feet may have been small in size, but her organ shoes are a cavernous size to fill." Martin Temple observed that Connie had the heart of a teacher, who was supportive of young people within the church context.

Another choir member chimed in, "Connie's smile and sense of humor, in addition to her superior talent, made choir practicing a joy. I will miss her twinkling eyes and ready wit." Louise Armstrong agreed that Connie's quick wit and joy of life made her fun to be with.

One member said, "Being the church organist was not a job to her.

It was the opportunity that God gave her to bring joy into her life, and she let that joy overflow to the choir and the congregation." Cathy Crosby appreciated Connie's cheerfulness above and beyond her skills as a musician.

Rod Lyon loved Connie's enthusiasm for God and her music. Andrea Mead appreciated Connie's smile, which brightened the room. "She liked to challenge us to greater faith. She was fiercely faith-filled and trusted God with her whole heart."

Barb Grunwald will miss Connie's prayer leadership, and the way Connie shared her prayer needs in a model way. Olivia Alverez always felt that Connie was a gifted person in her devotion to her family, her beautiful music ability, her baking, her quilting, and her selflessness.

"Connie was humble and genuine." "She was a ray of sunshine." "Connie always had the knowledge that God was in control." Choir members continued remembering Connie.

More than one member remembered how weak she was as she climbed the stairs towards the end of her life. But she never complained. Felicia Kellenberger agreed that, "just looking at Connie, you wouldn't think she was in such pain with her illness. She was able to cope, with God's touch."

Eleanor Alpha remembered how outgoing Connie was to her, a new choir member. Eleanor said, "Connie was as talented as Diane Bish." (a renowned organist from Florida). Three other choir members recalled the special "Guess Who?" game Connie and Julie started in the choir, a game which helped choir members to get to know each other.

*Choir is not just about music. It is a fellowship where people share their love of God and love for each other, in all seasons of life. And then they praise God through their music.*



# Soli Deo Gloria Presents “A Jubilant Song” By Dr. Julie Carter

Celebrate Mother’s Day in a unique way this year. Take Mom to a **Soli Deo Gloria** concert! Featuring Fresno’s newest women’s chorale, the concert will highlight music that focuses on the joy of making music, celebrating the month of May, singing music to bring glory to God and just plain old beautiful sounds!

Directed by Dr. Julie Carter, “A Jubilant Song” will be presented Saturday, May 8 at 7 p.m. at University Presbyterian Church, located at 1776 E Roberts. Formed to sing music of the highest quality to the glory of God, Soli Deo Gloria presents “A Jubilant Song” to celebrate the sheer joy of making music.

A central piece of the concert is Johannes Brahms’ *Four Songs* accompanied by harpist Laura Porter and French Hornists Elisha Wilson and Jennie Blomster of the Fresno Philharmonic. Many audience members are well-acquainted with Handel’s *For Unto Us a Child is Born* from the *Messiah*, but did you know it was originally a treble duet? Handel borrowed from himself to arrange it for the *Messiah* song we all know and love. Soli Deo Gloria presents it as the original song.

Clovis composer Kevin Memley’s beautiful *Ubi Caritas*, spirituals *Steal Away*, and *Deep River* are

more of the repertoire you will hear at the concert. Be sure not to miss a special piece celebrating ladies of the Red Hat Society! All in all, a most enjoyable way to spend an evening! Come join us for vivacious songs of music and mirth!

First Pres singers include Michelle Smith, Sharon McCammack, Sharon Robert, and Barb Grunwald. Tickets are \$15/\$10 students and seniors and are available from singers, at the door, or by contacting Soli Deo Gloria at (559) 473-6486, or e-mail us: [sdgchoir@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sdgchoir@sbcglobal.net). “If you are merry, sing away ... to give the praise to God most high ... is a most joyful thing!”



## *This Unique Spring By Terry Jaurena*

Somehow, the weather shifts this spring seem more extreme to me. One moment in a day it’s sunny and warm and inviting and a bit later it’s stormy and cold and threatening.

I haven’t researched it, but my guess is that most springs we experience those extremes. My husband has said of Fresno’s springs, “Wait five minutes; the weather will change.”

Perhaps this year it all feels more extreme because of the heaviness of my heart and the sorrow that is always right there, sort of like the storm clouds in the sky as I write. They seem dark and ominous, and so does the road ahead at times.

I have said to several people we are on a long and difficult road. I thought it was quite hard enough with Pastor Jamie’s death, but then another storm hit and we said another too-soon goodbye to Connie, our organist.

But spring, even this spring, is about more than storms. Just as there are poppies in bloom and roses about to burst out in my garden, there are joys to be found in our fellowship together along this long and difficult

road, maybe only to be found on this road.

I keep praying a phrase from the song, *Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus*. “Jesus, Jesus how I trust you ... oh for grace to trust you more.”

I keep hearing verse 13 from Psalm 27, “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” That’s from the NAS version. The NIV reads this way, “I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

And I keep telling myself the truth about God that Darrell Johnson wrote in his wonderful little book about the Lord’s Prayer, *Fifty Seven Words that Change the World*:

“Things are not as they seem. There is more going on that meets the un-aided senses. There is a God. A living God. A good God. A faithful God. A powerful God. A reigning God. An ever-present God. There is never a time when this God is not good. There is never a time



Photo by Cathy Crosby

when this God is not powerful. There is never a time when the God of the Bible is not on the throne of the universe. There is never a time when the God we meet in Jesus is not present. It is a promise: ‘I will never leave you or forsake you.’”

It’s stormy out today and it’s stormy in my heart. But there is more going on. Wait; the road will not always be this difficult or the storm this severe. Look; we are not alone on it.

Perhaps I need to train my ear to hear verse 14 of Psalm 27: “Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord.”

# Can Pastors Fly? By Marcie York

One of our favorite Wednesday nights in the AWANA year is the annual "Ask the Pastor" night. Recently we welcomed David Abdo, Paul Armstrong, Lana Roberts and Greg Ehlert to our clubs to field the questions that have been brewing in children's minds for the past year.

I sat in on "Ask the Pastor" night, Cubby-style, and the question was asked, "Can pastors fly?" From then on all questions and comments from these preschoolers revolved around the idea of flying pastors.

There was much discussion of methods of flight, and even a suggestion that wearing a cape might help. David Abdo sat in the hot seat and he fielded that discussion with great aplomb.

I was struck by how this microcosm of the Body of Christ mirrored the expectations we sometimes have of each other. Questions flew; "Can't you fly? Why not? Have you tried growing wings?" And then came the helpful suggestion, "Maybe wearing a cape would help, like Superman."

From the experience of the 3- or 4-year-old mind, wings work for birds, so why not for people? And if wings don't work, try the super-hero route and put on a cape! Their understanding of reality is still forming and is layered over with their perceptions of the world around them.

I realized that I also layer my understanding of reality with my perceptions of the world around me and sometimes I don't get it right. I live within hearing distance of two schools, and I know when it is recess time at the elementary school, and when sports practices and events are taking place at the high school.

The ebb and flow of those sounds have been part of my life for many years. I particularly enjoy hearing band practice at the high school, but I

remember how I used to "critique" the strength of the band based on what I heard. Sometimes I would say to myself, "How strong the band is today, they are playing so well I can hear every instrument and it sounds good!" At other times I would remark, "The band sounds weak and uncoordinated today, they sure need more practice before the weekend game."

And then God's gentle, insistent Spirit taught me a great but humbling lesson. I realized that the difference in how the band sounded to me was determined by the direction the breezes were blowing! My judgment of the quality of performance was completely skewed by whether the breeze was blowing towards me or away from me.

That experience showed me I can easily jump to other conclusions that are based on faulty perceptions on my part.

Due to their limited life experiences, 3 and 4 year olds are incredibly demanding and narrow minded. They want action and they want it NOW! They have no concept of time and certainly do not know how to wait.

It requires great patience and a sense of humor on our parts to help preschoolers develop appropriate expectations and the ability to wait for answers. Each of my grandchildren at some point during this age has brought me a toy that is irrevocably broken and expected me to fix it. When I have gently explained it



cannot be fixed, the requests turn to imperious demands.

My fourth grandchild has just entered this phase and I find myself sighing, "Here we go again!" I am flattered by her great expectations of my capabilities, but it is frustrating because I cannot make her understand why her demands cannot be met.

I see now why that question and answer time in Cubbies has struck me so. I have often felt like responding to others with "What do you expect me to do, sprout wings and fly?" or "Who do you think I am, Super Woman?"

As I read God's Word and listen to the nudges of His Spirit I know that because of my own skewed perceptions I also have expected others to sprout wings or put on their super capes, figuratively speaking! So what do I do with the expectations I have of others and how do I know if they are reasonable?

I took this question to the Lord in prayer and one of the nudges He gave me was to remind me that HE has an expectation of ME. I found His words in Micah 6:8,

*"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

Those are good words, simple words and I will choose to follow them, especially the next time that little 3-year-old granddaughter of mine expects me to "fly"!



From the Treasure Chest

# I Corinthians 1 and the Memorial Reception Team

By Kathy Hamlin and Roger Taylor

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul explains that we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, and that the body is not made up of one part, but of many. Each part is important to the body. Many parts, one body. Why is this important to the Deacons' Memorial Team?

The Deacons' Memorial Team is privileged to serve church family members by hosting memorial receptions in our fellowship hall. Deacons provide all set-up, food (except sandwiches), servers and clean-up.

The three deacons on the Memorial Team are Kathy Hamlin, Kimberly DeWolf, and Julie Barrows. All other workers are Harvest of Helpers volunteers who filled out the deacons' flyer on Thanksgiving Sunday in November.

This is the list we use to call for reception help, and we rotate through the names in order to spread the workload. Right now, we have 39 food volunteers. With very large memorials (200+ attending) this is not enough to cover our needs, so we do random calling out of the church directory.

Every memorial reception needs workers, and we do our best to staff

receptions according to estimated attendance. For instance, a reception for 200 would need approximately 18 workers. At Pastor Jamie Evans' reception we had 35 workers.

Reception workers prepare donated food for buffet service, set-up and decorate the fellowship hall us-

provides floral centerpieces, paper goods, utensils, cream and sugar, and other items needed to host a reception. A restricted account is used to pay for these items. Many families choose to donate to this account to help other families in need.

A memorial reception has many parts and many needs to fill. Because we have hosted six receptions since January 2010, three of them with over 300 attending, our team is stretched. Please consider donating to the Deacons' Memorials account and/or adding your name to the Harvest of Helpers list. A flyer will be in the church bulletin in a few weeks.

There are eighteen deacons who serve three-year terms. The Deacons' many services are organized with twelve committees, as well as home visits or phone call to the shut-ins or S.T.A.R.S. (Seniors That Are Really Special). A typical month of activities includes 36 home visits and 25 phone calls. This information may help you understand why we would like and encourage additional support by means of the Harvest of Helpers and/or monetary donations.

## One Body in Christ

ing colors requested by the family, tend to the family's needs during the reception, serve and clean up food and beverages, wash dishes, launder tablecloths, and take any extra food to Evangel Home or Poverello House. Presently, we have 17 Harvest of Helpers volunteers staffing receptions.

The Deacons' Memorial Team



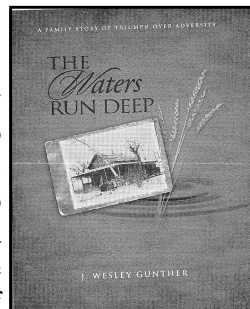
## In The Library By Albert Pauls

In his book, *The Waters Run Deep*, Wes Gunther, member of First Pres, explores his family history as his ancestors fled from European countries (including Prussia) to find a place that granted them religious freedom. In their pursuit of freedom, life was often unrelentingly harsh.

From Prussia to Russia to the prairies of North American, and finally to California, the family survived wars, the Great Depression, and emotional upheaval along the way.

This story is specific to Gunther's family, but it also provides a window to the struggles of many families

who came to the United States and Canada along different routes and for varying reasons. Copies of the book are available for purchase from the Gunthers.



***"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.***

***—Isaiah 54:10 NIV***

## Deadline Information

### **The deadline for the June Challenger is Friday, May 21 at 5 p.m.**

Please contact Daphne Saul by calling 252-4064, or e-mail her at [daphne4926@sbcglobal.net](mailto:daphne4926@sbcglobal.net). You may also leave articles in the newsletter box in the church office.

### **The deadline for “A Place for You” is each Monday at 5 p.m.**

Please submit announcements to: Cheryl Eaker at 485-6460 or [staff@fpcfresno.org](mailto:staff@fpcfresno.org) and put Cheryl Eaker’s name in the subject box.

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# For Your Information



Photo by Cathy Crosby

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