

Words of Faith

THE NEWSLETTER OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Spring 2016

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A Living Chronicle

John Wykoff

There are few who realize when they pick up their hymnal, that what they hold between their fingers is a living chronicle of Christendom. Gathered between the preface and the indices is a collection of Christian songs covering more generations, more cultures, more styles of music and poetry than most people give it credit for. Nowhere else is the tapestry of Christ's kingdom so boldly displayed.

It is more than an anthology, however. It is more than the church history it so singularly contains. It is more because it is first and foremost a songbook--a book to be sung, and its contents come alive in the singing. Reading history carries us into the past, but singing a hymn brings our history forward to meet us. Read about Martin Luther and you'll admire his boldness. But sing his hymns--put his words in your mouth, his song on your lips--and his courage is now your own. Your heart and Martin Luther's heart, joined across time and space! Is there a comparable method of devotion?

Yes, the hymnal is a living chronicle. But its life depends on its use. Music never was a matter of ink and paper. Music is something that human beings do together. Unless a song is sung, it lies dead on the page. Flat. And coldly silent. But when at last it is sung, lovingly and beautifully sung, repeatedly sung, it comes carefully to life, leaving the page behind. Our history comes to life. Our theology comes to life. The best reflections of the Saints come to life when we sing their songs. If the hymnal feels dead to you, then bring it to life. Tolle et psallite! Take it up and sing!

Tolle et psallite! Sing what they sang in the Roman Empire under Constantine (#58). Tolle et psallite! Sing what they sang in Jerusalem in the Eighth Century (#267). Tolle et psallite! Sing what John Calvin sang (#613). Sing what the Puritans sang (#18). Sing the song of an American slave (#611) and then sing the song of the forgiven slave trader (#627). Bind your soul to the soul of Christians everywhere at all times by singing their songs. Tolle et psallite!

Tolle et Psallite! Take it up and sing! Much more could be said to hymn the hymnal, but the proof is in the pudding. To know its contents is to know the heart of Christendom. It is a living chronicle. Take it up and sing!

Dr. Wykoff is Assistant Professor of Music, Lee University School of Music, Cleveland, TN, and Elder, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, TN.

“An Interview with Pastor Rayburn” Installment No. 4: Counseling & Prayer

Dr. Mark Murphy

Dr. Mark Murphy recently sat down with Pastor Rayburn to talk about various aspects of his ministry, his life as a pastor, Faith Pres., etc. Herewith, an excerpt from that discussion, covering counseling and prayer.

Counseling

Dr. Murphy: *What percentage of your total work hours are spent in counseling during an average week?*

Pastor Rayburn: Again, I can't really say that there is an average week. I am sure I have some weeks in which I have seen no one, and then there are weeks in which I am seeing several people every day. That sort of pastoral work is created for me by others and I have no control over that and have no need to have any control over that.

Dr. Murphy: *Do you enjoy counseling or what you have called individual preaching?*

Pastor Rayburn: Well, enjoy isn't the word because often it is heartbreak or fear or anger that brings folk to me as their pastor, but through the years I have more and more understood what an immense privilege it is for people to share their secrets with me and for me to have an opportunity to seek to help them in the Lord's name.

Dr. Murphy: *We have talked about preaching style. Would you say that you have a particular counseling style? Just as with preaching, who or what has influenced your counseling the most?*

Pastor Rayburn: I've read a good bit about pastoral counseling, as it is called nowadays, and I passed through a time earlier in my ministry when there were competing schools of pastoral counseling even in our own circles. Jay Adams was the representative of one approach, Bill Kerwin, who taught me at Covenant Seminary, didn't think much of Jay Adams and had a very different approach and across the landscape of American evangelicalism there were a number of other approaches. But over time I think it became clear to me what I was and what I was

not. I was a pastor. My abilities and my training allowed me to bring the Bible and the truth of God's Word to bear on people's lives. I am not a therapist, not trained as a therapist. So when people come to me I feel like my responsibility is to help them understand what the Word of God has to say about their particular life situation.

Dr. Murphy: *Are there times that the material uncovered in counseling exceeds your skill set or comfort level?*

Pastor Rayburn: Frequently, in fact. I have often told people who have come to see me that I wanted them to see a doctor. I have often told them that they are going to need the attentions of a professional counselor or a psychiatrist. There are any number of circumstances in which I am out of my depth and can quite quickly realize that I am not the person that should be in charge of this person's care.

Dr. Murphy: *How do you decide when it is appropriate to refer out? Does Faith Presbyterian Church have a list of trusted resources from which you select and direct?*

Pastor Rayburn: If a person is describing a situation in which I have concern that there is some condition that we would describe as mental illness of some kind, if there is longstanding spiritual disability that needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive way than I would be able to do, I have no hesitation in recommending that they see others better qualified than I. We don't have an approved list of people to whom we may refer but we do know folk we trust and I have often made referrals of that kind.

Prayer

Dr. Murphy: *John Knox described prayer as “an earnest and familiar talking with God.” Does that accurately describe how you understand and practice prayer, or do you prefer another working definition?*

Pastor Rayburn: I still think it is the best definition of prayer I have ever heard, but in the

scripture you do find different forms of prayer from more formal, public prayers to the passionate, highly personal arrow prayers such as Nehemiah offers in the moment when the emperor asks him what's wrong. So, all prayer ought to be earnest and familiar talking with God, but how it is delivered can depend on the circumstances.

Dr. Murphy: *Faith Presbyterian Church has a mid-week prayer meeting. When did that begin, and what was the impetus for that?*

Pastor Rayburn: I grew up attending prayer meetings because we were dutiful Christians and every church in those days had a mid-week prayer service. But the first prayer meeting I ever attended that I thought was a real prayer meeting, and that this was what a prayer meeting ought to be, was at Gilcomston South Church in Aberdeen, Scotland. Three hours every Saturday night and it was work. Nobody could have gone to that prayer meeting intending to participate without realizing that he was going to be working for three straight hours. What impressed me so much about that prayer meeting was that the people who attended it really believed they were doing something. There was a sense of calling and of importance and of expectation. I think that prayer meeting was the first prayer meeting that I attended that could really have thought they had something to do with the fall of the iron curtain because they had so earnestly prayed for the church behind the iron curtain for so many years. It was an outward looking prayer meeting. They knew most evangelical ministries in Scotland and in three hours you can pray for a lot of them in a particular service. I came feeling that that was the kind of prayer meeting they must have had in Acts 12 in those heady, apostolic days after Pentecost when they were bringing blessings down from heaven on the heads of a great many people in Jerusalem in those days. So I came to Faith determined that we were going to have something like that as a prayer meeting.

Dr. Murphy: *For someone reading this who has never attended a Wednesday evening prayer meeting describe briefly what typically takes place during these times of prayer?*

Pastor Rayburn: We spend some time as Mr. Still did in Gilcomston going over the agenda and reminding people of what needed particular attention in prayer and in introducing new matters that required prayer. They were constantly hearing from people all over the world asking for prayer for this and that. Missionaries know who prays for them. If they really believe they are going to get some prayer, they are very likely to keep you informed as to their circumstances. That's been true here. I don't know how many time missionaries have told me how impressed they were with the prayer meeting and how grateful they were for it. So, we go over what can be prayed for and should be prayed for and then we pray. Most of the prayer meeting is simply one pray after another.

Dr. Murphy: *And I know from experience our natural tendency seems to be more and more inward and you, on many occasions rightly, redirect that.*

Pastor Rayburn: Obviously we have to pray for things of importance to the congregation and the life of God's people here, but you're right, the tendency has to be counteracted. We have to push outward all the time.

Dr. Murphy: *If you could offer an inducement for attendance at prayer meeting, what would you say?*

Pastor Rayburn: Guilt works for a week. That's my experience. I can lay on the guilt and we'll have more people at prayer meeting on Wednesday night, but Mr. Still's argument was not that it was the unspiritual people who didn't come to prayer meeting. His argument was it was the lazy people who didn't come to prayer meeting because prayer was work and that's what they did. He always talked about rolling up your sleeves and getting down to work on Saturday night. That I think is a wise approach. We encourage people to think of the prayer meeting as a concentrated work on behalf of the kingdom of God and we hope people will want that in their lives.

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Dr. Murphy: *Missionaries and other Christian workers frequently speak at prayer meeting. Why is it important for our congregation to stay in touch and remain involved with other workers in Christ's vineyard?*

Pastor Rayburn: The constant tendency is to focus inward at a prayer meeting. Illness in the congregation, unemployment in the congregation, all of which needs the congregation's prayer, no question, but the Christian faith is so much larger than that and our interests ought to be so much larger because the Lord's are, and the presence of missionaries and other Christian workers speaking at prayer meeting helps us to maintain that outward focus. And, frankly, it is when you yourself meet the person and hear the person that you form a real interest in his or her continuing work. So when a person comes first to Faith's prayer meeting, he will be praying, as I was praying at Gilcomston, for a host of people I had never met and knew nothing about. Through the course of three years that changed so dramatically that at the end I was praying primarily for people whom I knew and about who's ministry knew quite a bit.

Dr. Murphy: *What comes to mind when you think about an encouraging answer to a prayer that was offered up in Wednesday evening prayer meeting?*

Pastor Rayburn: There are so many I could mention. We have prayed for the salvation of people who have then been converted. We have prayed for the healing of people who were desperately ill who were then delivered from that illness. We have prayed for the employment of people who are unemployed and they are employed. And in so many other ways God has heard and answered our prayers, but I often say to people because I believe this so firmly myself, eternity alone will reveal how much happened in the world because we were praying that it would happen in the course of these Wednesday nights for so many years.

Faith's Refrain

Jennifer Sullivan

During the time of sojourning in this world, shadow, sorrow and smallness often perplex and pain us. Our faith can be weighed down, assaulted, and sometimes confused. Amidst the reality of living by faith and not by sight, a subtle temptation creeps in which causes us to feel that our belief or submission would be clear, ready and sure, if only this darkness or pain or lack was not there. Our love and trust would be more genuine if relief would come. A bitter edge begins to haunt the strain, "Truly, you are a God who hides Himself." A self-pitying harangue sounds its tone in our De Profundis.

So when was our faith strong, our sight clear, and our obedience sure? And when was our love, joy and hope steadfast? Perhaps we will see it when we look back to the time that the absence of pain and veils and death was the substance of life's experience? No-- those life-giving realities were not enough to keep from pride, doubt and betrayal. They were not for us, or for another more glorious and powerful creature who fell—son of the dawn, guardian cherub, whose heart was proud because of his beauty, whose wisdom was corrupted, and who was cast out and down to the depths. And then how did we fare when all was well-watered and very good?

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. ~ The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ~ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." ~ Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ~ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ~ Then the Lord God

said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” ~ Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

The participation in clarity of life, the abundance of fruitfulness, the pleasure of love and acceptance, the peace of sinlessness, and the absence of grief did not foundationally sustain trust and obedience, or retain those having it from bringing harm to others as well.

Here are two comforts. The first is a ceaseless hymn of praise to Him who was not thrown out from glory, but left it willingly to suffer our agony and bless and restore others!

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

While we grumbled in Paradise, he was reverent in His agony. While we disobeyed in our haven, He learned obedience in His suffering. No wonder, He is the one worthy to unlock the scroll, not us, as we demand a sign. Though seeing a man rise from the dead will not now convince us, He who did rise from the dead will rescue us!

Another comfort is that the faith we must have now is not uniquely different than that from which we turned in our first happiness, or from that which we will ever have in future glory. We can be sure of the way forward, though now in the shadowlands. Even though in this present darkness, trouble sparks up around us, wrathful waves overwhelm, sight is dimmed in our cloudy mirror and a ministering friend glances his flaming sword to guard the way back-- even so, the theme of faith has the same melody-- humility, trust, obedience, and love.

John 16:33 “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Psalm 95: 8-9 “do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.”

News Bits

CHS Performs *Tartuffe*

Covenant High School transformed the Faith Pres. sanctuary into 17th century Paris for two performances of the French satire *Tartuffe*, on March 17 and 18. Audiences were transported to France, where the reign of King Louis XIV influenced every aspect of society, including the stage. Performer Steven Knight felt that passage and transformation, noting that dressing up in the costumes of 17th century France, helped enable him to “experience the mindset and worldview” of the characters, and to help the audience likewise understand. Hannah Lawty concurred, noting the fun it was to play the “larger-than-life characters.”

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, better known by his stage name Moliere, brought to French theater a new form of comedy – a satire of contemporary morals and manners shamelessly exposing the vices of the day. *Tartuffe*, which means “the hypocrite,” showcases the playwright’s masterful handling of the French language, which loses none of its bite in translation. He deftly lays bare the religiosity of the day. While his comedies on religious hypocrisy earned him disdain from the church of his day—church leadership perceived his works as attacks on the church itself rather than a criticism of hypocrisy—Moliere was ultimately successful in making an indelible mark in the world of theater. He persevered through numerous rewrites and rejections until finally producing the acclaimed *Tartuffe*, which he accomplished in large part by the king’s intercession. It is no surprise that the play concludes with a show of flowery and gratuitous homage to the king.

CHS continues to put on delightful shows, allowing students to enrich their high school education with performance arts. Further, such productions “teach [students] about themselves,” observed Haylee Darby. “You learn how to cooperate with others, to

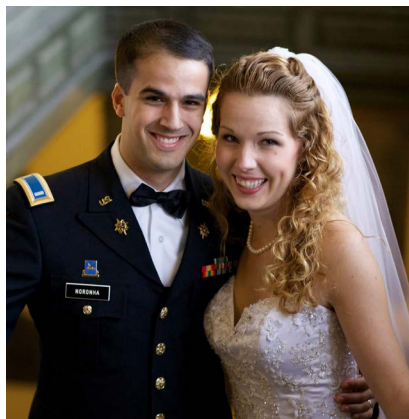
News Bits (continued)

let others have the spotlight, to be open to corrective criticism, and to open up yourself to an area that might be uncomfortable to you.”

New Members

Profiles of new members have not appeared for several editions of Words of Faith. Consequently, there are more than a few new members to profile. For the next several editions, then, we will cover several new members, some of whom are--shall we say--less new than others.

Jessica and Michael Noronha live in Tacoma and started attending Faith in January 2015. Although they had no previous connection to Faith, they were drawn to the church by their previous experience attending Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City while college students. Both Jessica and Michael grew up in Christian homes, although neither



came from a Presbyterian denomination. Michael grew up in a charismatic non-denominational church in New Hampshire while Jessica grew up in Baptist and Episcopal churches in South Florida. Michael works as an Army officer at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, where he has been stationed since the end of 2013. Jessica is a classical vocalist, currently performing with Tacoma Opera and Seattle Opera, and she also teaches voice. The Noronhas look forward to continued fellowship with the Faith family as long as the Army can keep them in the Northwest!

John Pulliam was raised in a Christian home in Indianapolis, IN. **Christina Pulliam** (daughter of Tom and Kathy Haass) grew up in Gig Harbor and is a graduate of Covenant High School. In January of



2015, the Pulliams moved from Indianapolis to Gig Harbor and started attending Faith. John and Christina have previously been members of Second Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis (the church where John grew up) and Christ

Church NYC, an evangelical Anglican congregation in New York City. John works in Finance and Planning for TrueBlue in Tacoma. Christina is at home with their three daughters, Lydia (5), Naomi (3) and Clara (1).

Doug and Janie Davey both came to know the Lord at a young age, and were raised in Christian homes; he in Portland Oregon and she in Tacoma Washington. Following Doug's transplant to Tacoma in 1967, they met at Mount Tahoma High School. Several years later they married and, in 1976, moved to Puyallup, where they live now. They have two children, Kimberly (Reis) and Collin, and four grandchildren. They first attended Faith for four years, beginning in 2005, and left in 2009 to help start Resurrection Presbyterian Church in Puyallup, returning to Faith in 2014. Aside from owning and operating a real estate firm, they enjoy spending time with their family, fellowshiping with the saints, music and studying the Word.



The **Kirk McMillan family** began attending Faith during the evening services in the summer of 2014. The McMillans were quite familiar with FPC before that time. Having attended the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church for many years, the

McMillans have long known many Faith families through Heritage Christian School, where Mrs. McMillan (Melissa) teaches. They both graduated from Tacoma Baptist High School, like others in the congregation, including Jason Van Gilder, Nathan Allison, Sarah Giampapa (Hinman), and Craig & Aaron Schrupp. The McMillans live in the unofficial “Faith East” neighborhood, home to the Van Gilders, Pribyls, LeFebvres, and Woodards, among others. Melissa is a music teacher and private piano instructor at Heritage Christian School and Charles Wright Academy. Kirk works as a carpenter with Laureen Skrivan’s remodeling/general contracting company, Wren & Willow. The McMillans have been blessed with four boys ranging in ages from 14 to nearly 9 (Wyatt, Ellis, Reid and Joel).

CHS Student Poetry

Covenant High students recently wrote poems and stories for the Pierce County Library Writing and Art Contest. While competing against thousands of high schoolers from the 30+ high schools in Pierce County, CHS authors and poets claimed six of the 12 high school writing prizes. Allyson Chiou (1st) and Nathan Lawty (3rd) won in the 9th/10th grade poetry contest. Rachel Quick earned 3rd place in 11th/12th grade poetry. Angela Le won 1st place in the 9th/10th short story category. Phillip Darby (1st) and Will Lewellen (3rd) took two of the prizes for 11th/12th short stories.

Words of Faith will periodically publish some of these award-winning works, along with pieces by other CHS authors.

Tuning to Eternity

Rachel Quick

I’ve tried to find my melody
Inside these hallowed keys.
The dissonance still echoes strong
From wrecks of harmonies.

My ears are full of discontent
My fingers faint at last

To hear a song beyond my room
That peals out from the past.

I hear my note inside that tune.
It rings alone to me.
So fully does it harmonize
Within Eternity.

No. 1

Payton Chiou

The best of friends are rent apart,
And allies torn asunder.
Fastest friendships can be fractured
By the reckless blunder,
Of one ill-spoken bitter word,
When thoughtlessly employed.
So take great care in what you say,
Your penance to avoid.
For but a little thought prevents
Great unintended consequence.

True

Hannah Lawty

The night my eyes refused to rest
And my mind spun round and round,
I cut my heart out of my chest
And left it on the ground.
When every nerve and every pore
Ached with a sullied sound,
I knew that I could bear no more
So I laid my spirit down.
But all at once, I heard a noise
Which filled my fervid ears--
It summoned up forgotten joys
And softened all my fears.
And to this day I do not know
What roused me from my sleep,
But when I think, I hear a voice
That bade me, “Do not weep--
For you are a dear love of mine
And there is more to do.
The pain that takes you whispers lies,
But I am eternal, True.”

Calendar

May 8 – Family Fun Luncheon
May 13 – Covenant High School Spring Concert & Art Show
May 19 – Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest Meeting
May 21 – Men of Faith Spring Breakfast
May 27 – Covenant High School Commencement, First Presbyterian Church
June 18-June 25 – Sacred Road Youth Group Mission Trip
June 20-June 24 – Art Camp Grades 9-12
June 20-June 24 – General Assembly, Mobile, AL
June 27-July 1 – Art Camp Grades 4-8
June 30 – Bridal Shower for Emily Shelden
July 2-July 9 – YXL Youth Leadership Camp, Horn Creek, CO
July 11-July 15 – Summer Singing Camp
August 8-August 12 – Writing Camp, Grades, 7-9
August 8-August 12 – Art Camp Grades, K-3
September 29-October 1 – Women In the Church Retreat, Seabrook, WA

For more details about these events, please visit <http://www.faithtacoma.org/events>

Member Changes

Additions

Hayley Funches, child profession, 1/24
Rose Knauss, child profession, 2/14
Rachael Shelden, transfer from Resurrection Church, Tacoma, 2/21
Brien & Emily Downie with non-communicants Ava, Flynn, and Rosemary, reaffirmation of faith, 3/6
Philip Lindholm, reaffirmation, 3/13
Ellie Kate Green, child profession, 4/10
Nancy McAllister, reaffirmation, 4/17

Baptisms

Charles Green & Penelope Green, 1/31
Katherine Allen, 2/7
Rinoa Armstrong, 2/14
Glory Nicoletti, 3/13

Deaths

Roger McAllister, 3/8
Barbara Gronewold, 4/18