



The Chimes

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Modesto Church of the Brethren

2301 Woodland Avenue, Modesto, CA 95358-9501 (209)523-1438

fax: 209-523-1469 ♦ e-mail: office@modcob.org ♦ web site: www.modcob.org

Ministers: Every Member of the Congregation

Continuing the work of Jesus. Peacefully. Simply. Together.



Darkness, by Anna Hazen Summarized for the Chimes from Sermon of February 3, 2019

Isaiah 45:3 NRSV

I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.

John 12:24-25 The Message

Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds onto life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal.

Here's my first question for you, if you listen to the darkness of night, literal darkness for now, what does it say to you? Slow down? Run for your life? Does the darkness make you feel vulnerable, or is it comforting?

Is nothing possible in the darkness, or are things that were impossible in daylight now in the realm of possibility? Could there be hidden treasure in the dark, as Isaiah suggests. Is God there, calling your name?

It's hard for most of us to explore or befriend darkness. Monsters appear under the bed when the lights go out, parents lock the door at sundown, the news shows nighttime crime, and we learn the deeply entrenched racism of our society, which feeds on fear of the "dark". It's easy to get the idea that darkness is bad.

Modern Christianity often calls on a dualistic worldview - with light vs darkness, good vs evil, spirit vs flesh, "saved vs unsaved", which divides the universe in halves, with one part "higher" and closer to God. But we should be careful, because these dualities are also used to push away people and parts of life or parts of ourselves we are uncomfortable with.

These dualities have been used in such human pursuits as sidelining women, devaluing and discriminating against people of color, denying transgendered folks their identity, and justifying environmental destruction. Pitting light and dark against each other gives us permission to push away the dark when it, as it sometimes does, makes us feel vulnerable.

If darkness is bad, then instead of following God's voice onto paths of limited visibility and leaning into vulnerability, we convince ourselves that we can just build some walls, stay positive, turn on all the lights, pretend we have life all figured out and ignore all the scary things over there, because that's not where God is anyway, right?

But God is not constrained by the walls we build, or the dividing lines we've made between light and dark, or life and death, or spirit and body. Jesus constantly defied the distinctions the society and religion around him had built. He valued and came alongside people and issues who would not fit in the "acceptable" portions of those categories, (take Mary Magdalene, for instance) and he calls us into challenging spaces of uncertainty, paradox, and, indeed, darkness.

In the gospel reading this morning Jesus calls us to enter transformative darkness like a grain of wheat falling into the earth to lose itself so that new life can begin. That can be a kind of frightening call. To follow that wheat seed we're going to have to get really friendly with the darkness. In order to let the seed coat soften and open so that a new plant can emerge, we might have to let go of some things we really thought were important when we were in the light, and let in some things we were trying to avoid.

But while letting go and stepping into the unknown is scary, we also know this: that while seasons of darkness feel lonely and uncertain, there is nowhere we can go and nothing we can do that would separate us from God.

The grain of wheat lying in the earth is not abandoned there. The seed which lets go of the life it knows and falls into the earth trusting there is more, is not falling away from God, but into just one more form of the creator's transforming embrace. There is no dividing line, that once crossed, takes a person, or their body or spirit beyond the grace of God. Christ in this story of the grain of wheat, points toward darkness as an integral part of life. To be true to our truest selves, we must risk journeys into the night. The light and darkness, life and death, it all belongs.



Sunday, February 17, 2019

Jim Costello will take a closer look at one of the gospel's greatest parables, "The Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37). There is more to this tale than just helping someone in need. Think about when you were a "Good Samaritan"

Sunday, February 24, 2019

Stephen Reddy will bring the message "Healing, Anointing, New Life". What is it like to anoint someone? What is it like to be anointed? Come to worship for the experience of healing, anointing, and new life. Scriptures: Mark 6:4-6, 12-13; Psalms 23; and Deuteronomy 33:24



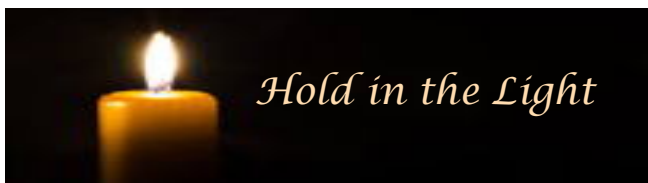
Greeters for February:

Feb. 17th: Jim & Bonnie Costello

Feb. 24th: Jeannie & Harold "Dean" Canter

Deacon on call for February

Gayle Hernandez



Congratulate Jim Feeney and his wife Anita on their 40th Anniversary.

Rejoice with Linda Bustle that she is back at the piano. She is concerned about her friend Joy who is dealing with cancer.

Keep the family of John Heisel in your prayers.

Rejoice with Kelly and Shaun Gepley that they are expecting their first child in October.

Keep Dan Galt in your prayers as he has been diagnosed with stage 3 prostate cancer.

Anita Pedersen-Pennock's father is receiving a new type of treatment for his stage 4 lung cancer.

Tammy Firch had her bike stolen last week and hopes to find it.

Cal Aukeman announced that Peter, Mary's son, will graduate from the Monterey Language Institute with a degree in Arabic.

Keep Eddie Hernandez' family in your thoughts and prayers. Monday morning, he received word that his mother had passed after a massive stroke and heart attack.

Keep in your prayers Jim Feeney's sister Mary Pat who has suffered a stroke.

Also keep in your prayers any whose troubles are too deep for words.

Great News from the Search Committee!

The Search Committee is delighted to announce that we've chosen a candidate for our full-time Pastor position! More specific information will be forthcoming as negotiations progress.

A special 'meet and greet' weekend will be scheduled, with opportunities for informal conversation with our candidate and family...and of course there will be food. Sunday worship that weekend will feature a sermon by our candidate and following worship we will vote during a brief council meeting.

Thanks go to the members of the Search Committee:

Elaine Forcier, chair; Evan Campbell, Karen Cosner, Felton Daniels, Rachel Gilstrap-Katen, Matt Hazen, and David F. Messamer

Special Event February 20!



EYN Leaders Samuel & Rebecca Dali

Join us on Wednesday, February 20 as we welcome Samuel and Rebecca Dali to Modesto Church of the Brethren. Samuel is the former president of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN - The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) and is currently an International Scholar in Residence at Bethany Theological Seminary.

Rebecca is the founder and director of the Centre for Caring, Empowerment, and Peace Initiatives (CCEPI), a nonprofit that works with Nigerian women, widows and orphans. They will share about the current situation for EYN as well as their ongoing justice and peace-building work in a country torn apart by religious violence.

The evening will begin with our regular Faith Bites meal, and continue with a presentation by the Dali's.

In addition to the usual basket in the kitchen for the \$4 cost of the Faith Bites meal, there will be baskets on the tables for free-will contributions to the Nigeria Crisis Fund. If you write a check, please make it payable to Modesto Church of the Brethren with "Nigeria Crisis Fund" in the memo line.

Please sign up to let the cooks know how many to expect for dinner. The sign-up sheet will be at Faith Bites this week, and on display in the narthex next Sunday.

MORE ITEMS OF NOTE

To all our Faith Bite Sweethearts, since Valentine's Day is Thursday, we thought we could celebrate together on Wednesday at Faith Bites.

We're inviting you to come early and join us in a few appetizers and some fellowship. We encourage you to arrive at 5:15 this week. See you then!!!

Sue Messamer for Fellowship & Rec



Friday, February 15th from 6 to 8 PM!
FUN for families with children between Kindergarten and 6th grade. Join us for cooking, art, games, music, family discussion, and prayer, to engage children and parents in playing, thinking and learning together.





WING DING DAY! is coming!
Sunday, February 24th, following morning worship.

Hope you all plan to have lunch with us that day. We have 7 competitors who will be preparing 7 different flavors of wings for you to taste and judge. Anyone else interested in joining the fun and preparing your version of wings, let us know, ASAP!

There will be no sign-up sheet. We just trust that you're all planning to stay and help us find out who the best Wing Ding competitor is. See you Sunday, February 24th following morning worship. ~Sue for Fellowship & Rec



Another Family Promise hosting week has passed-with a few glitches! We trust that the furnace in the back hallway will be repaired before the next hosting week!

Thanks to all the volunteers who make these hosting weeks work by providing dinner, acting as evening hosts, and by staying overnight. If you are not able to fill these volunteer tasks, there are other ways you can help the families who are being housed in Family Promise. There is always a need for donations of the following items: shampoo, body wash, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, Lysol, sanitizing wipes, and other cleaning supplies. Any donated items can be taken to the Day Center in Room 7. If you are new to the congregation or have never volunteered, and are interested, contact Luella Cole or Linda Williams.



The Witness Commission is sponsoring a Lenten Season project to benefit the homeless folks who are served by the Shower Shuttle. Every time someone uses the Shower Shuttle, they are given a new pair of socks. Beginning March 6, the first day of Lent, look for large boxes with a picture of the Shower Shuttle on them, and drop in as many pairs of new socks as you are able to donate. The Witness Commission and those who use the Shower Shuttle thank you.



The Witness Commission announces that the One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be taken during worship on March 17. One Great Hour of Sharing funds given through this special offering empower ministries like the Church of the Brethren's Global Mission and Service, Congregational Life Ministries, Brethren Disaster Ministries, Brethren Volunteer Service, workcamps, the Global Food Initiative, and many others. Look for a bulletin insert, and a special offering envelope, also in the bulletin. More information will be given before the offering.



Like us on
Facebook

Did you know that Modesto Church of the Brethren has a Facebook page? Since Pastor Erin left almost 2 years ago, I have been the administrator of the Facebook page.

However, if you look at our page, you might not see many current posts. I confess that I have concentrated on keeping the Chimes and the MCOB website up-to-date, and have neglected Facebook.

Part of my dilemma is time, but the chief reason is that I'm not sure what should be posted on Facebook. When I ask for material, I've been told that young folks don't look at Facebook anymore!

Personally, I have also been using my own Facebook page much less, keeping up with friends and family in other ways, due to issues with privacy that have plagued Facebook lately.

What I need to know is: Does the congregation want to continue to have a presence on Facebook? If the answer is, "Keep it," I would like to resign as the administrator.

In the meantime, if you have something you want to see on Facebook, you don't have to be an administrator. Anyone can post on the church's Facebook page. I will have to OK it; when the page was completely open to the public, some inappropriate things were posted, so I "moderate" posts before they appear.

I want to hear from you about the fate of our Facebook page. If someone is excited about Facebook and would like to serve the church as administrator, please let me know! I will gladly step down.

--Luella Cole



Now I know that most of us sit in rapt attention to the Sunday morning sermon, but in the off chance that your mind or attention may wander you may discover that there is a new sparkle to the sanctuary windows. This last week Bob Sesser set about cleaning the inside of the windows and Rick Lapora power washed the outside windows. Way to go guys, much appreciated! ~Bill Johnson

Do you have an announcement you would like the congregation to see on the big screen, before Sunday worship begins? Please send any announcements to the church office at office@modcob.org by Wednesday evenings. Thank you!



*Articles and photos for the next issue of Chimes are due by **Saturday, February 23**. Email to: chimes@modcob.org. The Editor thanks you.*

Editor's Note regarding Joys and Concerns. I write down what is said in worship and put that in the Chimes. If you do not want your concern published, please tell me! ~Luella

The Condensed Calendar

Monday, February 11
6:30 pm Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 12

Wednesday, February 13
5:15 pm Valentine's Day Social
6 pm Faith Bites
7 pm Choir

Thursday, February 14
Valentine's Day!



Friday, February 15
6 pm F.U.N. Event

Saturday, February 16

Next Sunday, February 17
9:30 am Sunday Morning Study
11 am Worship



February 18 President's Day/Office closed
February 20 6pm Samuel & Rebecca Dali
Faith Bites and presentation
February 24 12:15pm Wing Ding
February 25 5:30 pm Ladies' Night Out
La Parrilla/McHenry Village



March 6 7 pm Ash Wednesday Service/
Beginning of Lent
March 8 International Women's Day
March 8 6 pm Young Adult Gathering-
Divine Swine/Roseburg Square
March 10 Daylight Savings time begins
March 10 12:15 Witness Commission
March 10 3 pm Baby Shower for
Rachel & Josh's baby
March 17 St. Patrick's Day
March 20 First Day of Spring
March 21 Sr. Ministries "Sacramento
Underground Tour"



April 13 All Church Work Day
April 14 Palm Sunday
April 18 6 pm Maundy Thursday/Love Feast
April 19 6 pm F.U.N Event
April 21 Easter Sunday/Worship at 11am
9:30-10:30am Breakfast/10:00am Egg Hunt
April 22 Earth Day
April 28 Sr. Ministries "Tuesdays With
Morrie" at Gallo/Lunch at church
after worship, play at 2pm.