



The Rincon Mountain MESSENGER

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WINTER 2018

Sunday Christmas Eve Service



Rincon Mountain celebrated our savior's birth with a spirited Sunday service. Uplifting music was provided by both the children's and adult choirs. A truly joyous occasion.



Caroling at Brookdale

A large group of carolers from Rincon Mountain visited Brookdale Senior Living Community on Tanque Verde. Many Christmas carols were sung to bring a bit of musical cheer and good wishes to the residents.



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INSIDE THE ISSUE:

Christmas 2017	1
Kruis Korner	2
Operation Christmas Child	3
Missions Moment	3
Family Crests	3
Hey Y'all	4
Make a Difference Day	5
Men's Workday	5
Mark's Musings	6
Fall Kickoff	7
Trunk or Treat	7
A Word...or Two	8
Articles Continued	9





Pastor Phil Kruis

Kruis Korner

Growing Up!

On January 7, 2018, Rincon Mountain Presbyterian Church celebrated the 17th anniversary of its first worship service. I'm not sure it is fair to measure institutions or organizations along the human life cycle, but if we did we'd have to say that RMPC is a teenager.

And there are ways that we feel like a teenager as a church. We experience growth spurts that make us feel awkward and unsure. We ebb and flow in our confidence and knowledge of the way forward. And we certainly go through periods of struggling with our identity.

In order to help us navigate these final teen years and move into the next decade successfully, the pastoral staff and Session have been working hard to clarify our vision, Equip to Engage. We have functioned well under this brief but memorable vision statement for eight years. But we believe that some clarification and refinement are necessary to keep moving ahead.

Here is how we have clarified Equip to Engage:

The vision of RMPC is to be faithful to the Scriptures by knowing, living and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to multiply disciples and churches in Him.

When we think of our unique identity as a church in Tucson, one thing that stands out is that we are a church that is unashamedly faithful to the Scriptures. When someone in our congregation was recently invited to attend another local church because it was closer to her home, the comment she made to me was, "I am so glad we have the word of God central to all we do at RMPC. There is no other church like it." Commitment to the Bible as the word of God is something we will always maintain.

We grow in faithfulness to the Scriptures as we rehearse the gospel over and over again in our gathered, corporate worship and as we move about this city in our homes, places of work and leisure, and in our community. We strive to know, live and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ so that we will grow individually and as a church. Gospel-centered growth does not simply lead to numerical growth. It begins with good, healthy spiritual growth that naturally multiplies disciples, small groups and churches.

There is an exciting church planting movement going on in the state of Arizona. We are part of a group of churches that is committed to seeing several new churches planted in Arizona in the next decade. There are currently church plants taking place in downtown Phoenix, and south Phoenix with three others in the planning stages! And, of course, there is the church plant we are supporting and encouraging in Midtown Tucson.

(continued on page 9)

Operation Christmas Child

Over 190 boxes were assembled by church volunteers for Operation Christmas Child. Toys, school supplies and personal care items filled each box. Children in many countries enjoy receiving these boxes as well as being provided with the gospel message.



Missions Update

A short term missions trip to Costa Rica is being planned for July 13-20, 2018. Rincon Mountain would like to send a delegation of several members from the congregation. There is an opportunity to work in various areas of ministry. The Missions team will coordinate fund raising. Please contact Jim Collins for more information.

Family Crests

The art gallery in the narthex is currently displaying the family crests of Rincon members. Each crest features a photo and particular bible verses of importance to each family. Its not to late to add your contribution to the display.





Pastor Luke Smith

Hey Y'all!

“Tell me something good”

It had been a bad day. It was my day off where I was supposed to get rest, but I had spent the day preoccupied with feeling like I was completely ill-equipped to share the gospel with people through evangelism—and I'm a pastor! It was seven o'clock at night, and Joelle had asked me to return something to Target to get me out of the house and out of my head. It was going to be a quick 15 minute round trip.

Two minutes into the short ride over I see a young lady whose tire had just blown out and she was on the rim. I got out of my truck to the sound of a mixture of Spanish phrases I didn't understand and a host of expletives I knew quite well. This was a young, single mom not familiar with this part of town on her way to pick up her child from a house whose address was unknown. I offered to help. After finding her spare tire I make my way over to the blowout to realize she had pulled over as close to the curb as one could get without trying—this was going to be a doozy to change. In addition, she had pulled next to what seemed to be the world's entire population of stinging ants—not fun. I finally managed to get the tire changed after navigating the obstacles. That's when I thought “Jesus probably wants me to pray with her.” So I ended up praying and then afterwards simply using the blowout and her helpless situation to share a simple message of the gospel.

Finally, I was on my way to Target feeling a little more encouraged in my ability to evangelize. I walk into the store and walk up to the returns counter when I hear from the clerk “What on earth happened to you?!” So I tell her and she says “That means good karma is coming back to you.” But I rebutted “Actually, I don't believe in karma.” And we chatted about the providence of God and his grace. Another opportunity.

Joelle texts me “WHERE ARE YOU?!?...and can you pick up some ice on the way home?” I texted her back that I was on the way.

Instead of stopping by the normal store I use to get a bag of ice I decided to stop by an unfamiliar gas station. I grab the ice, pay, and I am walking out the door when a lady doing a scratch off lottery ticket says “I hope I win and can retire—are you retired?” I laugh of course and say “No, I'm a pastor so I'll probably never retire.” Tears start to fall down her cheek as she sheepishly asks “Can I talk with you?” We head outside and she tells me her whole life story and the present issues that are rocking her world. She asks “Can you tell me something good in all of this?” Something good—like the good news of Jesus. So I start simply walking through the big picture of what the Bible is all about at the 10,000 foot level: redemption in Jesus' finished work. Then I shared about how the Lord has saved me. I prayed for her and as I opened my eyes there was a man who had walked up while I was praying that asked “Can you pray for me too?” So I did and shared the same simple message of Jesus. As I was speaking another woman walked up and heard the gospel and was able to be prayed for.

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Make a Difference Day

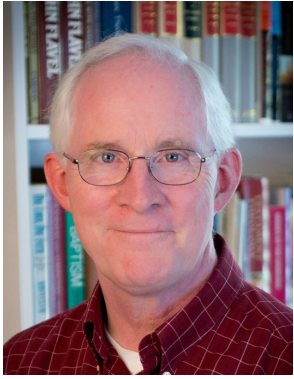
On Saturday, October 28, many volunteers from Rincon Mountain participated in National Make a Difference Day. Tanque Verde Elementary School welcomed our crew and gave them the opportunity to upgrade school playgrounds with new woodchips and sand. With so many hands involved, the task was completed in just a few hours. Make a Difference Day is always a great opportunity to reach out to other organizations in our community.



Men's Workday

In November another Men's Work Day was held to spruce up the outside and inside at RMPC. Tree and bush trimming, replacing light bulbs, and window cleaning were among the tasks performed. A great breakfast was also provided for the hungry workers.





Pastor Mark Lauterbach

Mark's Musings

One Church is not Enough

When I was a boy, a new restaurant opened down the street. It had golden arches and served great hamburgers. Occasionally, my Dad took me there for a treat. I thought it was a local restaurant for our township of Mt Lebanon, in the suburbs of Pittsburgh.

You can imagine my surprise when, from the backseat, I spied another pair of golden arches . . . then another. I asked, “Why is there more than one McDonalds?” Dad’s answer (the salesman) was something like, “It’s called a franchise. One is not enough for the whole city. Every area needs one.” I think they thought this made sense to me. (It didn’t really. But when I asked if we can stop at every one to see if all their burgers and fries were equally good, there was silence.)

So it is with the church. God has designed the Gospel to advance through planting churches that serve communities. One church is not enough. A few big churches is not enough. Many churches are needed. We do not reach the lost by growing bigger and bigger churches. We reach the lost by having more and more churches. That is God’s pattern. Guess what? Research has confirmed that God’s ways are best – the most significant factor in bringing the Gospel to the lost and building up believers is church planting.

That is why Rincon was started. Catalina Foothills Church planted Rincon so that people in East Tucson would have a church for their community. Holy Cross is a plant in Marana, seeded from members in other PCA churches, so that people in Marana would have a church.

Mid-Town Presbyterian, now being planted by Charles Garland, is our newest PCA plant. A restarted RUF on the U of A campus, led by Dan Smith, is already begun.

Planting is scary. It means saying goodbye. It means losing contributors. It means sacrifice. All of that sounds just like the Gospel – losing our lives to find them, being a seed that dies so that it bears fruit.

Planting is a risk. No one plants a church because they have worked out all the finances. Planting churches calls for an honest glance at our limitations followed by a gaze at the faithfulness and resources of God.

Healthy Christians want to reproduce. Healthy disciples make more disciples. Healthy churches reproduce. Churches that turn in on themselves, that focus their energies on themselves, are sick. Rincon aspires to be a healthy church that sends its members to plant new churches in areas of Tucson where there is no Reformed presence.

Would you pray for these men and their wives as they seek to advance the Gospel to people who are not yet in Christ? Would you support their work with your gifts?

Fall Kickoff/Chili Cook Off

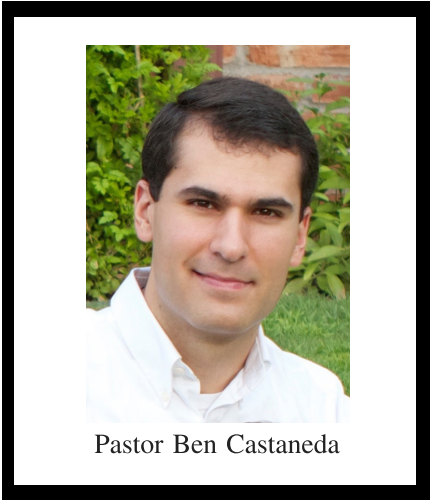
To jump start the Fall, Rincon Mountain had its annual chili cook off. Over twenty chili crock pots were featured with chili recipes ranging from very mild to spicy hot. An overall winner was chosen based on participant voting. Games and a jumping castle were also provided for this night of family fun.



Trunk or Treat

The church sponsored Trunk or Treat on Halloween was again a successful community outreach. There were seventeen decorated trunks with display themes of everything from Star Wars to the Despicable Me minions to Dutch Windmills. Over one hundred families with children participated. In addition to receiving sweet treats, the families were given gospel tracts and information about Rincon Mountain.





Pastor Ben Castaneda

A Word...or Two

2018 Youth Winter Retreat

During my time here at RMPC, I've organized and led a winter retreat for our youth every January. For a couple years, we were able to hold the retreat in coordination with Church of the Resurrection (PCA) in Flagstaff. This taste of inter-church coordination led me to desire even more cooperation, not just with one or two more churches, but with our whole Presbytery. Imagine what that would look like! Youth from a dozen different churches all over Arizona coming together to worship God, diving into the Scriptures in both big sessions and in small groups, forming friendships and praying for each other across church lines. This desire kick-started talks between us and several other churches to see how we could turn this dream into a reality.

On January 12-14, we held what I hope will be the first annual youth winter retreat for our Presbytery. We started small, travelling to a camp in Prescott with twenty-one youth and adults from RMPC. We were joined by eleven youth and adults from Desert Palms Church (PCA) in Chandler. Our speaker was Joel Fitzpatrick, a PCA pastor from Southern California, who gave three fantastic messages on the theme "Lost and Found: Recovering Your Identity in Christ." We had loads of fun too! We had amazing cafeteria food (I'm not being sarcastic!) and enjoyed games of humans vs. zombies, live-action mafia, and spicy Uno (yes, these are real games). I can't wait for next year!



[*Kruis Korner* cont'd from page 2]

Author Paul David Tripp envisions the teenage years not as years to be feared but as the age of opportunity. As a teenager close to moving into the next decade of life, we will move forward with a clearer vision for what God is calling us to be and to do in Tucson. We will still experience some awkwardness, I'm sure. And we will still ebb and flow in our confidence. But God is our rock, His word is our anchor, and we are poised to see God multiply disciples and churches who know, live and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[*Hey Y'all* cont'd from page 4]

Please hear me—this was simple stuff, not pulling from some artillery of memorized Scripture verses and strategic evangelism methods—I just shared about Jesus and what he's done for me. I finally make my way back home at 9:45pm—almost three hours after I left—and as I walk in the door covered in sweat and dirt and oil Joelle looks at the time and jokingly says “You better have a darn good story why it took you this long.” Of course, I did—a story of the Lord's encouragement to me that he has already equipped me with what I need to share the gospel with others. He has given me the knowledge of who Jesus is and the experience of knowing his saving work in my life. That's all I need. That's all you need.

So many of us wonder if we are truly equipped to win others to Christ. Many of us say “Well, I'm not gifted as an evangelist.” Most of us aren't. But we are called to speak. The reality is that the Lord has given us what he promised in Acts 1:8 that “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...and you will be my witnesses.” And so, being equipped with the Spirit and given the knowledge of salvation in Jesus, we have what we need to tell people something good—people burdened by the weight of sin and brokenness in this world that we all experience. Jesus said in Luke 6 that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” The Lord will put the words in our mouths to speak because he has put new life into our hearts. So be encouraged! You have received power! Now is the time to go and tell people something good.
