



Welcome to Lauterbach Family!



Mark and Rondi Lauterbach joined RMPC in the Fall. Mark serves as an assistant pastor, having previously served churches in Oregon, Arizona and California. At RMPC, Mark will focus on discipleship and coaching church planters. He also has an important ministry serving the church and training pastors, in Serbia, in Southeastern

Europe. Rondi has recently authored a book, *Hungry: Learning to Feed Your Soul With Christ*, and leads a women's study based on her book. Mark and Rondi are a very welcome addition to our church family.

Trunk or Treat

On October 31st, Rincon Mountain again hosted Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot. Over a hundred and sixty children from the surrounding community participated, and there were more than twenty trunks decorated by those who attend the church. The amount of candy handed out would fill a small car. Each family was given a Gospel devotion, information about the church and an invitation to attend services.



.....

Inside this issue:

Lauterbach Family 1

Trunk or Treat 1

Kruis Korner 2

Make a Diff Day 3

Church Workday 3

Hey Y'all 4

A Word...or Two 5

Missions Update 6

Operation Xmas 6

Caroling 7

Xmas at RMPC 7

Cont'd 8

.....



Pastor Phil Kruis

Kruis Korner

Grief and the Grace of God

2016 ended and 2017 began with a number of deaths in our church family. And there will, no doubt, be more throughout the year. How do we understand grief? How does God use grief in our lives? Author Edgar Jackson poignantly describes grief in this manner:

- Grief is the young widow or single-parent mom trying to raise her three children alone.
- Grief is the man so filled with shock and uncertainty and confusion that he strikes out at the nearest person.

- Grief is a mother walking daily to a nearby cemetery to stand quietly and alone a few minutes before going about the tasks of the day. She knows that a part of her is in the cemetery, just as part of her is in her daily work.
- Grief is the silent, knife-like terror and sadness that comes a hundred times a day, when you start to speak to someone who is no longer there.
- Grief is the emptiness that comes when you eat alone after eating with another for many years. Grief is teaching yourself to go to bed without saying good night to the one who has died.
- Grief is the helpless wishing that things were different when you know they are not and never will be again.
- Grief is a whole cluster of adjustments, apprehensions, and uncertainties that strike life in its forward progress and make it difficult to redirect the energies of life.

We all experience losses in life and those losses lead to grief. Grief doesn't happen in a neat little understandable package as some have proposed. Grief involves a number of different emotions: anger, confusion, deep sorrow, fear, denial, and others. Grief happens for each of us differently. We go through these emotions like waves on the ocean. Each one is different than the one before, some higher and more intense at times; others lower and a bit easier. Over time the waves may grow in distance and decrease in intensity. But with some losses the grief lasts a lifetime.

That was the case for my parents. With 9 children and seven of them boys you can only imagine the amount of grief they had to suffer. Some of their griefs were greater than others. One stood out above the rest.

You see, I have a sister that is in heaven. Her name is Trudy and she died in 1960, two years before I was born. She died of leukemia at the age of nine. When my sister was eight she was laying on the bed while my mom was ironing clothes nearby. My mom, who is an RN, noticed tiny red spots called petechial spots on her legs. The only other time she had seen that kind of spots was in a patient who had leukemia. She immediately prayed to Jesus that he would help them when he took her girl home to heaven.

My parents were living on the Navajo reservation when they discovered her illness and they moved to Bethesda, Maryland so they could be near the National Institutes of Health. The NIH was trying experimental drugs in an effort to cure leukemia and Trudy participated in their studies. [Cont'd on page 8.]

Make a Difference Day

In October over twenty people from Rincon Mountain took part in the national Make a Difference Day. Groups staged community service workdays at various locations around town. Rincon participated at Agua Caliente Elementary School in the Tanque Verde School District. Crews were divided up to restripe the parking lot and add new sand to the playground area. The school staff were very appreciative of the help and hoped Rincon would be available for another workday in the future.



Church Workday

Just before Halloween, the men of Rincon participated in another workday on the church property. Various tasks included: upkeep of the grounds, striping the parking lot, window washing inside and out. A great breakfast was provided to fuel the hungry workers.





Pastor Luke Smith

Hey Y'all!

Time to Undock

There was once a very well-equipped fishing trawler tied up at the dock near rich fishing waters. For aspiring fisherman, the boat had everything you could ever want. For veterans, it had everything you could ever need. It was a well-known vessel, and the crew gathered regularly with each other, as well as other interested locals, to discuss how to be successful fishermen. Everyone had their own ideas as to the best way to catch fish. The crew would sometimes even invite marine biologists to offer their own special insight into the world of fishing. Some argued the best way was to anchor down and pray that God would providentially direct the fish into the nets. Others maintained that you needed to become friends with the fish so they wouldn't be frightened away and make it harder to catch. And some said that you should search out the younger fish before they swam out into the deep waters. In the meantime, other boats ventured out into the fishing waters every morning and returned at night with large hauls. The crew of the trawler would comment, "Eh, they're mainly surface fish. Easy catches. Their boats are not as good as ours with their bad engines and broken nets. Besides, they've got poor refrigeration—they can't preserve the fish long enough to get them canned." One day, a frustrated crew member spoke up and said, "We have a fifteen boats in our company and ten of them caught less than thirty fish last year. Why are we always tied to the dock? We just talk about fishing while we watch others go out to fish and bring in hauls, but we never actually fish. Are their boats as well-equipped as ours? No. But isn't what they are doing imperfectly far better than that which we don't do at all?" After some time arguing over the concern, there was a decision reached as to what to do in response to the complaint: they formed a study committee to research the matter. Five years later, the committee is making progress and feels confident they will soon have some tangible results to share.

When the pastors interview individuals becoming members, something we encourage everyone to do is find one ministry of the church where they can pour into (e.g. Youth & Family group) and one ministry where they can be poured into (e.g. Bible study or Life Group). Over this next year, I would like to motivate us in a similar manner but on a personal level by asking two questions: "What individual is pouring into you?" and "What individual are you pouring into?" These are questions of personal discipleship. The Lord has given us one another to build up the Body in the knowledge of the Lord, bear each other's burdens, confess sins, and promote holiness. The LORD encourages us in this manner from Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." A disciple is one who sits at the master's feet to learn from him and imitate him. We are all disciples of Christ and, therefore, in our discipleship of others we must always be pointing back to Christ just as the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." We also ourselves need to be pointed to Christ and his Word by those who are more mature than us or have keen insight into our lives, if we only let them. [Cont'd on page 8.]



Pastor Ben Castaneda

A Word...or Two

A Few Thoughts on Resolutions

Call me cranky, but I'm not a big fan of New Year's resolutions. Not only do they seem to inevitably fall by the wayside after a few weeks, but all too often they emphasize goals and aims that are quite trivial. Resolutions like "laugh more" or "start exercising regularly", besides being vague, are not incredibly important in the long run. Even the Apostle Paul admitted that bodily exercise is only of relatively minor value (see 1 Timothy 4:8)!

What's more, we tend to use New Year's resolutions as a means of self-improvement through shame. We make promises to ourselves that this year is different; this time we'll really change and keep our weight loss goals (or whatever we've vowed to do). And to prove that we mean business, we publicly announce our resolutions on Facebook, buy a gym membership, or sign up with Weight Watchers. Implicitly what we're doing is attempting to hold ourselves accountable by inviting public scrutiny and threatening ourselves with public shame and/or financial loss if we don't follow through.

But there's a problem: shame can't motivate lasting change. It might work for a week or perhaps even a month, but in the end inertia will win out. And when we fall short, as we surely will, shame bites back with a vengeance. For example, when we fail to meet our weight loss goals, one reaction is to give ourselves over to ice cream. After all, it doesn't matter anymore.

However, there are some resolutions which stand out in my mind: the resolutions of Jonathan Edwards. Born in Connecticut in the early 1700s, he played a key role in the first Great Awakening and made his mark as one of the most profound theologians in church history. At the tender age of 18, having been a Christian for only about a year, he realized that in order to most fully glorify God, he needed a set of principles to direct his life. The result was 70 resolutions written over the course of a year. Edwards' resolutions focus on a variety of subjects, but they especially deal with life goals, the pursuit of godliness, and time management. I've listed a few below:

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence...

17. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.

28. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

What makes these resolutions different from our shame-driven efforts at self-improvement? We get a clue in the preface to Edwards' resolutions. He wrote: [Cont'd on page 8.]

Missions Update

In October, an RMPC team of Claudia Levin, Laurie Merenick and Jessica Quinlan went on a short term mission trip to Honduras. In conjunction with Open Door Ministry the women provided support to the orphanage, the school for girls (victims of sex trafficking) and the feeding centers.

The RMPC Missions Committee also provided funds to purchase electrical power regulators to protect necessary electrical equipment at risk due to a new power plant in the area. The Missions Committee has started supporting a new missionary Matt Elder. Matt is a missionary with Hope Church on the ASU campus. He interacts with new students and organizes bible studies and provides mentorship to many incoming freshmen.



Left to right: Laurie Merenick, Claudia Levine, and Jessica Quinlan.



Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is an opportunity to send gift boxes to needy children around the world. The ministry was started by Samaritan's Purse, and Rincon was happy to participate again in 2016. Under the direction of Mark Barnard, items for the boxes were collected over several months and then 152 boxes (Yea!) were assembled at the church before being sent overseas. Each box contained toys, stationary supplies and toiletry items. Every box also contains the Gospel message and encouragement for the child and his family to attend a local Christian fellowship.

We look forward to continuing our tradition of supporting Operation Christmas Child in 2017. Look for more information this spring on a collection schedule for the new year!

More information about this ministry can be found at www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child.

Caroling at Brookdale

As a celebration of the Christmas season, several members from Rincon Mountain went caroling at Brookdale assisted living facility, near Catalina Hwy. Several residents joined in with the singing of many favorite Christmas songs. Singers and residents appreciated the opportunity to participate and this holiday outreach.



Christmas at Rincon

Two Christmas Eve services at Rincon Mountain were well attended. Each service was a combination of music from the church choir, scripture readings, congregational singing and a message from Pastor Phil. There were also musical performances by church youth at the beginning of each service. The evening was a wonderful way to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus.



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

How long? How long before we know if any of the treatments are helping? How long is she going to have to suffer? How much longer do we have with her? How long can we make it out here in Maryland without fulltime jobs?

Here is what my parents learned and what each of us must learn in the face of grief: The reality of your grief is met in the grace of your God! He seems most absent when we are in deep grief but it is then, in fact, that he is most present. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

When you feel like the grief you bear is going to kill you, cry out to God, the one who gives life and sustains life. As King David said in his grief, “Light up my eyes”, my eyes that are weary for watching through the night, my eyes that are all cried out and worn out, my eyes that are the window to my soul leaving no observer mistaken that I am done in.

Cry out to Jesus and find comfort in the One who has born your griefs. You are not alone in your grief. He walks beside you through the body of Christ.

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

As the English poet David Whyte noted, we need others to invest in us as all people want those they can call friend “to have walked with them and to have believed in them, and sometimes just to have accompanied them for however brief a span, on a journey impossible to accomplish alone.” We are needy people. We need Christ. And he uses us, in personal ways, to challenge each other to seek his face, his Word, and will. However, the problem is that we often spend a lot of time talking about personal discipleship instead of actually doing it. So the question is this: Who is the LORD calling you to pour into this year? Who is he inviting you to ask to pour into you? Maybe our boats have broken nets and dirty engines, but the LORD has equipped us to be fishers of men. There is a haul out there waiting to be caught. It’s time to undock.

[*A Word...or Two* cont'd from page 5]

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ’s sake.

Edwards wasn’t trying to change his life by changing his behavior; he sought to change his behavior because God had changed his life. He was a new creation in Christ, and he realized that the only right response was—in humble reliance on God’s grace—to glorify the God who had saved him. May this dependence on God’s grace characterize all we do this year!