

# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

## Spring/Summer 2012 I've been thinking ...

### On Earl's Calendar

#### In Seattle

#### **The Kindlings Muse Podcast\***

Oct. 1: 7 - 8:30 p.m. (Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall, UW)

*Calm Under Pressure*

Nov. 5: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

*God is Easy to Please*

Dec. 3: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

*Defining Joy*

#### **Theological Dialogue\***

*The Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin

Oct. 3: 9 - 11 a.m.

Nov. 7: 9 - 11 a.m.

Dec. 5: 9 - 11 a.m.

#### **Word & Worship\***

The Highlands Chapel

Thursdays: October 4, November 1 & December 6 at 7 p.m.

#### **Sammamish Presbyterian Church:**

**C.S. Lewis the Man, Writer, Christian**

Sept. 28: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

29: 9 a.m. - noon

30: Sunday Morning Worship

Services at 9 & 10:30)

Contact Sammamish Presbyterian Church for more information: 425.868.5186

#### Around the Country

#### **St. Paul's Fruits of the Spirit**

Laity Lodge, Texas

July 12 - 15

Register at [www.laitylodge.org](http://www.laitylodge.org)

#### **Mt. Hermon Conference Center**

Aug. 31 - Sept. 3: Labor Day Retreat

Sept. 4 - 7: Conference: Creating a Legacy

More info at [www.mounthermon.org](http://www.mounthermon.org)

#### Around the World

#### **Sea Cloud: Cities of St. Paul and St. John**

Turkey & Greece

June 21 - July 2

\*Contact [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org) for more information on this event, or go to [www.earlpalmer.org/events](http://www.earlpalmer.org/events).

**Also, be sure to explore our new website at the same old address—[www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org)**

What comes into your mind when you think of the word “courage”? In the New Testament are three words that stand out. First is “risk” or “dare,” the word used in the Gospel account (Mark 15:43) to describe Joseph of Arimathea who “dared to ask Pontius Pilate” for the body of Jesus of Nazareth so the disciples could arrange for a proper burial. Whenever courage is described it always acknowledges this risky stretch that a courageous man or woman chooses to take on, sometimes dangerously close to harm’s way.

The second word is “presence.” Paul tells the Philippians of the hope he has that he will share his faith in Christ boldly and out in the open: “With full openness” (Phil. 1:20). The Greek word that Paul uses here is *pareisia*, which literally means “openness.” For us it is the courage of faithful presence so that we can be found, and we are finding those in need. It is opposite of the secrecy of avoidance. This is a simple description of physical courage in a time of danger—it is that person who is willing to be exposed to danger just two or three minutes longer than would be ordinarily expected. We use this word to anticipate the second coming of Christ. It is sometimes called His Perusia: His grand appearance.

Just this past week in Seattle our city suffered the deaths of five innocent people at the hand of a murderer. One of those attacked that day was a mother of two who was beaten and shot at point blank in a parking lot. Jo Ann Stremmer, the principal organist at University Presbyterian Church, saw what happened, rushed toward the fallen victim, and gave aid to her. Jo Ann faced the killer as he drove the victim’s car away but still assured the fatally wounded woman, “You are not alone.” This is courage that risked and was present when needed most. The Seattle Times described her as a “Good Samaritan.” I know Jo Ann very well, and we will never forget her courage on that terrifying day.

The third word is a favorite word of New Testament writers. It is the endurance word, sometimes translated into English as steadfastness. The word in Greek is *upomemo* and it means in its most literal sense to “stay under” or “to hang in there” for the long haul. James uses the word: “Blessed is anyone who endures” (James 1:12), and Paul includes steadfastness as one of the virtues of love (1 Cor. 13:7).

I recently had a conversation with an international human rights worker. We were talking about dangerous hotspots in the world where local populations are facing immediate devastation from natural catastrophes or political violence. We spoke of the various agencies that seek to help in times of stress, such as the U.N. and various governmental aid efforts. He told me how much he respected the Christian agency World Vision for its wise and substantial efforts, and then he added this sentence: “You know, they are the first to arrive and the last to leave.” What he was really describing was *upomemo*, the courage of staying for the long haul.

St. Paul describes the results of just this kind of faithful presence in Romans 5: “Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope” (Romans 5:5). The reason for this endurance quality is the love of God at work in human life; all three of these kinds of courage come from the grace of God.

~ Earl F. Palmer

—On a personal note: I would like to affirm the decision of Dan Wilson, who has accepted a leadership position for the United Way in Greater Seattle. So that he can give full energy to this new post, we accept his resignation from the EPM Board with appreciation for the leadership he has exercised, his willing spirit of service, and his deep faith in Christ. May the Lord bless him and Annie as they take on this role for the city.



Earl preaching at UPC on 5/13/12



Music Team: Dale Roth, Brian Coon, Sue Nixon, & Heather Whitney

WORD & WORSHIP

This spring, EPM offered a three-part worship series under the leadership of board member Sue Nixon. These times were truly blessed with a peaceful and reviving atmosphere. The music team quite literally brought many to tears while Walt Wagner surrounded voices on the piano. Earl's messages on *Encounters With Jesus* were illuminating and gospel centered.

**These times were such a success that we don't want them to end. So we're inviting you for more. . .**

**October 4, November 1, and December 6 at 7 p.m. in the Highlands Chapel, reflections by Earl on *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy* – See [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org) for directions.**

We owe a warm thank you to Bruce Hosford for hosting this event at the chapel. It is a warm and inviting space, to say nothing of the beautiful stained glass and elaborate architecture. Thank you, Bruce.

## THE TIMELESS C.S. LEWIS

Clive Staples Lewis has been dead for nearly fifty years. For a dead man, he is still getting along quite well—selling tens of millions of books, mentoring people of all ages in their journey of faith, even featured in movies and theatrical hits. I should qualify my previous statement—C.S. Lewis is alive, and will be as long as there are people around to read his books. His legacy is monumental, his work is revered, and his life is beloved.

On a rainy April night, around 150 people converged at the Taproot Theatre Company to listen in on a conversation between three men worth listening to. Rev. Palmer and Dr. Daniel Benveniste, a psychoanalyst and expert on Sigmund Freud, discussed their respective heroes who are the focus of the award-winning theater production "Freud's Last Session." This play explores the ideas of C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud through a hypothetical meeting and what they might have said in such an encounter. The conversation, mediated by Kindling's Muse host Dick Staub, was electrifying, amicable, and left the minds of those present better off than before.

Earl has often said that in adopting Lewis as his own mentor there are two goals: to know what Lewis *has* said, but also in a deeper sense to try and understand what Lewis *would* say. Host Dick Staub reflected on the show afterward: "I regularly watch Earl handle questions intelligently, creatively, and as one who has wrestled with tough issues, but one who is still listening and learning." Indeed, it is because of people like Earl and events like these that we can say the legacy of C.S. Lewis lives on, and will for a very long time.



Earl, Dick Staub, and Dr. Daniel Benveniste at Taproot Theatre  
Listen to the conversation at [www.earlpalmer.org/resources/media](http://www.earlpalmer.org/resources/media)

**MORE C.S. LEWIS:**  
*The man, the writer, the Christian*

**Sammamish Presbyterian Church**

Lectures by Earl Palmer on Sept. 28 & 29;  
Morning worship on the 30th.  
[www.spconline.org](http://www.spconline.org)



University of Washington  
Walker-Ames Room  
in Kane Hall

### October 1

Calm Under Pressure: The Virtue of Dynamic Moderation  
*From Under the Rubble*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn

### November 5

God Is Easy to Please: George MacDonald, the Storyteller Who Caught Hold of C.S. Lewis  
*Phantastes*, George MacDonald  
*George MacDonald: An Anthology*, C.S. Lewis

### December 3

Defining Joy  
*Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis  
*The Humor of Jesus*, Earl F. Palmer

To attend a live event, register at:  
[www.thekindlings.com/events](http://www.thekindlings.com/events)

Each event is podcast and made available to download at:  
[www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org)  
Under "Resources"

## The Walker-Ames Room

Is located on the 2nd floor of Kane Hall on the campus of the University of Washington. Please visit the Kindlings Muse page at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org) for detailed directions and instructions on parking, or email [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org).

## At Home and on the Road with Earl

There is a hunger to leave a mark of goodness behind after you've left a place, regardless of the reason for leaving. It may be a move, a change in vocation, retirement, or death—these all act as a means of closure. And on the other side of this dividing line we can truly examine the mark or imprint made. As I touched on briefly in the C.S. Lewis article, his influence seems to unfold itself and grow over



*Ted and Barbara Hoover, dear friends and faithful supporters of EPM, with Earl and me at Laity Lodge, Texas.*

time. We seem to see the impact more the longer he and other great men and women like him are gone.

While Earl was speaking on Lewis at Laity Lodge this spring, he talked some about the nature of evil. Evil seems to

have an energy that builds upon itself; it expands and accelerates as it moves forward through time. It also has a legacy. There is no reason to deny it, one needs only to look at history to confirm this. But we must never get caught up in pessimism and despair, what Earl calls a “disorienting fear” (borrowed from his beloved letter of Paul to Timothy). There also is an energy in good that has already outweighed evil. This is the legacy of Christ overcoming the cross, outweighing evil’s ultimate legacy in death. Even the worst that evil has to offer, death, cannot outdo the best legacy that good could offer, Christ’s resurrection. And this resurrection legacy is ours to own.

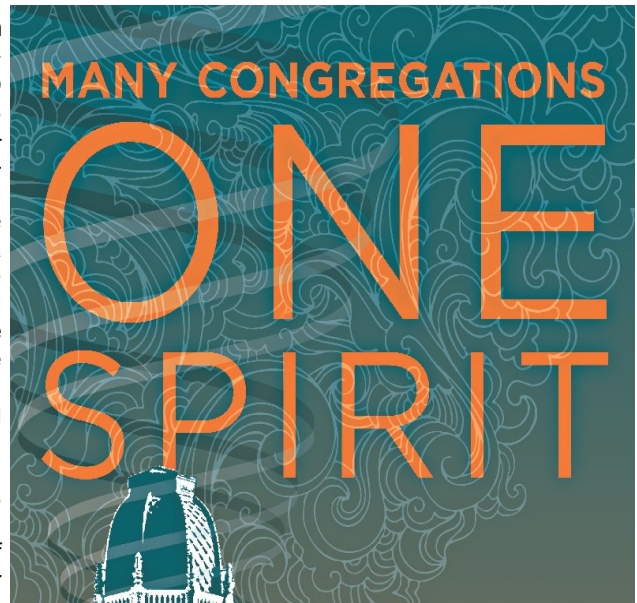
I have been around a number of great people over the course of this year, not limited to but including Earl. In all of these people I have seen what it means to seriously consider the mark we are leaving behind, within family, community, and to the world. These are people who hold true to the legacy of good, to the resurrection over death. It’s too easy just to say it’s inspiring to see these people taking their position in the world seriously (although it *is* inspiring). Something I have learned from Earl over the course of this year is that someone truly leaving this resurrection legacy, as Earl has worked to do over the past 50 some years in ministry, will leave a fire in the places that person has been. And we who are left in that place carry the fire after they are gone. From Lewis, to Earl, to so many others, good is leaving this mark.  
~ John Sittser

## An Interdenominational Experience

Pentecost 2012 was an answer to many year-long prayers for eight churches in Bellingham, Washington. We had been planning for eight months to gather and worship together for the third year on Pentecost in the historic Mount Baker Theater to celebrate the unity we share in Jesus. The icing on the cake was that Earl Palmer was able to join us this year to proclaim God’s Word—we were very excited. From the moment that the old Mount Baker Theater Wurlitzer Organ fired up, there was an anticipation that God had something good in store for all of us. As a body we rose and praised God singing, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” The contemporary Band then led us in some inspired praise as we sang “How Great is our God.” The mass choir blessed us with a stunning gospel song, and that was the context to welcome Earl Palmer. Earl chose passages from the Pentecost story in Acts 2 to direct our attention to Jesus. He lifted that text, unpacked it, and used it to point us to Jesus. We were blessed with some C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton quotes and through some personal stories, but the focus remained from beginning to end on Jesus and his redemptive work on the cross. For many in attendance, it was their first chance to be blessed by Earl’s preaching ministry. After the sermon we gathered around the table and received Communion. The service was a highlight of the year for all eight church congregations present.

In addition, we were able to bless the community with a donation of 1009 pounds of peanut butter for the food bank and \$9,000 in donations to a local ministry called Rebound. More than that, though, was the chance to lean into the joy and strength of the unity that we have in Jesus. It was truly a day that we pray will continue to bear fruit in Bellingham and all around for many years to come.

~ Doug Bunnell, Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church Bellingham



## Chapel at World Vision

### Encouraging World Vision Staff

It was wonderful having Earl share with and encourage the World Vision staff in early May during a recent weekly chapel

service. He preached from Philippians 1:19-28 about the source of courage for the man and woman in Christ. In this author’s humble opinion, it was “classic Palmer,” Greek and Hebrew word studies matched beautifully with Earl’s humor, insights, opinions and wisdom.

World Vision president Rich Stearns is also a member of UPC, and we were both honored to share “our pastor-emeritus” with our World Vision family. The staff response to

his message was extraordinary! It’s not uncommon to have local pastors bring a message during our chapel services, but it is rare to receive the countless number of positive calls, emails, and hallway blessings we got after Earl’s time with us. On a personal note, it was a thrill to be able to lead the musical worship that day with the help of UPC principal organist Jo Ann Stremmer: a few Fanny Crosby tunes and the hymn “Redeemed” (all Earl’s favorites!).

The topic of courage was particularly fitting for our World Vision staff as each day around the globe our 40,000+ employees face incalculable threats and challenges as we serve the poor in desperate and difficult situations. Thank you, Earl, for your encouragement to our staff to “stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27).

~ Steve Quant, friend of EPM and VP at World Vision

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PO Box 85117  
Seattle, WA 98145

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*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

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### Mission Statement

EPM's mission statement comes from 1 Thessalonians 5:11 — "Serving to encourage and build up in Christian faith." These words from the Apostle Paul inspire our ministry of teaching, writing, and mentoring. First, we seek to mentor young theologians through our internship program and monthly theological dialogues. Live podcasts through *The Kindlings Muse* offer regular teaching and conversation for all ages to consider major Christian themes. EPM's wider ministry focuses primarily on encouraging pastors and giving a case for expositional worship.

If you have questions regarding Earl Palmer Ministries and its events, or to schedule an event, visit us at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org) or e-mail us at [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org).

If you know of others who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you would prefer not to receive this mailing, e-mail John at [john@earlpalmer.org](mailto:john@earlpalmer.org).

Your support makes this ministry happen. As we continue in this fourth year of ministry, we invite you to share in this outreach again with your prayers and your financial investment. To make a tax-deductible contribution, please send a check made out to Earl Palmer Ministries, PO Box 85117, Seattle, WA 98145, or electronically via PayPal at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org). On behalf of the EPM team, I thank you.

