

# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

## Summer 2010

### On Earl's Calendar

#### In Washington, D.C.

#### **The National Presbyterian Church Sermon Series**

*St. Paul's Greatest Book: The Letter to the Romans for Us Today*  
May 2 - June 27

#### **NPC Wednesday Night Series**

*Compass Points of the Faith: Our Creeds and Confessions*  
April 28 - June 24

#### Around the Country

#### **Laity Lodge Leadership Weekend**

Kerrville, Texas - July 14-18

#### **Presbyterian Preaching Conference**

*St. Paul and the Cities He Loved*  
Zepher Cove, Nevada -  
October 10-12

#### **Christ Episcopal Church**

*Two Defiant Traditionalists Who Believed in God: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien*  
Greenwich, Connecticut -  
October 15-17

#### **Preaching at Wake Forest University**

Winston-Salem, North Carolina -  
November 14

#### **First Presbyterian Church**

Bellingham, Washington -  
December 12 & 19

#### Around the World

**C.S. Lewis: For His Time and Ours**  
Oxford, England - September 9-13

*Back in Seattle this fall:*

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

October 4: 7-8:30 p.m.  
November 1: 7-8:30 p.m.  
December 6: 7-8:30 p.m.

#### **Theological Dialogue**

October 5: 9-11 a.m.  
November 2: 9-11 a.m.  
December 7: 9-11 a.m.

**I've been thinking ...** once again about power as I have been preaching from Revelation and Romans at The National Presbyterian Church this past winter and spring. Revelation speaks about power—both good and bad. It is encouraging for me to read this last book of the Bible because it makes clear that good power far outweighs the bad. This good power is strong because the Lamb of God of Revelation 5 is the Lord Jesus Christ who holds the scroll of history in His faithful hands. We who trust Him have key roles to play in continuing to make that story ours and to share it with our generation. The book of Romans clarifies our task as it shows us how to be a Christian in the turbulent world in which we live.

My Sundays this next year will be different as I conclude my time at The National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. I will really miss the amazing people and new friends at this great church where I have been privileged to serve since November 2008 as Preaching Pastor-in-Residence. It does mean less cross-country travel, but here is one more church that for Shirley and me will always be our church.

As I look forward to this next year with Earl Palmer Ministries, I welcome Tony Whatley as the new chair of the Board. And I thank Scott Hardman as outgoing chair for his vision initially in organizing this ministry and his ongoing faithful encouragement. In September we will welcome a new face for study assistant in Roderick Gellner, who is also a University of Washington graduate and active with The Inn at UPC. Daniel Triller, who has been a colleague and friend as study assistant this past year, leaves in July to attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the fall. May the Lord bless him as he moves toward a call to ministry.

How grateful I am for the many people who are at work in the world to bring people to faith. Time with Dr. Amnuay and Siree Tapingkae in Chiang Mai, Thailand, was very inspiring for Daniel and me to witness what a difference their lives are making! Looking ahead, I am especially excited that President Philip Eaton from Seattle Pacific University will join with me as a resource speaker during the Oxford Gathering. His leadership has had a great impact on the city. What a richness for me to be working with such people who are dedicated to living lives for the good. —Earl F. Palmer

First Church  
of Chiang Mai,  
Thailand

Amnuay Tapingkae,  
President Emeritus  
of Payap University  
introduces Earl as  
guest preacher

Sermon on  
Philippians 4  
with translator

May 2, 2010



## Traveling South with Dad

As our ship, the *Corinthian II*, slipped away from the tip of South America, I was totally unprepared for what lay ahead. Dad had been invited by *First Century Voyages* to deliver four lectures on the doctrines of "creation" and "free will" as the ship cruised with its 115 passengers through the islands and passages of the Antarctic Peninsula. I told Dad jokingly before we left, "Good thing you picked a few lightweight topics!" As it turned out, there could have been no better setting for lectures on such weighty subjects. Over the next 10 days we drifted in Zodiacs among other-worldly ice sculptures, threaded narrow channels with blue glaciers tumbling from ice-rimmed peaks to the sea, visited old huts where researchers and whalers had passed melancholy winters, braved horizontal snow squalls, and took in the late-night Austral sunsets. Against this backdrop, Dad delivered his lectures—at one point hugging the lectern as the ship plowed through the bone-crushing swells of Drake Passage. We experienced albatross, petrels, orcas, humpback whales, leopard seals, crab-eater seals, elephant seals, and, of course, penguins. Lots of penguins. We stood among them in their thousands, in the orderly chaos of their rocky colonies. The Southern Ocean is full of creatures—clinging to life in their harsh environment. The immensity and fragile beauty of the place prepared us all well for Dad's thoughtful reflections on God's creation, our freedom and dominion, and our duty of stewardship. What an experience!



Earl and Jon in Antarctica

—Jon Palmer

## Frodo and the Ring, in Beijing!

This past April, by arrangement of the China Academic Consortium in Berkeley, Earl was privileged to speak at the prestigious Peking University and Beijing Normal University on the works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Earl had the opportunity to speak to 400 Ph.D. students about the central themes found in C.S. Lewis's



Q and A Time with Earl in Peking University

*The Chronicles of Narnia* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. It stimulated many questions from the students who are not very familiar with these two significant writers. He was also formally invited to lecture at Beijing Normal University, Literature Department. He helped the students to appreciate how these classics are important for us today, and he provided a different perspective to which Chinese students had not been exposed. Along with the large group meetings, Earl met small groups of Religious Studies students and discussed questions about "good and evil." In addition, he met a group

of Chinese Christian university teachers giving them encouragement and providing them with directions on how to deal with some controversial issues with which Christian leaders are struggling. With his humor and warmth, Earl has given a special gift to the American Christian teachers who are teaching in Beijing with Educational Resources & Referrals-China (ERRC).

—President Martha Chan



University of Washington  
Burke Museum Café  
Mondays @ 7 p.m.

### October 4

Truth and Grace in Victor Hugo's Greatest Story:  
*Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo

### November 1

A New Look at St. Paul: The Friend of Women and  
Their Role in the Christian Church

### December 6

Christians as Peacemakers  
*Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, Martin Luther King Jr.  
*Second Inaugural Address*, Abraham Lincoln  
*Good News About Injustice*, Gary A. Haugen

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)  
or  
[www.thekindlings.com](http://www.thekindlings.com)  
(search: Earl Palmer Ministries)

## About Earl ... in the Pulpit

*In this article, Donna Marsh begins by discussing Tim Keller's preaching style and his ability to reach young adults while seemingly "breaking all conventional wisdom." What is it then that makes his preaching relevant and meaningful in today's society? The second half of the article continues below as she writes about Earl's style.*

"To unpack the first great end of the Church, I sat down with the Rev. Earl Palmer, Preaching Pastor-in-Residence at The National Presbyterian Church. Palmer is an unabashed intellectual, a prolific author, and a pastor of great stature in the PC(USA), yet I daresay he [in the same fashion as Keller] fits the description of "conservative, not flashy, charismatic, or contemporary, but clear, compelling, and affable." His ministry has helped to stabilize and reinvigorate our 2,000+ member congregation during a difficult season. When I taught a new members class recently, not a soul was over the age of 45 (most were in their 20s and 30s), but those young new members cited his preaching as a key factor in their spiritual growth and choice of a congregation ... Earl's cardinal rule of preaching is, "Let the text speak." He is a longtime practitioner and advocate of expository preaching, that is, working carefully through a biblical text in each sermon, drawing out its meaning line by line. Palmer's eyes light up when he says, "The great thing about preaching from the text is that, if you do it right, the person in the pew gets the point a split second before you make it." They are stirred to repentance, guided in the footsteps of Jesus, or given hope, because the text, which is more powerful than any preacher, gives it to them. If the preacher's message is mainly self-referential, "You should hope because I have hope," it may be pleasantly inspiring but it will lack transformative power. Is there hope for this approach to proclamation in a post-modern world fixated on the question "What is *your* story?" rather than "What is *the* story?" No one tells a story better than Palmer, and so he says, "Narrative fascination is good until it becomes obsessive and vectors away from the text. It shouldn't keep us from doing the hard work of seeing what the text is saying." Relevant, artful proclamation can and must rely on the power of stories but will use those stories in service to the text, rather than using the text in service to a story." Excerpt from "Job One" in *Presbyterians for Renewal* by Donna Marsh, Ministry Associate at NPC, PFR Board Member. Access full article at [www.pfrenewal.org/missionally-minded/358-donna-marsh-job-one](http://www.pfrenewal.org/missionally-minded/358-donna-marsh-job-one).

## The People of The National Presbyterian Church Speak Out

Rev. Palmer's sermons and lectures are enjoyed by NPC members of all ages: teenagers, college students, adults, and the elderly. They listen to his talks and take away a positive message of Christ every time. I love how Rev. Palmer weaves history and etymology into his speech, whether it is a sermon on the Book of Romans or a lecture on C.S. Lewis.

*Richard "Jay" Pera,  
a high school senior*

Earl Palmer's ministry here has enriched our congregation and blessed our religious lives. Earl has brought wisdom, insight, and teaching to our lives of faith, reminded us to be ever mindful of God's love, and has encouraged our devotion to Jesus Christ. Beloved by all whose hearts he has touched, Earl will be remembered as one of the finest preachers of the Gospel ever to grace the pulpit of NPC. We both have deep affection for Earl and Shirley, and are thankful for their contributions and commitment to our church home.

*The Honorable George and Mrs. Mary Beth Nethercutt, longtime members of NPC*

It has been my joy and privilege to work closely with Earl and his dear wife, Shirley, in administrative support of the ministry of Preaching Pastor-in-Residence. I appreciate how Earl illuminates the big picture in his sermons, connecting overarching themes and concepts as he explicates detailed historical analysis of Bible passages. I have listened and learned. I also respect the way Earl reaches out to people of all walks of life and faith traditions. He is humble and gracious, a dedicated servant of God.

*Holly Novak, assistant to the Senior Pastor*

*On June 27 Earl will leave his post as Preaching Pastor-in-Residence at NPC, concluding nearly two years of ministry.*



## Daniel on the Road with Earl

What a gift! That's what I tell people about my time working and traveling with Earl. I have been unbelievably blessed traveling with a man I have long admired both across the country and around the world – from Washington D.C. to Thailand, from Berkeley to Beijing. I've had the opportunity to see how God is working through all these ministries, including Chinese students in Beijing. By the way, that's not Photoshop on your left; I actually got to walk up the Great Wall of China! In my travels with Earl, I get access to ask him almost any question I have, whether it's on passages of scripture or reflections on pastoral life. Even more, in traveling you get to see the whole person, their passions, tendencies, even quirks. Here are a few: Earl *loves* talking and bragging about his grandchildren. He constantly uses the word "cute," he absolutely cannot stand being late, and he knows how to make a fine cup of coffee. More seriously, this year has been very confirming to move forward in vocational ministry, and I head off to begin seminary in the fall. I will forever look back on this year with great memories and hope that my ministry in the years to come will be a reflection of my year with Earl.

# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

PO Box 85117  
Seattle, WA 98145

# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tony Whatley, Chair  
Richard Greiling, Treasurer  
Frank Haas  
Scott Hardman  
Susan Hutchison  
Gordon Stephenson

## STAFF

Daniel Triller  
Study Assistant  
daniel@earlpalmer.org  
Office Phone:  
206.524.3250

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 9 a.m. - noon

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 Daniel at [daniel@earlpalmer.org](mailto:daniel@earlpalmer.org).

## 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. And live podcasts through *The Kindlings Muse* offer regular teaching and conversation for all ages to consider major Christian themes.

Your support makes this ministry happen. As we enter into this third 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.

