

Earl Palmer Ministries  
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# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

www.earlpalmer.org

Summer 2009

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1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

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### Mission Statement

Our mission statement for EPM comes from 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Serving to encourage and build up in Christian faith." These words from the Apostle Paul are the guideline for our mandate as we seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ here in Seattle and in the places where the Lord guides us.

If you have any questions regarding Earl Palmer Ministries and its events, or to schedule an event, visit [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org) or send an e-mail to [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org). If you know of others who would enjoy receiving this newsletter or if you prefer not to receive this mailing, please respond accordingly by e-mailing [kurt@earlpalmer.org](mailto:kurt@earlpalmer.org)

Your prayers for this ministry are greatly appreciated. Thank you to those of you who have made a donation. Anyone who would like to make a tax-deductible donation to EPM may send a check to Earl Palmer Ministries, PO Box 85117, Seattle, WA 98145-1117. Checks can be made out to Earl Palmer Ministries. If you would like to donate electronically, you can do so on our web page at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org).

### On Earl's Calendar

#### In Seattle

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

October 5: 7-8:30 p.m.  
 November 2: 7-8:30 p.m.  
 November 30: 7-8:30 p.m.

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

October 6: 9-11 a.m.  
 November 3: 9-11 a.m.  
 December 1: 9-11 a.m.

#### In Washington, D.C.

#### **National Presbyterian Church Sunday Sermon Series:**

"The Story Before the Grand Story, a Christian Understanding of the Old Testament."  
 Sept 13—Nov 22

#### And Also...

#### **Christ Episcopal Church, Greenwich, Connecticut**

"C. S. Lewis; The Man, The Christian, and the Writer."  
 October 16, 17.

#### **Princeton Seminary Alumni Lectures\***

October 26-30.

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

November 13-15

#### **First Century Voyages: Antarctica Expedition to the White Continent\***

January 26—February 8, 2010

\*Contact information on page 3

### A Name Above Every Name

Isaiah writes, "This is what the high and lofty One says – who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." (57:15) This prophetic oracle points to a prevailing perspective in Holy Scripture, that the God of the Bible is a very big God. If we take the Bible's message seriously then this perspective focuses our teaching and preaching in sharp contrast to fuzzier, grainier, and arguably sub-biblical views.

When I first heard Earl Palmer speak thirty-four years ago, he said the driving force behind his preaching and teaching is a commitment to letting the Bible "make its own point." It occurred to me then that behind this commitment was his faith that the Bible has a point worth making. I understood far less clearly then that any open, honest seeking of that point leads readers of God's Word to a broader, longer, deeper, and richer vantage than they might well have expected: God's immensity and intimacy intertwined in the emerging vista.

Like Isaiah, those who come to know the Bible's big God invariably are able to rest, not despair, in our relative significance. It's been said that the great thing about being God is you don't need a lot of help. But God has chosen us for faithful and fruitful lives, with open-minded and open-handed authenticity to people who cross our paths. I remember Earl once saying that power

*Continued on page 2*

**I've been thinking about...** friends of the family, I mean those men and women past and present who have marked our lives for good, people like Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, C. S. Lewis, Martin Luther King Jr., Fanny Crosby. We all need friends like these to teach us, stir us up, and encourage us in our own discipleship as Christians. And there are friends within the family too. They play the same role only nearby.

One of my encouragers this year has been Kurt Heineman, our EPM Study Assistant who has traveled on several ministry visits with me and has edited our newsletter and also my sermons and articles. What a fine and talented young man Kurt is! He has a warm Christian faith and has enriched our ministry together. And now he leaves to study at Princeton Seminary this fall. In September we will welcome Daniel Triller as our study Assistant for 2009-2010. As this first year of EPM is almost complete I am personally grateful to the friends inside the family too, to Nancy Holder our Part-time Administrative Assistant, the faithful board of directors and especially my wife Shirley who has been the strongest supporter in this new era of ministry for me.

*—Earl F. Palmer*

## Question and Answer with Earl

### Q: Briefly describe your first eight months in Washington, D.C.?

Well this has been a very fast moving eight months, because of the weekly assignment of preaching, Wednesday classes, and also meeting with people and the staff. This has been a marvelous opportunity to be a preacher and teacher, I am not the moderator of session or the leader of the Church, I assist them as a Preaching Pastor in Residence. It has been eight wonderful months in Washington, D.C.

### Q: Can you share a way you see God at work in Washington, D.C.?

I am grateful for the fact that expository preaching has been welcomed by people who come from all kinds of backgrounds and all places in their life and in their growth, young and old. It is heartwarming to see people get excited about the Bible, so that they share what they have seen to be the relevance of the text and that it helps them in their own Christian lives especially in a city like Washington, D.C.



The National Presbyterian Church

### Q: What is a prayer request that you have for Washington, D.C.?

While the National Presbyterian Church is in the process of finding a new senior pastor we are praying for them that they will find the Lord's person for that Church. I am praying especially for the staff, who are serving the congregation that they grow in grace and that they will have joy in their ministries.

### Q: Do you have a prayer request as you begin envisioning your second year of EPM?

Pray that Shirley and I will keep all of the ministry and family obligations that God has given us balanced and healthy. May this bi-coastal mandate be helpful and blessed by the Lord.

## Many Parts of One Body

It has been a joy to work with Earl, Kurt and the EPM Board this first year of Earl Palmer Ministries. It is a marvel to witness Earl, a person fully living out his talents as God has entrusted. Most of the time, all I can say is "wow".

My title at EPM is Administrative Assistant. According to the worldly standards, it would be easy for me to see my role as diminutive, doing work such as keeping the office in working order, processing donations, managing Earl's calendar, etc.... But thinking that these tasks are unimportant couldn't be further from the truth.

This year I stumbled upon an article of Earl's (he is currently writing it) in which it has enlivened my understanding of a passage Paul wrote to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 12) Paul speaks of the importance of looking at what we are a part of, not simply our part. The focus starts with the big picture: furthering God's kingdom. Not the small picture, where we usually start, "what is my role?"

I guess this is why the Bible is called "The Living Word"; like the perfect weight added to a balance scale it brings me to the point of steadiness. Words written thousands of years ago seem as though they were written just for me.

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:10-11.

—Nancy Holder  
EPM Administrative Assistant

### A Name Above Every Name...

for Christians is less a resource coursing through us than it is confidence in Jesus Christ's power to achieve God's purpose in us. His comment has long been directive, even corrective, in my life. I'm so grateful for this, and for the gracious, winsome model of his long ministry in our Lord's name. After all, St. Paul says it's a name above every name. Together we really do worship and serve a very big God.

—Mike Denham, Director of Music Ministries  
The National Presbyterian Church

## From the Pulpit on May 31, 2009 at National Presbyterian Church

Paul writes to the Philippians, "you are like children in the midst of a bent and unrighteous generation in which you shine like lights, holding fast to the word of life (Phil 2:15-16)." At first glance the matchup doesn't seem fair does it? How are these first century Christians who Paul describes as children to stand up in the face of the power of Nero's Roman Empire but they have two things going for them; the first is "light," you have truth and truth outlasts falsehood. In a scientific experiment the truth wins out in the end because a falsehood leads down a false alley. This is why Paul uses the language of the mind to encourage us to think through the implications of our faith.

And they have "life." You have life, the life of Jesus Christ: nourishing you, healing, giving hope. Others may have the power of death but you have the power of life. What a text for us and for our generation, to know that we can wager on truth and wager on life because of Jesus Christ who validates the truth and gives us the life.



### October 5

"The Defiant Traditionalist who Believed in God." *Orthodoxy* by G.K. Chesterton.

### November 2

"More of a Friend of Christian Faith than he let on." *Huckleberry Finn* and *Lectures of Mark Twain*, by Mark Twain.

### November 30

"Fanny Crosby: America's songwriter. Story of her life and her songs." *Her Heart Can See* by Edith Blumhofer

**Kurt on the Road with Earl ...** This past June I visited Earl for a week in Washington, D.C. While there I met a member of the National Presbyterian Church and during our a conversation we had, he mentioned that he was often labeled as a "biblical literalist." Not that he disliked this title, but rather he considered himself to be a person that takes the Bible seriously. This notion of taking the Bible seriously, has surrounded me this past year and on one particular occasion in Berkeley, CA it took a deeper hold on my heart and mind. In April of 2009, Earl gave a full day of expository lectures on the book of Revelation hosted by New College Berkeley at First Presbyterian Church. Having known the topic for the seminar prior to visiting, I could not imagine how in five to six hours Earl would be able to outline and go into a great detail and depth about Revelation, including its themes and relevance to modern life. Of course, as most of my time has gone this year, it was a great surprise to see Earl not only cover the entire book of Revelation but to help make sense of the grand text. Without a summarization, (if I try to, it would hardly live up to Earl's exposition) I found it extremely rewarding to look at the entire book of Revelation as a whole rather than reading it piece by piece as I had in personal study time. Doing so helped me frame the whole of John's message in context with my personal questions such as John's letters to the seven churches and his visions which seemed hard to understand (why all the monsters?). With such a refreshing overview of the book, I saw how John wanted me to know not just what Jesus is going to do, but what he has done in his death on the cross and that wondrous act of love he displayed. As I move on, hoping to someday be a pastor as well, I will always remember the ways in which Earl taught me "to take the text seriously."



Earl Speaking in Berkeley, CA

### \*Contact information from page 1

- The Kindlings Muse is a live event that takes place on the University of Washington campus at the Burke Museum. The 1 ½ hour discussion is recorded and made available to download at [www.thekindlings.com](http://www.thekindlings.com) or [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org). To attend in person, register online at [reservations@thekindlings.com](mailto:reservations@thekindlings.com) and provide (1) the name and date of the event for which you are registering, and (2) your name, number of guests, and the e-mail addresses of your guests.

- The Theological Dialogue is a small group of pastors who meet once a month in Seattle. If you are interested in joining the group, e-mail [nancy@earlpalmer.org](mailto:nancy@earlpalmer.org).
- For more information and registration to attend the Great Reformation 2009 Princeton Seminary Alumni event visit; [www.ptsem.edu](http://www.ptsem.edu).
- To Make reservations of for further information about this travel program, please contact First Century Voyages at (919) 381-5722 or visit them on the Web at [www.firstcenturyvoyages.com](http://www.firstcenturyvoyages.com).