

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

Spring 2009

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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.

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.

If you have any questions regarding Earl Palmer Ministries and its events, or to schedule an event, visit www.earlpalmer.org or send an e-mail to 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

On Earl's Calendar

In Seattle

The Kindlings Muse Podcast*:

Touchstone of Reality: *Screwtape Letters* and *Silver Chair* by C. S. Lewis

April 6: 7-8:30 p.m.

Theological Dialogue*

April 7: 9-11 a.m.

In Washington, D.C.

National Presbyterian Church

Sunday Sermon Series:

"Meet Jesus at Nazareth"

April 5, 12, 19

"St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians"

May 3, 10, 17

June 7, 14, 21

And Also...

New College Berkeley, California* "A New Look at the Book of Revelation"

April 25-26

Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.* "The Pastor as Preacher"

May 4-9

Falls Church, Virginia

Pastoral Staff Retreat for Falls Church

June 2-4

*Contact information on page 3

New Online Access to Earl's Sermons

The Earl Palmer Ministries website, www.earlpalmer.org, will be undergoing transition in the coming months. Until now, the content of the resources section primarily comprised links to various places on the World Wide Web that have acted as hosts for Earl's sermons and lectures. This section of the Earl Palmer Ministries website will begin to change starting in April. EPM is partnering with sermon.net to develop an online electronic library of Earl's sermons and lectures from his time as pastor at First Presbyterian in Berkeley; California, University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington; and National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. This new electronic library will be free to access and download the various multimedia it contains. Our mission is to make accessing Earl's ministry of teaching more convenient.

Using sermon.net's "sermon player" will be quite familiar for some of us because currently, it is the software that University Presbyterian Church uses to share its multimedia. Using sermon.net's sermon player is convenient in that all of the audio, video, and text documents are stored on the media player. Also, the sermon player archive contains an easy to use search drive that includes keyword searches for items such as a date, speaker, topic, or a book in the Bible. We encourage you to visit www.earlpalmer.org to download a favorite Earl Palmer sermon or lecture.

I have been thinking about ... The assignment, as Resident Preaching Pastor at National Presbyterian Church has been a nourishing experience for both Shirley and me. First, because of the reverence and the joy in each Sunday's worship, then the welcoming openness of the people, and then add the strong support of each member of the church staff team. Most of those who attend this church are part of the amazing mix of people that make up Washington, D.C. Many are career servants with the United States government, both civilian and military. There are also those in corporations who have direct involvement in the government; many are in the profession of law, medicine, or education. Students come from nearby world-renowned universities. There are also those who have served in government posts but have retired and stayed in Washington because it is such a fascinating city in which to live. And every Sunday there are even visitors from Seattle, Berkeley, and sometimes Manila to keep us reminded of that part of our lives. Washington, D.C. is a motivational city; people are open-faced and friendly. The world saw that quality of character during the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Nearly 2 million people crowded the mall, and there were no police arrests during those days of peaceful excitement. It is a privilege to be here at this time in history. I believe this congregation is at a key place and time for our nation and the world. Pray for our witness as a church and for the way we live, think, and work. My goal is to be an encouragement of the ministry of God's people in this city of plans and actions, of planners and doers. —Earl F. Palmer

Reflections from Board Member Tony Whatley

For years, Earl has been my personal hero! He is best in class as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is a real, congruent, honest, and transparent human being. Earl's preaching has always been Christ-centered. He is an excellent father and husband, according to Shirley and his children. He has never used his position or reputation to enrich himself but rather has maintained an understated and exemplary lifestyle. Earl not only talks the talk but also walks the walk.

For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. This is the appropriate chronological time for Earl to switch gears and alter his orientation from Senior Pastor and Head of the Session to the new and exciting mission of Earl Palmer Ministries, which is "Serving to encourage and build up in Christian faith." As a minister and evangelist at large, Earl is able to accept assignments such as National Presbyterian Church, The Kindling Muse, and the Laity Fo-



Left to right: Rev. Earl F. Palmer, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Judge Glenda Hatchett, and Ambassador Andrew Young at the Laity Forum in Naples, Florida, in March 2009.

rum. What a treat it was at the Laity Forum to hear Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu complain about having to follow Earl on the agenda after Earl delivered one of his classic Bible teachings! I have personally witnessed Earl at all of these venues, and I can testify that he is the same superb teacher at each. But he also has a renewed energy and enthusiasm due to the freedom and different perspective that comes from this new beginning.

My family and I visited National Presbyterian in Washington, D.C., on a spectacularly clear day in February 2009. The church itself is an imposing structure, which, though impressive in design, locates the pulpit for the speaking minister 60 feet from the first pew so connection to the audience is difficult. Regardless, Earl is described by local congregants as a "jolt of electricity to the church." This day was no exception as Earl preached on "Advantages and Disadvantages" in relation to Acts 19. This is the story of Paul in Ephesus as told in Acts 19:1-20:1. Here it says that Paul went first to the synagogue but was mocked by many in the congregation, so he left and rented Tyrannas Hall where he conducted a successful ministry, years of preaching, and healing. Paul called his listeners to join a new community, one stripped of ethnicity, and

built on self sacrifice and mutual helpfulness.

Some of Paul's disadvantages were that he delivered a radical new message of the "Good News of Christ," which was unpopular to the local Jews, so he was forced to move to a theater that was hot and uncomfortable during midday. His audience was mostly slaves and women.

He also confronted a hostile local industry of idol makers. According to Acts, Paul was so successful ("the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily," Acts 19:20) that he threatened the livelihood of the craftsmen who made silver souvenirs of the Temple of Artemis and sold them to foreign tourists and pilgrims. Paul had to be saved from a rioting crowd by his friends.

In terms of advantages, Paul was a great teacher and preacher, and was a highly educated Jew and Roman citizen. His major advantage was, of course, his message of the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and His grace that is available to us all. Another major asset was Paul's uncanny ability to make friends. In spite of his high level of education, Paul could relate to the full spectrum of humanity ... rich, poor, Roman, Jew, free or slave, man or woman. Paul's most significant advantage was his amazing faith and consistent centeredness on Christ, which enabled him to become the chief design engineer of the Christian faith.

Earl has these same advantages. He also has the unusual ability to combine scholarship with humor and history with philosophy and psychology, all in an understandable, inspirational manner. Earl is a passionate evangelist and an outstanding public speaker but not in an overstated, bombastic style. It is no wonder that he electrifies the crowd in Washington. This is an ideal time for Earl as he inspires D.C., Seattle, and leaders around the country to experience the relationship and walk available to us all with our Lord. —Tony Whatley

Prayer Offered at the U. S. House of Representatives on March 25, 2009, by the Rev. Earl Palmer

O God, Our Father we begin this day with gratitude and resolve.

We give thanks for those who are privileged to serve in this place of study, deliberation, decisions, and history.

We are grateful for our republic of citizens, young and old, their cities and states, farms and villages – a people, who by their work and dreams give motivation and energy to what happens here in this House of Representatives.

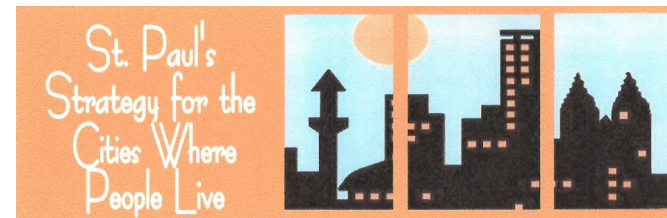
As we begin this day, we claim O God your gift of truth and grace: for truth that bears the imprint of integrity and honesty and for your grace that forgives us when harm happens and healing is needed to keep us whole.

We ask for the wisdom, courage and respect that build friendships among these leaders who guide our land. Grant us the hope that encourages through morning, afternoon, and evening hours because of your love and faithfulness.

Amen.

From the Pulpit on December 7 at National Presbyterian Church

In Matthew 11 we are told that Jesus says, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Jesus was a carpenter with his dad until almost the age of 30. You know what carpenters built in Nazareth? We have all these ideas that Jesus, the young carpenter, built cabinets. No, the Amish build cabinets. What would a carpenter build in the 1st century? Probably the most important thing carpenters would build would be yokes for animals, especially where two animals are put side-by-side. It takes skill to build a yoke that fits two animals side-by-side without hurting either of them. As a carpenter, Jesus probably built yokes, and with that in mind, think of the promise he makes: "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you." I know how to make a yoke that fits. It is easy. My burden is light when the yoke is right. And when that dawns on you and me, and we realize how good is this person who made that promise to each of us to come unto him, all you who labor and are heavy laden, it changes everything. It is one more reason to trust Him.



Kurt on the Road with Earl ... During the weekend of February 20-22, Earl and I traveled to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Earl was invited to Tulsa's First Presbyterian Church, as guest speaker for the Welch Lectures. Earl gave three lectures during the weekend about "St. Paul's Strategy for the Cities Where People Live." Traveling with Earl has been a fascinating experi-

ence. We have visited with vibrant Christian communities across America in Tulsa, Washington, D.C., Denver, Texas, and others. Our travels have helped me see a broader Christian community than the one I have been a part of here in Seattle. God is certainly alive and at work in exciting ways all over the world. This truth has become clear and more evident to me in our meetings with various clergy and lay people during our travels. Earl mentions that Paul would travel around the ancient Mediterranean preaching "the Lord Jesus Christ." In many ways this feels like what Earl has been doing with Earl Palmer Ministries, preaching "the Lord Jesus Christ." One particular way that Tulsa's church is growing is through its college ministry. Earl and I met with the college ministry team and some Tulsa University students. Over that weekend I received news that I had been accepted to Princeton Theological Seminary for the coming fall. To my surprise I met someone else that weekend who had also been accepted to Princeton. It was mutually exciting to share how the Lord is at work in all of our lives. For this I feel blessed.

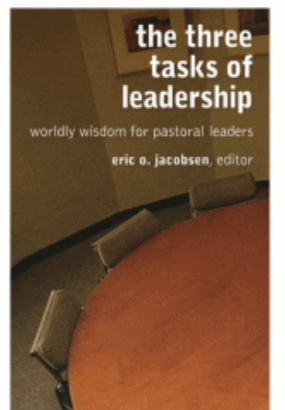
Recently in Print

Palmer, Earl F. "The Pulpit as Primary Setting for Defining Reality" in *The Three Tasks of Leadership: Worldly Wisdom for Pastoral Leaders*, edited by Eric O. Jacobsen. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009.

Palmer, Earl F. "To Keep my Head Clear" in *Best Advice: Wisdom on Ministry from 30 Leading Pastors and Preachers*, edited by William J. Carl III. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

Palmer, Earl F. "Like a Very Good Rainstorm" in *Mere Christians: Inspiring Stories of Encounters with C. S. Lewis*, edited by Mary Anne Phemister and Andrew Lazo. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009.

Palmer, Earl F. "Sustaining Pastoral Life" in *From Midterms to Ministry: Practical Theologians in Pastoral Beginnings*, edited by Allan Hugh Cole, Jr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.



*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 Café. The 1 ½ hour discussion is recorded and made available to download at www.thekindlings.com or www.earlpalmer.org. To attend in person, register online at 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 kurt@earlpalmer.org.
- You can register for the New College Berkeley conference by calling 510-841-9386 or by visiting www.newcollegeberkeley.org/spring09reg.asp
- You can enroll for the Regent College conference by calling 604-224-3245 or by visiting conferences.regent-college.edu/pastors.