

President's Note for March 2019

"If you board the wrong train, it is no use running along the corridor in the other direction." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Unless you're James Bond or a Marvel super-hero and can leap from one moving train to another we would be wise to heed Rev. Bonhoeffer's advice. Yes, I understand Bonhoeffer is speaking more figuratively than literally. Literally or figuratively we are blessed to have an advocate in the Holy Spirit and have our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as our ultimate conduit to salvation, in a very real way He is our everything, our super-hero. As we live in a world filled not only with goodness and light, but one also laden with traps and snares from the evil one let's remember Christ states in Matthew 4:7 "Again it is written, Do not put the Lord your God to the test." These words echo Deuteronomy 6:16 which states: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah." NRSV In Exodus 17, while wandering the desert, the Israelites quarreled with Moses and tested the Lord when they grew thirsty. Knowing that ultimately our Lord will provide for our own thirst and every need, let's strive not to put Him to the test today. Instead, and returning to the train metaphor, we need to get onboard the right train with the right conductor. Musicians often employ that train metaphor in their lyrics. I've mentioned this one before where Bruce Springsteen sings in The Land of Hopes and Dreams, "don't need no ticket, just get onboard and thank the Lord." Bono and BB King sing in the U2 song When Love Comes to Town (where love can be equated with Christ), "when love comes to town I'm gonna catch that train". I know, I know, some artists today have created a bit of a tempest in a teapot with their statements on politics, these two included, though neither of these songs have a political message, which leads me back to another interesting quote from Bonhoeffer, "Politics are not the task of a Christian". I'm a bit torn on that sentiment as while as a Christian we should take the high and moral road sometimes the high and moral road requires us to

speak up. To quote Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke, "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." I suppose Bonhoeffer is echoing Christ's words in Mark 12:17, "...render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." KJV Ultimately Bonhoeffer himself paid the ultimate price for returning to Germany and taking the high road. Okay, enough about politics, testing God and train metaphors, though writing about trains makes me want to take a trip by rail. I'll bet it's a beautiful ride over the Sierras right now given all of the snow we've been blessed to receive. Thank you Lord!

I've purposefully utilized a couple of quotes from our Lutheran brother, guide and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer as we will be watching a video on his life during our Lenten Soup Suppers this year...should be enlightening. Ash Wednesday falls on March 6th and we will hold worship service at 12:15pm. There will be no Wednesday midday worship from then until after Holy Week. We will start our Lenten Soup Suppers on Wednesday March 13th at six pm and they will continue through April 10th. Please sign up in the Fireside Room if you can help by making soup. Holy Week we will have a Maundy Thursday worship service at seven pm and a Good Friday service at 12:15pm and of course Easter Sunday at ten am. Check out the April newsletter and your worship bulletin for more details. In keeping with tradition and in honor of Tom Keim we currently have tentative plans for a light Easter breakfast before worship and then may, weather permitting, spill onto our corner lawn for an after service joint celebration and nosh with our friends from Grace Presbyterian Church. April is often beautiful and gathering on the lawn would not only be pleasant for us, but be a witness to the surrounding community that here we are, Christ is Risen, come join us as we say hallelujah!

March will also bring a change or two to our worship leaders' schedule. Pastor Schedler, who regularly serves on the first Sunday of each month, will be unable to attend on March 3rd, so in his absence Pastor Paul Carlson will be preaching. We'll miss Pastor Schedler and his wife Ruth, but it will be good to have Pastor Carlson with us. Pastor Carlson and Pastor Townsend attended seminary,

PLTS, together so perhaps we'll get an insight or two. And the fifth Sunday, March 31st, will see the return of Pastor Ray Olsen who was with us last fall. It will be good to have him back with us again.

Lent is a time of introspection, simplicity and self-denial. We will have self-denial envelopes available for those who elect to sacrifice a bit each day as an act of contrition and thanksgiving for the ultimate sacrifice our Lord provided, a sacrifice that changes the world and offers a new chance at life and salvation. May your Lenten journey be filled with insight and blessings.

The life of the church moves forward. It is good to have our little refuge from the trials of the world here at St. Paul's where we can simultaneously be a part of the Tahoe Park community and a part of our own community of faith set apart from some of the inane madness that seems to permeate much of our world. Thanks to all who serve. Keep those in need both on and off our prayer list in your prayers as we do our best to love our Lord and one another as we gather together then go in peace to serve the Lord.

"The Lord measures out perfection neither by the multitude nor the magnitude of our deeds, but by the manner in which we perform them."

St. John of the Cross

Peace and blessings,

Chuck Prewett

Council President