

The AGAPE Newsletter

May 2010

Vol. 5, No. 5

Around the World in 40 Days: A Loving Look at World Religions From a Christian Perspective

The world is getting smaller and smaller. If we do not learn to respect human differences, our prospects as a species look dim.

Our current sermon series moves around the globe to study the similarities and differences between world religions. Each week we take a world scripture and a Christian text to find a common depth between them.

The last week will show that even atheism can be a source of wisdom and love and need not end the dialogue between respectful human beings.

April 11 Hinduism

April 18 Buddhism

April 25 Taoism

May 2 Confucianism

May 9 Native American

May 16 Judaism

May 23 Islam

May 30 Can Atheism Be
"Spiritual?"

Is War Ever Just?

After church Sunday, a member challenged my general condemnation of war. "War is sometimes justified," he said. "Sometimes an act of violence is the lesser of two evils. Are you being fair when you always paint war as bad?" It is a fair question, and I have to write a newsletter article so I would like to kill two birds with one stone by addressing the question here.

It is true that one act of violence may sometimes prevent another, greater violence. "Just war theory" is the struggle to clarify the rules of engagement when war seems necessary. "Just war" theory says things like "a war must be defensive", "war must be confined to the combatants", "war must not be more destructive than the evil it seeks to correct", etc.

The topic is made more complicated by the fact that our weapons are now so destructive that they punish unborn generations with radiation and pollution making proportionate response impossible to measure. Modern war is also urban war which means more civilians die in a modern war than combatants, which makes "protecting the innocents" impossible. A modern war is like a gun duel in a submarine. The rhetoric may be between the combatants, but the results of a modern war threaten us all. Modern war risks human survival in a clear and present way that eclipses most of the threats we use as excuses for going to war. War as a threat to the species itself was unimaginable when the vocabulary of just war theory was crafted. w

Discussing the topic of just war is also made more difficult by the fact that we live in a nation that has renounced the Geneva conventions and flaunts any effort by the world courts to hold all nations to the same standard. Theoretically, we could wage a just war, but what does that discussion mean in a nation that refuses to measure itself by universal standards and deems any effort at self-criticism as a lack of patriotism? I think some people want to hear me say, if our nation were attacked, we would have a right to defend ourselves. I do believe that. But invoking that principle also means if we attack another nation unjustly, they have a right to kill *us*.

Talk of just war makes me uncomfortable because I do love our troops and, to me, supporting our troops includes caring what happens to the actual human being beneath the uniform. We have made a practice of plunging our troops, many of whom are teenagers, into immoral and illegal undeclared wars. Even the victors of modern warfare are permanently wounded, emotionally if not physically. To send our youth into that maelstrom makes most other forms of child abuse seem mild in comparison.

If "just war" theory was ever applicable, those days are gone. Our alternatives are a world confederacy where every nation binds itself to international law based on universal human rights, or a splintered world of autistic police states plunging ever deeper into a spiral of escalating fear and violence. If we do not choose the former, we will inherit the later.

Love, Jim

April Session Summary
Submitted by Marilyn Love, Clerk of Session

March minutes approved and the following items were discussed:

1. New computers are operating and the phones are fixed. Team expenditures are below budget. Easter giving was high.
2. Discussion of who will substitute for Jim during his writing leave. Discussion of a fund-raiser for the Church of the Savior which burned.
3. Training for leaders.
4. Motion was made and passed to serve communion at Peace Camp and passed.
5. Discussion regarding serving a catered lunch after church when the Teams meet next month.
6. The Website committee is busy updating and improving our website: staopen.com.
7. Plans for a full-day workshop for a Strategic Planning Committee to provide a clear vision of where we're heading. It will be on Saturday, June 5, from 9 am to 3 pm for Elders and interested congregation members. Rita Stephan will compile a document to be used for future plans.
8. The question of whether we need to form a new Nominating Committee now.
9. The pictorial directory is nearly done.
10. There has been a good response to Round Table Dinners.

You Are Invited to Attend
AGAPE Team Meetings
on May 16

AGAPE Team Meetings will be held following the 10:45 worship service on May 16.

A meal will be served for those attending the Team Meetings.
Childcare will be available.



There has been an overwhelming positive response for the Friends and Neighbors groups. We are working on putting the groups together in the next few weeks after we get an updated database. You should be hearing more about Friends and Neighbors in a few weeks when this is done. Thanks for letting us know what you think about this program

The AGAPE News

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Rita Stephan

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Marilyn Love



May 2, is the monthly First Sunday Pot Luck. Please bring some food to share and stay following the 10:45 service. This event presents an excellent time of fellowship and friendship, along with great food, and gives us a time to get to know each other better. Plan to stay for lunch - pot luck lunch - on Sunday, May 2.

Artist Team



Do you love live music, but dislike driving to downtown Austin, searching for parking, and struggling to hear the music over the people at the bar? If so, then try out Open Ears Concerts (www.openearsconcerts.com), a monthly concert series held here at St. Andrew's. We strive to present both established and emerging artists – mainly in acoustic genres such as folk, bluegrass, world, and jazz – in a family-friendly, peaceful, listener-oriented environment.

Our next show, on Saturday May 1, will be the Leonard Cohen Hoot Night. Songwriters around the world list Leonard Cohen at the top of their influences and inspirations. Several of these happen to live in Austin and will perform their favorite Cohen songs on Saturday May 1. Confirmed performers include Marilyn Rucker (our host for the evening), Jean Synodinos, Gary Feist, and Dennis Jones. Others may still be added. Doors open at 6 PM and the show starts at 7. Admission is free. A collection will be taken to benefit the St. Andrew's Food Pantry, which provides food, showers, and comfort to over 200 families each month.

Previous performers include John Spillane, Carrie Elkin, Danny Schmidt, Beaver Nelson, David Roth, Michael Fracasso, Jennings & Keller, and many others. Upcoming shows include The Austin Lounge Lizards on September 24, Sara Hickman on October 15, and Corinne West and Kelly Joe Phelps on November 12. Send email to info@openearsconcerts.com if you have any questions.

Guardian Team



St. Andrew's can earn a donation every time you search the Internet and shop online!!! Search the web with Yahoo-powered [GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) and they'll donate a penny to St. Andrew's each time you search! Shop at more than 600 [GoodShop.com](http://www.GoodShop.com) merchants including Amazon, Best Buy, Toys R Us, and EBay, and a percentage of each purchase will go to St. Andrew's! Charity line entry: *St Andrews Presbyterian Church (Austin, TX)* Add GoodSearch/GoodShop to your toolbar: <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/mode/>.



Stewardship Matters: Seeking Wisdom and Courage

Thanks to generous response to the stewardship campaign, the Session was able to put in place a 2010 budget maintaining the 2009 staff additions. Through the first quarter of 2010, we have a negative cash flow of \$12,549.81. Income for the period was \$4,249 below budget projections while expenses were \$6,995 over budget projections.

This would be a good time to see if your giving is up-to-date, so that we can be in a strong financial position going into the summer.

Many thanks,
Martha Rogers, Stewardship Coordinator

Educator Team



Mother's Day Updated: The State of Mothering, Sunday, May 9. You don't have to be a mother to provide "mothering."

Join us in the church library as we honor, question, and explore the state of mothering now: what is needed personally, for our communities, and the earth. We will share our experiences with the cultural and gender myths of motherhood, the gifts, the problems, and reality of mothering. Where can we find the divine feminine side of God? What role can men play in forming nurturing families? What can we do to enliven and extend mothering?

Bring a symbol of one thing "mothering" means to you, like a piece of earth, a flower and "mothering" questions for mentors/older or younger. Please email staopen.com to RSVP.

"Spirituality of Evolution" May 16 for youth and adults. The class will be limited to the first 25 people to allow everyone time to touch and experience the timeline beads as Carlos Rumbaut talks about the development of life on earth from the formation of the solar system to the emergence of humans. The talk is free. To make your reservation, please call the office or sign up after church in the foyer starting April 18th. The class is open to interested adults and youth. Youth (middle school and high school) are encouraged to bring their family and friends.



The Poiema book study is reading An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith by Barbara Brown Taylor. May 16 we will meet to discuss Chapters 4 and 5: The Practice Walking on the Earth – *Groundedness* and The Practice of Getting Lost - *Wilderness*. You are invited to join us whether you have read the book or not. We gather at 5:30 p.m. for a meal hosted by Poiema. The book study begins about 7 and concludes about 8. For more info call Barbara McCarty at 512-272-5438 barbaramc@pvco.net or Jean Fox at 926-1132. Information about Poiema is available at www.poiemacommunity.org.



Adult Sunday School Classes 9:30 am

● **A Year Through the Bible** meets on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. This way you can attend Jim's class some of the time and still work your way through the Bible too. We are working our way through the Old Testament and having a great time doing this. Join us in the Adult Sunday School room which is the first door on the left as you come down our educational wing. The class is facilitated by Babs Miller

● **Discovering Your Own Tree of Life** If you want to explore and deepen your own inner life, St. Andrew's offers a time and place to do just that. The class meets the 1st Sunday of the month. Pam Wagner facilitates an ongoing discussion of spiritual practices in this class which meets in our library.

● **Women of the Bible** So many of the stories we hear from the Bible are about men. Have you ever wondered about the women in the Bible? Peggy Stoll facilitates as we go through the Bible and, one by one, listen to women's stories--voices not always heard. Come and learn more about the Mothers of our faith. The class meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month..

● **Jim Rigby's Class** Each Sunday Jim leads a class on that Sunday's Lesson in Living.



Theology in Everyday Life will meet on Mondays, May 3 and May 17. Topics are chosen by participants and range from sermons, articles, movies, book excerpts and more. Recognizing how theological concepts are lived out in ordinary lives helps to deepen our understanding of faith. The group learns from one another in an atmosphere of listening and respect. Meetings are from 7:15 pm until 8:30 pm. Please note that everyone is welcome. Each session stands on its own. Topic handouts are available in a basket in the church foyer.

May 3 the discussion topic is "Christianity Before Christianity," a chapter from The Pagan Christ written by Tom Harpur in 2004. In this chapter we will explore the many parallels between ancient faiths such as Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, the Greco-Roman Mystery Religions and early Christianity. If names such as Osiris, Horus, Bacchus, Orpheus, Hermes, Balder, Adonis, Hercules, Attis, Mithras and Tammuz spark your interest, then join in what promises to be a lively conversation.



***Just Around the Corner!!!
Peace Camp 2010
Love Can Change the World***

Sunday, June 20 –Thursday, June 24, 6:30—8:30 p.m.
Pre-school (age 3 by Dec.31), Elementary (next year's grades 1 - 5)

Get your registrations in today for this exciting event. Invite your friends and neighbors!

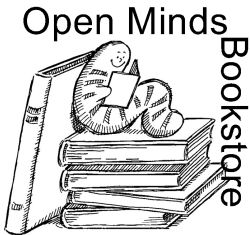
Registration deadline is May 23.

Go to staopen.com for a registration form or at the registration table in the foyer on Sunday.
There are also forms on the cabinet in the foyer by the printed sermon tapes.

Want To Make a Difference in Your World?

Sign up to volunteer at Peace Camp.

Stop by the table in the foyer after worship service
and check out the variety of ways you can participate in one of our biggest church family projects of the year.
Linda will help you find a great opportunity to share your time and talents with children.



This month's featured books are in the bookstore for your review, (to order) and we have other books "to go."

Featured this month:

The Dalai Lama's Little Book of Wisdom: The Essential Teaching, by The Dalai Lama, \$10
This little book which can fit in the palm of your hand or in your back pocket is based on the bestseller, *The Power of Compassion*. Basically it is 115 pages of direct quotes from the Dalai Lama concerning four major life issues: Contentment, Joy and Living Well; Facing

Death and Dying, Dealing with Anger and Emotion; and Giving and Receiving. The wisdom in this little book is simple and helpful for someone who practices any faith or discipline. It would also make a great gift.

Welcome to the Wisdom of the World, by Joan Chittister, \$17. In this inviting book Joan Chittister offers her readers penetrating spiritual insights distilled from five major religious traditions. It is an extraordinarily rich exploration of spirituality.

Leaving Church, by Barbara Brown Taylor, \$13. Barbara Brown Taylor is an Episcopal priest who gave up her pulpit after twenty years of service. While she fully expected to spend the rest of her life writing sermons, leading worship, delivering pastoral care to the living, and burying the dead, that was not to be. Her gains and losses are chronicled in this warm and fascinating book, which depicts her struggles in the quest to be fully human.

Previous month's selections:

An Altar in the World, by Barbara Brown Taylor, \$13 This book is the study selection of the Poima Community.

Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation by Martin Laird, \$16

Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey, by Jane Goodall, \$13 Goodall looks back on her life of studying chimpanzees in Africa, and the evolution of thought she's had, moving from a clinical scientist perspective to recognizing the commonality of humans and chimps at a personal and spiritual level.

Faith-Based War: From 9/11 to Catastrophic Success by T. Walter Herbert, \$25

We have copies "to go."

*We have on hand copies of The Inclusive New Testament. They are only available in soft cover at the present time, \$20.

Children's Featured Book -

Listen to the Wind, Greg Mortenson, illus. by Susan Roth, \$14.50

A children's version of Three Cups of Tea, tells the story of how Greg Mortenson, the mountaineer, built over 50 schools for girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan! Many other great and unusual children's books are available.

The Bookstore is open the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.

Youth Group Activities



Sunday School is every Sunday from 9:30am to 10:30am. Sunday School will be led by the wondrous Randy Cauley through May 9. Upstairs in the cozy youth room.

Sunday, May 2 – 12 noon to 1:30 pm- First practice, everyone come on out and knock the volleyball around and have some pizza! Our plan is to have volleyball practice every Sunday. Let me know if you have a better idea of time.

Friday, May 14 LOCK IN – Calling all youth to an overnight at the church, where we will set up our garage sale and do baking for our bake sale. We had a lot of fun at our last one and had next to no sleep, so why not put those hours to good use?

OFFICIAL YOUTH YARD AND BAKE SALE DATE May 15. 7 am to 3 pm We will use the proceeds to complete the money we pledged to the church as a youth group and vote on the rest of the proceeds. Upgrade to the volleyball area is a main idea! Have something truly unique? Tell us about it. Need pick up? Give us a call. Accepting donation in the ever-filling room upstairs, next to the youth room.

Sunday, May 16- The Spirituality of Evolution A combined Sunday School class with a very special guest. I have seen the beads made to tell the story and I think it is going to be very cool. Deanna will be back at Sunday School as of that day. (My semester is OVER! Yay!)

We will be helping with Vacation Bible School and also planning a big summer kickoff party in this first week of June.

DRUMROLL! Official Volleyball League play starts Thursday, June 10, and goes through Thursday, July 29, with the tournament on Saturday, July 31. If you know a middle or high schooler that wants to play, let them know.

Warmly, Deanna Duplechain, Youth Activities Leader
828-1010



We opened the Food Pantry doors, April 24, to a huge line of people waiting to pick up groceries, and have some nutritious food while they waited for their requests to be processed. We gave out food for 121 people, half of them children, distributed 8 bus passes and 7 people opted for showers. These numbers, although not quite as high as they were a few months ago, are still much higher than they have been in years past. So many people are hurting in these difficult times.

Our ministry is small compared to some of the other churches in our area, but we think it's important and truly appreciated by our clients, some of whom pitch in and volunteer right along with us.

If you would like to experience extending a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in need, please sign up on the white board near the Greeters' Table. We're open on the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Currently, our pantry needs are: dried pasta, individual boxed juices, peanut butter, jelly, soup, cereal, canned meat, chili, stew, canned pasta, rice in small bags or boxes, dental products, bottled water, canned fruit, diapers, and toilet paper. Many thanks, St. Andrew's!



Youth Yard Sale:
May 15, 7 am to 3 pm

Time to do that Spring Cleaning.

Please bring yard sale items to the Youth Room upstairs as we assemble **The Greatest Yard Sale Ever!**

The sale is May 15 so you have time to get it together and bring in your things. If you need help carrying items, or a truck, let us know and we will assist you. If you donate an item of particular value that might not be apparent to us, please let us know. Anything left over will be donated to Goodwill or placed in a silent auction bid.

Also, we will have a BAKE SALE so be thinking of that amazing dessert to contribute as well.

And come and shop on Yard Sale Day!

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Living and Sharing Progressive Christianity

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May 2010

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
<p>Sunday Schedule 8:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School for all ages 10:45 Worship Services</p>	<p>Church Office 9 am – 1:30 pm Monday thru Friday Jim Rigby's Day off is Fridays</p>	<p>Weekly Adult Class Schedule Sunday with Jim Rigby: Each Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m., Jim Rigby teaches a lesson that is closely tied to that day's sermon. On the 18th Jason Brownlee will lead this class with a discussion on the Middle East. May 2: Discovering Your Own Tree of Life with Pam Wagner May 2 & 16: A Year Through the Bible with Babs Miller May 9 & 23: All the Women of the Bible with Peggy Stoll May 9: "The State of Mothering" with Patty Stephens May 16: "Spirituality of Evolution" with Carlos Rumbaut</p>				<p>1 "Fill Your Bucket" will not meet this month. 3:15p Building Bridges 7p Open Ears Concert Joey Achacoso</p>
<p>2 Pot Luck Luncheon BP Screening Martha Rogers Joan Asseff & Jason Brownlee</p>	<p>3 7:15p Theology in Everyday Life</p>	<p>4 10a Bible Study Class</p>	<p>5 7:15p Choir Rehearsal 7p NA</p>	<p>6 6:30p SafePlace Class Patrick Bouquet</p>	<p>7 Round Table Dinners Ethan Achacoso Donna Rutherford</p>	<p>8 9:30a Youth Assist Food Pantry 10a Food Pantry Open Round Table Dinners Cathy Collins Margaret Tolbert</p>
<p>9 Communion Evan Hiland Kay Klumpp</p>	<p>10 Suze Miller</p>	<p>11 10a Bible Study Class Jessica Hestand Fred Tarbox Ann & Bob Glenn</p>	<p>12 7:15p Choir Rehearsal 7p NA</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Shannon Bracamonte</p>	<p>15 7a -3p Youth Yard Sale Kay & Joel Klumpp Katie & Stefan Mastovich</p>
<p>16 AGAPE Team Meetings following 10:45 worship Martha Eanes Daniel Trevino Brandon Wilson Ginny Stricker & Peter Bush</p>	<p>17 7:15p Theology in Everyday Life Eileen Danaher</p>	<p>18 10a Bible Study Class</p>	<p>19 7:15p Choir Rehearsal 7p NA Celia Delgado</p>	<p>20 6:30p SafePlace Class Brenda Tharp Rick Wallingford</p>	<p>21 Mary Rose Cauley</p>	<p>22 9:30a Youth Assist Food Pantry 10a Food Pantry Open Matthew Miller Cathy & James Collins</p>
<p>23 Joshua Fox Linda & George Moxley Holly Galloway & August Plock</p>	<p>24 Felipe Rocha</p>	<p>25 10a Bible Study Class 7p Session Meeting Christina Carlquist</p>	<p>26 7:15p Choir Rehearsal 7p NA</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Reese Richmond Kate Richmond Tricia Walker-Carson Margaret & Patrick Hughes</p>	<p>29 Lloyd Grover Mickey & Joey Achacoso</p>
<p>30</p>	<p>31 Julie Carson</p>					