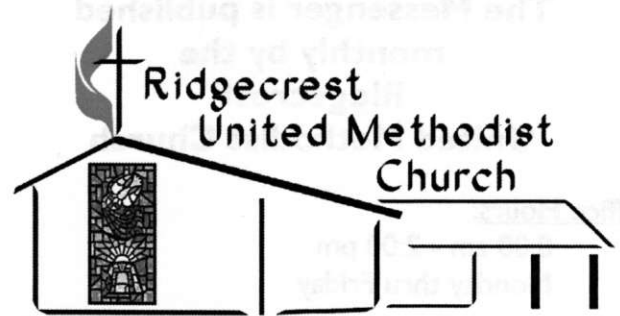


The Messenger



Newsletter of the Ridgecrest United Methodist Church

May, 2011

PASTOR'S POINT

Here at RUMC we celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. Our style of serving Communion is to gather in a line of 20 or so persons at the base of the Chancel steps, join hands, and receive the sacrament as a group. Then I dismiss each group with a scripture-based blessing. I don't prepare these blessings in advance, but rather I wait on the Spirit to give me the verses and the words for the moment.

Last Sunday, May 1, about midway through Communion, God powerfully put this verse on my heart: "If God is for us, then who can be against us?" I hadn't previously used that verse as a blessing in my 5+ years of ministry with you. Of course, it comes from Romans 8. The sense of the verse isn't a lack of clarity on who our enemies are—rather it's an attitude of victory, as if to ask, "With God for us, what does it matter who is against us?"

To get the context, the full passage is Romans 8.31-35, 37-39:

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

On Easter we celebrated Christ's victory over

sin and death, a victory which God intends to be our victory too. And this isn't limited to one Sunday a year—God wants us to be an Easter people, a people who have an attitude of victory 365 days a year.

I woke up this morning, May 2, feeling as though the ground had shifted under my feet. A formidable enemy is no more. The death of Osama bin Laden is good news. And before I heard it on the radio, I knew in my heart that Navy Seals had carried out the mission to take bin Laden out. Those Seals are our heroes, along with all enlisted Navy, Army, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard men and women, and all reservists.

This moment has been a very long time in coming. My prayer is that all Americans who lost a loved one on 9-11-2001 can at least feel some sense of justice, if not closure. And while the modern war against terrorist groups is by no means finished, let May 1, 2011 be marked as a day of victory, a day when the good guys won.

Because of what Jesus achieved in dying and rising from the dead, may you always have an attitude of victory—every day, come what may.

Rich

SSP SOAP SHOP ON MOTHER'S DAY

It's not too late to support our fine high school youth who will be participating in the Sierra Service Project this summer, and also purchase a last minute gift for Mom. After the Sunday morning worship services on Mother's Day, May 8, come visit the SSP Soap Shop in the Social Hall. There are still over 70 kinds of artisan soaps available, including plenty of lavender bars, unscented soaps, the new-this-year Navy Blue & White soap, exfoliating salt spa bars, Gardener's Scrubby soaps, and Pastor Rich's favorite, Desert Nomad. All are priced at \$5.50 per bar with all receipts going to SSP. Bring a friend to worship and shop.

Thank you to everyone who made a purchase on May 1, our first day of sales. The total, as of May 2, stands at \$2,551.50, which is wonderful! Our goal is to raise \$4,000, so come get soapy this Sunday!