



2nd Thoughts

FEB-MARCH
2014

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

Last October, during Pastor's Appreciation Month, the church blessed me with a gift certificate to purchase Bible software to refresh my pastoral resources. I chose to download software from Olive Tree. I have to confess, this thoughtful gift has revolutionized my sermon preparation. How so? Well, now, from the comfort of my iPad, I can read the lectionary text in four different English translations, as well as in Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Greek. In addition, the software includes add-ons that allow me to instantly translate and parse any Greek word in the original New Testament text. (Oh, how I wish I had discovered this in seminary days. It would have saved me hours of research.) So too, I was able to download four different commentaries on each text with the ability to search cross references at the click of the cursor.

This has certainly turbo-charged my sermon preparation as it has opened up new insights and angles of exegesis and interpretation. So, I am grateful to all of you for providing me with this wonderful gift.

However, as important and wonderful as these resources are for pastors, they are equally useful and accessible to lay folk. Thus, I encourage you to explore the possibilities. I especially recommend the new English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible. It is both readable and faithful to the original texts. But if you are going to purchase the ESV, I would encourage you to spend the extra bucks to attain the ESV Study Bible that includes one of the best, short commentaries I have seen. I use it to help me work through our Bible-in-a-Year program that Christie has initiated. The commentary is brief, but meaty. So too, it is not overly technical, consequently you do not need an M.Div. to understand it. I also find it to be fair and balanced in its presentation of differing views within biblical orthodoxy...an important feature in an interdenominational congregation such as ours.

Last of all, ever since our trip to Israel, I have a newfound interest in the geography of the Holy Land. Indeed, biblical maps are no



Pastor Bob Zoba

Sunday Services
10:00 a.m.

Adult Sunday School
9:00am

Sunday School
PK-12
10:30am

Choir Practice
Sundays 12pm
Thursdays 7pm

Weekly Activities

Ladies Bible Study
Tuesdays noon-2pm

Small Group
@ the Rivera's
Tuesday 7pm

Men's Breakfast
Wednesday 7am

Women's Study
Wednesday 7pm

Prayer Service
Thursday 7pm

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Rev. Robert Zoba

longer arbitrary dots on a grid. Instead, they are now reminders of places that I have actually visited and vividly remember in my mind's eye. Therefore, I am very glad that the Olive Tree software includes wonderful Bible maps that are linked to commentary studies with the click of the cursor.

In sum, these new resources have reignited my love to study the Word. Since my calling is to be a workman unashamed in his or her handling of the Word of God, I am grateful to you all for the new tools that you have provided to better fulfill that calling. And in the end, I think you will benefit as you will get a better preacher and a better pastor. Can you say amen to that?

Blessings!

Pastor Bob



Devotional Deadline

Thank you to all who have already committed to writing for our Lenten Devotional for 2UC!! Julio Rivera wins the Early Bird Prize for already submitting his!

Please remember the devotionals are due
Sunday, February 23.

If you haven't sent in your submission, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Second Union Church Council & Staff

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Christie Zoba



We have a few members in the choir who have withstood all the ups and downs that have been thrown their way....meaning...that come what may, they won't give up the battle and they stand by the calling that God has asked of them.

Every Sunday, during practice, I am proud to say that it is with pleasure that I share this time with such a great group of people, who always manage to give of their time and gifts....that of singing to God and the church congregation.

We maybe a small group, but the drive and the love I see every Sunday of these church members is an honor to me. I know that it is their love for God, and doing His bidding, that gives them that drive to be there.

I would love to have more people from the congregation join but I am also realistic in the knowledge that not everyone is called to this tiding.....yet....the hope is ever present that more members would be willing to join and help us grow in this effort to continue and maintain this tradition in the Second Union Church.

Whatever this year brings....the choir will be ever present, whether it is a group of 4, 6 or 10....we are not giving up the only form of expression and outlet we have, to praise our Lord.....so come and join us every Sunday from 9-10 am and 11:45 till 1pm.....and let your beautiful gift of song be heard to God and others.

Maylie Colón

WM Backpack Ministry



Many hands make light work! That's certainly true for our backpack ministry. Each week we pack 31 backpacks with food and with so many willing volunteers, we usually finish in less than 20 minutes!



But the Backpack Ministry is a lot more than just packing the backpacks. At least once a month we pick up several pallets of food at the Food Bank which needs to be transported back to the church, unloaded and stored on the pantry shelves. It is truly back-breaking work, and Ramón China has volunteered to assist in this area which has been a true blessing. We are always grateful for Julio Rivera's help, and Pastor Bob is always there to assist as well! We also need help delivering the backpacks to the school on Fridays. We are also looking for volunteers to give informative talks to the parents of the students. And of course - donations of healthy food! Next time you are at the grocery store, pick up a few cans of soup, spaghetti & meatballs, applesauce, peanut butter, vienna sausages, etc. All donations are welcome!!

We initiated a new phase of this ministry during the month of February - the Backpack Prayer Pals. Within 20 minutes after announcing this program during the church service, the 31 students were all 'adopted'. The prayer pals will pray for these students and their families throughout the year. This is most definitely the most important part of the ministry!!

Thanks to all who help. It is truly a blessing and brings honor to God when we bless others!

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16



Ramón with our new dolly!

Joanne Varon writes, **Milton** will be attending the (annual) Moyers Symposium at School of Dentistry, Univ. of Michigan in Detroit from March 7-9th with his father, Dr. Milton Matos Maldonado. Of course, the talk will be about Orthodontics.

Greg Romanchuk writes, **Tatiana**, now 19, is in her freshman year at St Edwards University, Austin, Texas. It's a very good private school, she is studying international business. She is doing very well and loves Austin. Dad is happy! Tatiana also has a boyfriend (from Honduras). Great guy, from a good family. Tatiana also traveled with me and a Living Water Intl. team last summer to Honduras (drilling water wells for the needy) and it changed her life perspective in many positive ways – praise the lord!! That was my 3rd missionary trip to Honduras with Living Water.

Matthew, now 17, is a junior at Woodlands High School, Woodlands, Texas. He has made some good friends, is attending a very competitive school (sports and academics) and he is taking some very tough classes (mostly AP), and is doing very well. He studies a lot more than dad ever did – but don't tell him that. He is still playing competitive soccer and he loves it. He is getting ready for college, but not sure where he will attend.

Dad (me), well I'm doing fine, very busy (too busy) with work, some traveling and trying to be a responsible parent and positive role model. We found a nice church (Stonebridge, Woodlands, Texas) and we like it, but we sure do miss 2UC!! We still live in The Woodlands, and while I love this place, the kids are still warming up to it ☐ The family spent 8 days in sunny SJ last December/January and we had a really great time. It was great to see everyone!

Mike LaLlave writes, Irma and I are looking forward to a visit by our daughter Michelle and granddaughter Bianca the last week in March.

Madelyn Vega writes, These last months have been so joyful for my family. First my husband **Raymond** had the opportunity to record and present his Jazz cd Antillano which has been a hit! His concert at the Tapia Theater was very successful too. **Xavi** had the opportunity to play the violin at Church, marking his debut with his father at the piano! I completed the editing of my book Letters to my Son 2 which is going to be out just in time for Mother's Day. We are blessed!

JB & Audrey Wilcox make frequent visits to FL to watch their dear daughter play college lacrosse?

Bill Heffley writes, I flew into Tampa and spent Christmas with family in Florida. I first got news that my Uncle Wayne had died during a short lay-over in Miami. The funeral was in Indiana on the farm land that my beloved Uncle had donated to build a new church. We could look out the windows just down the lane and see the white fence, farm house, and barn that we all remember and love. I recorded the memorial service for the family.

It was good to be with aunts, uncles and cousins in Indiana, although it was a whirlwind tour. We drove up by way of Cincinnati and visited family there (oldest sister), as well as in Atlanta area (cousin). This was before all the ice and snow. We saw patches of melted white snow on the ground in Indiana. The wind made it cold. Good news is that my nephew Larry Heffley is now happily married to Cindy. They have known each other since high school days in Sarasota. The wedding was at a lovely, restored Victorian house in Asheville, NC. Dinner for the 20 guests afterwards. We did lots of driving - Sarasota FL to North Indiana and back, then to Asheville and Brevard N.C. and back again to Florida. We enjoyed sightseeing around Sarasota and learning some of the history of that Florida county.

Pito Droz writes, **Sebastian Droz** made Colegio San Ignacio's Junior Honors Society. He's also taking tennis and guitar lessons. So proud of him! **Sofia Droz** is in Toledo, Spain this semester. So far, she's been to Madrid and Lisboa. Future trips include Barcelona and Paris. We all miss her dearly! Jossette and Pito Droz celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on January 21, 2014. (How she's been able to put up with me this long is a festus miracle!;-)



Bill Stowell has new digs in Garden Hills?

Livia Roman was the only person who picked the Seahawks at a recent church service...and she was right!?!)

Kathryn Robinson has found a new home in a local Presbyterian Church in her newly adopted state of Washington?

Julio Rivera distributes more used clothes than the Salvation Army?

Christopher O'Meara was contemplating taking the next plane to PR because he heard that we were serving Christie's gourmet French Toast? (But when he learned that it was the Pastor Bob version he refrained.)

The McMurrays hosted their favorite daughter, **Patty**, and beloved grandson recently?

Our **couples ministry** got off to a great start with a new curriculum and lots of fun? Next event: bowling!!!



Marissa Serrano reports from NYC that she loves her new job and she loves the Big Apple?

Risa Tobin writes: This past year has been a VERY BUSY AND HECTIC for the Montalvo Tobin family! Kids are growing up fast and the older they get the busier they are with academics, clubs, community service, sports and friends! I must say, I feel truly blessed by our Lord to have such wonderful, healthy, compassionate, active and smart children... and most importantly, with a heart of service for the Kingdom of God!! Second Union has played such an IMPORTANT role in the Christian formation of ALL OF US, specially the kids! We are so GRATEFUL to the entire congregation!!

On the more specific note:

- **Omar** and I continue playing tennis, and I spend most of my time caring for the kids;
- **Jean Marco** began high school, is currently on the honor roll, and is doing very well in the swimming team! He also just began a community service club in his school, "dogs 4 smiles", where he along with other students visit hospitals, foster care homes and other entities with their trained therapy dogs, to bring smiles and joy to those who need it the most.
- **Julian** just began middle school, is also in the honor roll, and just recently made the school basketball team. He also plays tennis in Torrimar;
- **Catalina** is in the 4th grade, also in the honor roll, and in any and all activities she can think of!! This year she made the school soccer team and the swim team, and she also plays tennis in Torrimar!

In sum, our household is CRAZY... and getting crazier by the minute! One of the downfalls of all of this, besides the sleep deprivation, is that we are not able to attend church regularly! We have our family services at home, but nothing compares to the fellowship and communion from our church! I also make it a priority to have a daily devotional time with Omar every morning before we begin our day... the kids also join us most of the days! Cariños, Risa :)



Sebastian Valdés, Christie Zoba's grandson was baptized on the beach in Rincón on February 15? Proud parents, Yvette and Jake Smith (Christie's step-daughter and husband) and friends and family were on hand as **Pastor Bob** officiated at this blessed event.

Mayra Chipi returned to Disney World after many years to enjoy the theme park with their granddaughter on her third birthday!



Laurie Foster is helping Second Union Church upgrade their website? She is so organized and professional.

Cheryl Virginia is back in town getting their home ready for rental. She reports that she and Dave are doing well in Ft. Myers and their pizza restaurants are thriving. If you're in the Ft. Myers area, make sure you look them up!



The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation of Puerto Rico is sponsoring a Walk to raise funds on March 1st. Executive Director, and 2UC member, Paloma Aymat is in charge of the event and so far over 15 2UCers have volunteered to walk for Team Jose and Paloma! The Girl Scouts are also sending a team to walk and they graciously baked Valentine's Day cookies for all who signed up on Sunday, February 16 to walk in the Walk! It's not too late, contact Paloma or visit their Facebook page!



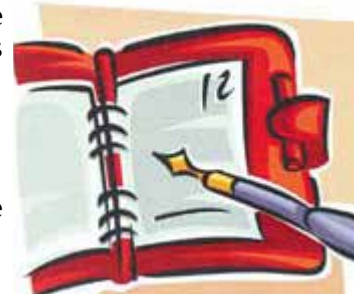
Calendars. Day planners. Agendas.

We're constantly checking where we are suppose to be and what we are suppose to be doing. Whenever we make plans we check our agendas, its how we keep track of everything.

But what if...what if we check in on God's agenda first?

Daily, just to see if we are where we are meant to be doing what we are meant to be doing. What if we consulted God about everything?

Sounds crazy? Or have we raised some questions you'd like to investigate?



Join us 9am, Saturday, March 15th, at the home of Christie Zoba for Second Union's Women's Ministry Praise and Prayer breakfast.

You could put it on your calendar.

Women's Ministries Praise & Prayer Breakfast Saturday, March 15th at 9am at Christie Zoba's home



Women's Walk to Emmaus

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. Luke 24:15

A very special women's retreat is just around the corner. The Walk to Emmaus is a three day experience that has the power to transform your walk with Jesus.

Join women from churches around the island to participate in this life-changing event. Many women from Second Union Church have participated in the Walk and will be happy to talk to you about it: Brenda Ferrer, Christie Zoba, Rosa Trinidad, Evelyn Alberts, Debbie Garcia, Mabel Varela, Rose de Jesus, Irma Lallave, Joellen Ramos - to name a few. Ask them about their experience on the mountain-top.

The next Walk to Emmaus for women will take place:

April 3rd - April 6, 2014.

First of all, we wish to thank the congregation for the confidence you have shown as we continue to bring the various aspects of Men's Ministry activities into a program of support for the men of the church. We would like to let you all know some of the upcoming activities of Men's Ministry of Second Union Church.

In Mark 9:28-29, Jesus's disciples come to Him after they found they could not cast demons out of a young man so afflicted. Jesus told them, "This kind can come out only by prayer." We often confront demons in our lives, personal and other kinds. Unfortunately, as men, we often try to deal with these demons as the disciples did, on our own. We need to be reminded that we don't need to face difficulties on our own, but we can depend on Jesus to help us. For this reason, we have instituted the Prayer Club for Men. Through this initiative, we hope to encourage men to pray before reaching the desperation that comes from trying to do it on our own, and to encourage men to pray for one another. Luis Alberto Rivera is heading up this initiative and will soon be sharing more information.



Men's Ministry is devoted to help men not only in their spiritual lives, but also in their relationships with their families and with one another. Sometimes men just need to have fun. To this end, we have accepted a challenge from Pastor Joe Ramos and Palmas Community Church for a golf outing. The date and location is yet to be determined, but it will be soon. Frank Cruz is organizing our team for the outing and promises a good day for all involved.



We are planning an event for early March for all men of the church to plan other activities and service projects, and several other ideas are in the early planning stages. We'll keep you informed as they develop.



World Day of Prayer 2014

Women, men and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 7, 2014. This year, the women of the WDP Egypt Committee invite us into a time of worship with the words of the prophet Isaiah; "I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert." With these words as backdrop, we are invited to learn about Egypt's history and rich cultural diversity.

An exploration of the Samaritan Woman's conversation with Jesus at a well offers us an opportunity for deep dialogue and reflection about the borders that we, like Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, have to cross to get to the streams of living water. The Samaritan woman by the well has a theological conversation with Jesus that ends with action; much like our motto – informed prayer led to prayerful action. They were able to cross their religious and cultural differences and build a common ground that then empowered her to bring change to her community.

This year's service will be held at Second Union Church at noon.

Invite your friends, family and communities of faith to join the women of Egypt in prayer and song to support ecumenical efforts toward justice, peace, healing and wholeness. The annual offering supports the work of World Day of Prayer USA and helps meet the needs of families in Egypt and around the world who are victims of many forms of poverty, violence and injustice.



Girl Scout Troop 515

Roses are red, violets are blue.
We cleaned up the nursery
'Cause we love you!
Happy Valentine's Day
from
GSUSA Troop 515



Couples' Ministry: Bowling!

The Couples' Ministry invites you and your spouse to join us for an afternoon of bowling on **Saturday, February 22 at 3pm** the "Bowlera" in Caguas. It's going to be a lot of fun mixed in with some friendly competition. The Bowlera is located in the penthouse of the Lincoln Center Plaza, downtown Caguas, Calle Luis Muñoz Rivera esq. Calle Dr. Goyco, two blocks from the Centro de Bellas Artes de Caguas.

Driving directions: Exit 52 on Route 1 toward downtown Caguas. When you arrive at the "Fuente de la Taína" fountain, continue to the third building on the left. There is parking in the building for \$2.00. Visit <http://www.bowlera.com/> for more info.

See you there at 3pm on Saturday!!

A Note from Pastor Joe Ramos at PCC



Joe Ramos writes: Jeremiah 29:10-11, one of my favorite passages, says: This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. *NIV*

Jeremiah writes this letter to the captives in Babylon. They are words of hope to those in captivity, exhorting them to reconcile to their captivity and to make the best of it. He also cautions them to be careful in giving credence to the false prophets who were giving false hopes of a speedy release. He cautions them not to give any credit to their false prophets, who fed them with hopes of a speedy release, Jeremiah is assuring them that God will be merciful and restore them to their own land again.

Well, by the Grace of God, after 42 years of moving from place to place to celebrate worship, on January 26, 2014 **Palmas Community Church** hosted its first congregational meeting since my calling as their Pastor and I survived. Not only did I survive, but the congregation voted to move forward with the building of the new church – PTL. The Church owns 1 ½ Acres of Land and has a substantial amount of seed money to move forward.

PCC has been (metaphorically speaking) captive for 42 years, and soon the Church will have a permanent home. Jeremiah said to those in captivity; I have plans to give you hope and a future. Today, PCC is moving forward trusting in the word and grace of God.

I am thankful to God and humbled by the thought that Elilda and I, of all the people in ministry, were called by God to share in this new historical event in the life of PCCh. That with all the trials and tribulations Elilda and I have faced, God restores us by His Love and Grace. To God be all the Glory, Honor and Praise.

PCC has adopted the following tag line; "Big enough to serve you, small enough to know you!" Please keep us in your prayers as we move forward in faith.

Blessings,
Joe