



What a Difference a Day Makes!

As we celebrate another Resurrection Sunday, I am always so grateful for this celebratory event. Someone has said that Easter Sunday to the Christian is the Super Bowl, the Masters, the World Series, the Final Four, the NBA Game Seven, Wimbledon, and the Stanley Cup all rolled into one. It is all that, and so much more. Indeed, that one day of resurrection some two thousand years ago changed the entire course of human history, planet earth, and, yes, even the destiny of the universe.



Without Easter, we would all still be dead in our sins, separated from God, and headed for an eternity separated from Him. Likewise, without Easter, the disciples would have never had the chutzpah to stand up to the power of the Roman Empire and conquer it. And they did this not with the sword of Muhammad, but with the love of Christ, the blood of the martyrs, and a lifestyle that caused even their critics to remark, "Look how the love one another." Without their witness, fired by the Resurrection, we would not have the New Testament, the witness of the Apostles, or the church as we know and love it today.

Without Easter we would be like the rest of the world: without hope or real meaning in life. We too would join the world in its desperate search for fulfillment through vain philosophy, cheap sex, workaholism, greed, materialism, or self-destructive abuse of alcohol and drugs. Those who are true to the philosophy of this world have no hope and their lifestyle, attitude, and speech give evidence of this hopelessness.

But Easter changed all of that for we know have evidence that Christ's sacrifice for our sin was acceptable to God and we now have proof that there really is life after death. In fact, because of Easter, we not only no longer fear death, but we actually long for it to come some day as we know that death is just a gateway into a life so full and rich that it is beyond our wildest imagining. So too, the sufferings of this life cannot even be compared to the glory that is going to be revealed in us as a result of them.

So, let's get excited this Resurrection Sunday and may we stay excited every Sunday of the year as every Lord's Day is a celebration of the very truths I've just provided.

God is good...all the time!

Blessings,

Pastor Bob

Sunday Services
10:00 a.m.

Adult Sunday School
9:00am

Sunday School
PK-12
10:30am

Choir Practice
9am & 11:30am

Weekly Activities

Ladies Bible Study
Tuesdays 12-2

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

How are you reaching out to others for Christ? Are you sharing your testimony with your family, friends and the people you come into contact with? Are you encouraging others as they go through difficult times and reminding them of a Savior who bears their burdens? Are you witnessing to the lost and the needy? Are you serving those around you?

Hopefully, you are doing all of the above!

Another way you can help others is by inviting them to church! Think about the people in your inner circle and those in your outer circle that you come into contact with. Have you invited them to come to church - or attend one of our activities? If not, what are you waiting for? When we face Jesus, our advocate, in Heaven, He's going to ask you - what about her? What about him? Why didn't you at the very least, invite them to church? What will you say?

Be bold - don't be afraid they will not like you "for you were not given a spirit of timidity but of power!" What's the worst that could happen? They might say 'no'! But think of what might happen?? They might say 'yes'! And imagine how pleased your Father in Heaven will be that you took this tiny step of faith and invited someone into the Kingdom. The ultimate choice is theirs - but **you** can plant the seed.

Another great way you can help advance the kingdom is through our website and social media sites. I've been working on SEO (search engine optimization) for our website and one of the best ways to increase our 'visibility' on the web is through frequent 'hits' or visits to our website: secondunion.org. So, I encourage you to visit our site frequently. You'll get great information (about things like our 50th Anniversary Jubilee Celebration, Couples' Ministry activities, Bible Studies, etc.) and you'll help our site come up quickly when others are searching for a church in Puerto Rico! Also, if you have a website, a link on your site to our site will be a great help as well.

Don't forget that our Facebook page: Second Union Church and groups: Second Union Church 50th Anniversary, 2UC Women's Bible Study are great ways to keep connected and to help you on your daily walk with the Lord.

2014-2015 2UC Church Council & Staff

Pastor
Rev. Robert Zoba

President
David Román

Vice President
Julio Rivera

Treasurer
Stan Pinkerton

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Worship
Maylie Colón

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Jannette Quiles

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Women's Ministries Team Leader
Anita Rodriguez

Youth Leader
Gustavo Gonzalez

Office Manager
Mabel Varela

Minister of Music
Luis Manuel Tirado

Newsletter & Website Editor
Christie Zoba

Invitation

A visit to the Original Union Church of Puerto Rico

Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m.



Join us in Miramar at La Capilla de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes on Avenida Ponce de León at the corner of Calle Miramar for an architectural presentation by Thomas S. Marvel, architect of Second Union Church's sanctuary, about the work of Antonín Nechodomo and his building of this well-restored Neo-Gothic church.

We will share a meal after the guided visit.

This is a part of the Second Union Church 50th Jubilee Anniversary Celebration.

50th Anniversary Celebration Schedule of Events

April 18, Saturday: A visit to the original building of the first Union Church in Miramar.

May 16, Saturday: A special concert featuring the Orfeón Choir, Yadira de Jesus and our own uis Manuel Tirado. This concert will celebrate the occasion in 1965 when the newly formed congregation asked the Union Church to allow it to incorporate under its own charter.

May 17, Sunday: To celebrate the event of our official incorporation, former Union Church Pastor Garth Thompson, will deliver the Sunday Sermon. Rev. Thompson preached at 2UC prior to our incorporation and was instrumental in planting our church as a mission outreach of union Church.

September 26, Saturday: A visit to see old churches in old San Juan, including an old city founding church that joined together with Methodist church, to form the first Miramar Union Church in 1917.

October 11, Sunday: After Sunday worship, architect Tom Marvel will recount the planning and the building of the sanctuary in the 1980s.

November 7, Saturday: Former pastor, L'Anni Hill, will explain the symbolism of our sanctuary's stained glass window.

November 7, Saturday: A Gala Banquet will be held to celebrate the 50th Jubilee Celebration of our founding.

November 8, Sunday: Rev. L'Anni Hill, a much beloved former pastor of 2UC will deliver the Sunday sermon.

Check out our Facebook page: Second Union Church 50th Reunion



Second Union Church

Jared Adams was the starting quarterback of his high school in Twinsburg, OH.

John Alberts ran the recent Puerto Rican marathon and clocked his second-best time. (This may be due to the fact that since the race started at 5AM, John had actually finished the race before he was completely awake;-) Congrats John!



David & Val Banderman are doing well in Austin, Texas (keeping it weird) and they are happy that Val's parents will soon be moving there as well.



Baby Jane Foster was recently baptized in the ocean with parents, Matt & Laurie, and grandparents to witness?!

The **Burgess** family went skiing in Colorado during spring break.

Marion Calcolli got a great job in the States in the area of her training: chemistry.

Denise Hill sent an instructor, **Joshua**, over from her Arthur Murray Dance Studio to 2UC to give our couple's group salsa lessons.



Luigi & Litz Contessa recently returned from a visit to Litz' home country of Columbia.

Osiris de Jesus (Yadira's sister) and **Jose Romero** are getting married this month? Congrats!

Janie Deloatch has been a huge help with our backpack program. Thanks Janie!

Paul Franki was recently back at church after a long illness and an even longer absence.

Gustavo Gonzalez, our Youth Pastor organized a super fun day at the beach in celebration of our 50th Anniversary which resulted in a very cool 50th Anniversary sand sculpture.



Sharon Ramirez has been the law clerk for our own **Judge Brian Tester** for almost 10 years.

Dennis Gonzalez has been receiving training to be a mentor for the last year and is now official. He has his own charge and is influencing him for good. A great example of showing Christ's love.



It was great to see our youth take over official duties at our Palm Sunday and to serve the homeless the following Monday. The youth will be doing this every fifth Sunday and Monday of the month.



Mike LaLlave is rehabing his shoulder after a recent surgery, and he is recovering quickly.

Don & Joanne Marx were in town last month? It was great to see them at church! They have returned to Virginia to oversee their growing vineyard.

George McMurray's son, **Mackey**, came all the way from California to surprise George on his recent 29th birthday...but who's counting?

Pablo & Elsa Melendez recently had a visit from their daughter and granddaughter.

Muriel Francis recently returned from a family visit in England. In the course of her life, Muriel has met Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, and the late Princess Diana.

Derek & Susanne Myles have arrived in Montreal and are getting settled in. We sure do miss them ;-)

Cadiz Rodriguez recently received a visit from JB and Audrey Wilcoz? And **Cadiz** made the Dean's List. Congrats Cadiz!



Don **Julio Rivera** will be celebrating his 84th birthday on April 7th. Happy Birthday, Don Julio!!!



Juan Navarro pulls an all-nighter almost every night working on a food truck. So, we are glad when he makes it to church early to set up our sound system.



Pastor Joe Ramos says the prospects of starting to build a new church in Palmas is almost ready to launch. And our own **Rob Grosek** will be overseeing the construction process.

Thelma Rivera recently blessed the church with numerous flower arrangements after her recent flower arranging workshop.

Tuesday nite basketball has been frequented by Los Hermanos Rivera (Armando & Daniel), Gustavo Gonzalez and his giant brother, Pastor Bob, Jared Adams, Jeff Blacker, Yoav Cohen, and Manny Fernandez (when he's not attending university classes). If you are interested in joining us, see Pastor Bob.

Livia Román once attended a tickertape parade in NYC.



Ron and Raquel Seely are moving to the D.C. area?! Ron was offered a great position! **Raquel Seely and her two beautiful kids, Abraham and Leah** were recently back to PR for a visit.



Nicole Stowell is off on a cruise of the Greek Islands and the Turkish coast with her mom. Wow!!! It's so great to see Nicole at church -- Bill is no doubt beaming in heaven when she walks through the doors!



Mike Strong and **Isabel Fernandez** recently sang a duet that rocked the house. Good job!

Rosa Trinidad has been up in NJ helping her sister recover from an accident.



Jan Gonzalez' daughter, **Alexandra**, was baptized in March!

Mateo Velez recently won the Puerto Rican Pinewood Derby competition. Congrats Mateo (& **Waldemar** ;-)

Christie Zoba has been logging some time in Key Largo, FL helping her mom recover from a recent fall.

Sofia Beatriz Sandoval Cates was accepted to Berklee College of Music! And Sofía has been a wonderful addition to our team of Backpack Program volunteers.

Robbie Valdés, Christie Zoba's son is moving to a Chicago?! He received a promotion with the Advisory Board Company and is relocating from Washington D.C. at the end of April! Congratulation!. Also, Robbie ran a half-marathon in Philadelphia (with no prior training)!



Christopher Strong, a.k.a. Chaplain to the Mariners was appointed by the Council to be the new interim Property Chairperson.

Sunday School Teachers Needed

We are reaching out to you because we are in dire need of volunteers to teach Sunday School in April and May. For those of you who are Sunday school veterans, you know that the norm is to teach once a quarter. Unfortunately, because we have been short on volunteers, we have had a few people having to teach more than that.

If you cannot commit to an entire month, that's ok. Just let me know which dates you are available and we will work it out. I pray that God places the desire in each of your hearts to serve Him and our children.

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:58

Please contact Elsy or Dalia if you have any questions. Here is their contact info:

Elsy Perez, 787-697-6192, perezem73@gmail.com
Dalia Gonzalez, 787-925-5296, eudalia_gonzalez@hotmail.com

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
Matthew 20:28

Submitted by: Elsy Perez



The word ‘epistle’ comes from the Greek word **epistole** that means “letter” or “message.” During ancient times, epistles were the primary form of communication. Since many of the New Testament books were originally written as letters to churches or individuals, they are referred to as the Epistles.

If one is to properly interpret the epistles, it is very important that one understands the historical and literary context pertaining to these letters. In order to understand the historical context one must form a re-assembly of the situation that the author is speaking to. The best way to form this reassembly is to break down the letter into four questions and then answer each question individually. You should ask:

1. What was going on in the place that prompted the author to write the letter?
2. How does the author come to learn of what was going on in that place?
3. What kind of relationship or contacts did the author have with the people of that place?
4. What qualities of the people and of the author are reflected in the letter?

You may have to read the letter several times in order to be able to successfully answer these questions. Using a Bible dictionary will help you. It is equally important to proper interpretation of the epistles to understand the literary context. The best way to understand the literary context is to break down the letter into paragraphs. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, authors of “How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth” call this “THINK PARAGRAPHS.” Once you do this, you can read each paragraph and answer these two questions:

1. What does the author say in this paragraph?
2. Why does the author mention what he is saying right at that moment?

According to Fee and Stuart, our lack of consistency is the greatest flaw when it comes to common hermeneutics. They write, “*Without necessarily intending to, we bring our theological heritage, our church traditions, our cultural norms, or our existential concerns to the epistles as we read them*”. In order to help with the issue of common hermeneutics, you should remember the two basic hermeneutical principles. The first one is called “The Basic Rule”. This principal basically states that a text cannot mean what it never could have meant to its author or his or her readers. We may have difficulty trying to figure out what the text actually means but using this rule will at least help us eliminate what the text does NOT mean. I believe that if we eliminate what it doesn’t mean, then perhaps it may be easier to focus on what it may mean. The second principle is called “The Second Rule”. This rule states that if we share specific life situations with the first century hearers, then God’s Word is the same to both us and those first century hearers. For example, in Romans 12:2-8, Paul writes, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect”. This verse is a good example of how you can apply the second rule. Paul wrote this to the Romans of the first century yet this same verse applies to us who live in the 21st century.

In conclusion, although the epistles can be challenging to interpret, we can use the tips mentioned herein to successfully interpret them thus bringing us a world of knowledge and inspiration.

Women's Ministry at Second Union Church

Equipping women to lead and serve. Through Bible study, prayer and special programs, our purpose is to seek the Lord and live a life that brings honor and glory to His name.

The Women's Ministry team needs you! Two of our leadership team members have left our shores, and we are looking for a few women who are interested in furthering our ministry. Our focus is on preparation - not so we grow only in knowledge, but so we grow in service to those in need in our community and beyond.

There are so many issues facing our society in Puerto Rico. If we complain and look the other way, then we are part of the problem. The question is not "should I serve?", but "how and where can I serve?"

If you feel the Lord calling you to serve through Women's Ministry, please get in contact with Anita Rodriguez, Christie Zoba, Mabel Varela, Silvette Candelaria, Dalia Gonzalez, Irma Torres or Colleen Comer.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MENS MINISTRY

As Spring begins, Men's Ministry is becoming more active again. First of all, we are planning a breakfast for Saturday, April 27. Our breakfasts always provide plenty of delicious food, great fellowship, and discussions of topics that help us make new discoveries in our faith and new tools for our lives. Please mark your calendar for April 27, and watch the Sunday bulletin for more details.

In June, we will hold our second Men's Ministry Golf Outing. Our last one was fun for all, whether new to the game or very experienced at it. Our target date is Saturday, June 20.

Speaking of second editions, we are also beginning plans for Happy Feet 2. Some of you may wonder 'what is Happy Feet?' Happy Feet is a 5K foot race held on the streets near Second Union Church. Our first Happy Feet was held in 2012 and drew nearly 400 participants. The race raised over \$7,000 for local charities and provided a chance for our church family to meet many people in our local community. There will be many opportunities to help out in getting this activity off the ground, so please be willing to help out. Look for more information the weeks to come.

Finally, we want to take a moment to remember some of our Men's Ministry stalwarts. Sadly, Bill Stowell, whom we always counted on to help and support our activities, passed on to be with the Lord in January. We miss him so much at our Wednesday breakfasts and Sunday services and everywhere else he spread his unique charm and told his stories. We also miss John Doncel, who left us last month to be closer to his daughter and granddaughter in Pennsylvania. He too was a regular at breakfast and supported all the ministry is doing.

We do invite all of the men of Second Union to become more involved in Men's Ministry. If you have ideas for activities or outings for men and families, please pass that to the Men's Ministry Steering Committee. See any of them as well to just learn more about the ministry. The Steering Committee is John Alberts, Mike LaLlave, Manny Fernandez, Mike Strong, and Luis Alberto Rivera. Please keep us in prayer.

It is that time of year again where Christians celebrate the most important event in the history of humankind (or at least that is what we believe). I'm talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even if you don't believe in this you owe it to yourself to, at least, consider this claim in a very serious manner. Why? Well, because if it is true then you have to respond to that truth. If it did happen, it is literally a matter of life or death (eternal that is).



Some people simply dismiss the resurrection because their world view doesn't allow for this kind of thing to happen, and they choose one of the many arguments that exist to attempt to discredit this event. But for Christians it is a very important matter, as a matter of fact, the apostle Paul puts it in a very radical way, "for us it is all or nothing":

"And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless."

1 Corinthians 15:14

"And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins."

1 Corinthians 15:17

So since it is such a big deal, lets go ahead and tackle the subject in a very fundamental way since we don't have the time to go very deep. To be able to argue against a view is not enough to state your arguments against such a view, you have to counter the arguments in favor of it. And there are four main philosophical and historical arguments in favor of the resurrection that are widely accepted between scholars of all kinds and backgrounds:

- The burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea's personal tomb
- The empty tomb found by his women followers.
- The post resurrection appearances.
- The belief by the original disciples that Jesus was raised from the dead despite having every reason not to.

Now let's discuss briefly the importance of each fact.

The fact that the site of Jesus' burial was of utmost importance, because it means that everybody knew where to find it. The Romans knew where he was buried as did the Jews and everyone else. This is important because the disciples could not have claimed that he was bodily raised from the death of there was a corpse inside the tomb. When the disciples started claiming that he was raised from the dead, the only thing that the Jews needed to do was to go to the tomb and drag the body out for everybody to see it. But instead of this they made up the story that Jesus followers took the body (Matthew 28:12-15). Which serves as proof that the tomb was in fact empty!

The fact that women were the ones who found the tomb is very significant as well. Back then the testimony of a woman was close to worthless, to the degree that a woman's testimony was not valid at court, the only reason that the early followers would have endured the awkwardness of this fact is because it is true! They certainly had more than enough time to change the story to have one of his male disciples finding the tomb, but they didn't!

The fact that different groups and individuals under different circumstances witnessed the resurrected Jesus is also central to this argument. The list of eyewitness quoted by Paul in 1st Corinthians 15: 3-9 is a guarantee that the appearances occurred. Paul says that some of them are still alive. Also is it very important that Paul includes James, Jesus' brother, who much like Paul didn't believe in Jesus was the messiah prior the resurrection (Mark 3:21; Acts 7:58). To add to this it is widely recognized that the appearance tradition in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestations of these appearances.

Last but not least, the fact that the first disciples believed that he was alive, despite having every reason not to, completes some of the arguments in favor of the resurrection. To better understand this we have to understand the collective mindset and belief that first-century Jews had with regard to the Messiah. First of all, their leader was dead, and Jews had no belief in a dying, much less a rising, Messiah. To the contrary the idea was that the Messiah would be triumphant against Israel's enemies, not shamefully put to death by them. Secondly, according to Jewish law, Jesus' execution as a criminal showed him to be under God's curse. Thirdly, as good Jewish people the disciples would have held to the belief that no one would resurrect prior to the end of the world. Nevertheless, in spite of all of these predispositions the first followers proclaimed that Jesus had risen from the dead in his own glorified body, not just his soul or something immaterial.

There you have it: four of the many arguments to believe that Jesus was resurrected from the dead by God as it was prophesied. Now, throughout the centuries people have developed arguments to deny this historic event but none of their arguments can be held against all of the four arguments presented here.

I'm not going to address those arguments here, maybe at another time. For now I want you to think deeply about this. If you are a Christian, I want you to take hold of these facts to protect your heart against every attack that comes your way (1 Peter 3:15). If you are not a Christian think about these facts, try to do away with all of them with a single hypothesis. And think also about the consequences, if Jesus is alive that means that you have the opportunity to get right with God, you have the opportunity of a: eternal life. If Jesus is alive, that means that every wrong will be made right, no more pain, no more suffering, no more death, no more sin.

God bless you.

Gustavo, 2UC Youth Pastor

“What is in your hand?”

submitted by Anita Rodriguez

I recently listen to a speaker from NCC [National Community Church] in DC via the Internet. She mentioned something that really struck a chord with me.

“What is in your hand?”

This is the question God asks Moses in Exodus 4, when Moses says no one will believe he has spoken with God. “What is in your hand?” Moses had a stick, he carried a walking stick as a tool of his trade as a shepherd. Ordinary, yet useful. Nothing remotely divine or extraordinary about it. Until Moses obeyed God and threw it on the ground. God changed the stick into a snake and by doing so convinced Moses and the Israelites that He is indeed God. And can be believed.

The speaker said her father used to ask her “What is in your hand?” He did this to help her refocus her attention on what she had been given, what skills she possesses, and is she willing to give it over to God. In her case it is a law degree. She asked her listeners “What is in your hand?”

What do we do with what is in our hands? Do we use our skills to fit our desires and purposes? Or do we offer these things, skills, talents to God? Do we trust Him? When we offer them to Him, He takes them and does something bigger and better than anything we can do on our own in our own strength.

What is in my hand? What is in your hand?

Dare we lay these gifts on God's altar and ask Him how best we can serve Him?

If you have questions about how you can serve and would like someone to pray with you- contact Pastor Bob, the church council leaders or join me after the worship service Sundays and we'll pray about it together.

Our church is well known for the help provided to those in need: children, youth, ladies and men in Puerto Rico and beyond our shores. We are really grateful to all who in one form or another contribute towards this endeavor.

For the year 2015 we are recommending an outstanding program to help those in need. Our plans are to continue to feed those were hungry through our Heart-to-Heart Ministry to the homeless in Old San Juan on the third and fifth Monday of every month. Our cooking crew plans the menu and prepares the food; another team loads it in the van and takes it to Old San Juan, where yet another team is waiting and ready to serve it. We serve an average of 70 people on a Monday. While there we also talk to the men and women, providing them with the Upper Room devotional guides or hadning out Bibles when requested. During Christmas we bring a parranda. When the meal has been served and all is picked up and returned to the van we go back to church where another team washes dishes and pans. We do this activity 16 times a year.

Another program that is a very popular is our "Love Bags". This project, partially sponsored by the Xerox Corporation, prepares bags which you can find twice a month at the entrance to the church. The Girl Scout Troop 515, which is also sponsored by the church, helps in the preparation when possible. Hundreds of pieces of clothing shoes, appliances, toys, food etc. are also donated to families and or agencies to help them with their programs. Sometimes cars are given.

Those of us is been a great number of hours per week sorting out in delivering these items want to say thank you to all who provide these things. Please continue to do so if it is in good shape we have a place for it During the year we have special eventssuch as the annual agency recognition day, toys for kids Drive, rice kills hunger drive, the Samaritan Christmas shoebox Drive, the baskets of love turkey drive and other related events. We would like to invite you to look over the out reach bulletin board for more details about dates times and a list of the 42 organizations that we are proposing to support this year. Your financial support allows us to provide help to many of the agencies with which we partner. Please know that we are also helping several mission programs oversees that have a larger worldwide coverage. Our goal is to do our best as God leads us.

If you want to know more about they out reach program and how you can partner in our work see Addison stash the out reach chairperson or Don Julio or any member of the outreach committee. How about sponsoring a meal for the homeless? A gift of \$250 will do it

Friday Nights: 2UC Youth



Couples' Salsa Night at 2UC

April 2015



There is no doubt that marriage requires work and self-sacrifice. Researchers found that couples willing to make sacrifices within their relationships were more effective in solving their problems which led to strong and happy marriages!

But why not have fun while 'working' on your relationship? That is precisely what the Couples' Ministry provided in March through our Salsa instruction and dancing night! We had a great turnout, and surprisingly only a few of our couples knew how to dance salsa! It was challenging (especially for the women who had a hard time letting their partner lead!), but at the same time it was great fun!



Stay tuned for our next Couples' Ministry event!!



2UC Beach Picnic



In March, as a part of the 50th anniversary jubilee celebration, the church family held a beach picnic complete with sand-sculpting!

It was a great time in the sun enjoying the beauty of God's creation and fellowship with the church family. Thanks to Youth Pastor, Gustavo Gonzalez, for organizing this event!





Maundy Thursday & Good Friday Services

Our **Maundy Thursday** services included, a soup dinner, a dramatic reading, foot washing, and a communion service. We had a great turnout for this event held in the Fellowship Hall.

On **Good Friday**, a tenebrae service was held in the Sanctuary. As congregants meditated on the last words of Jesus as he hung on the cross, candles were extinguished as a symbolic reminder of his last moments of pain and suffering. Pastor Bob gave a moving message and equally heartfelt music was provided by Luis Manuel Tirado and Isabel Fernandez.



What your parking space says about you

On this Easter Sunday, let's take a moment for a 'heart-check'. The events of 'Holy Week' focus on the servanthood of our Lord and Savior. On the night of the last supper, the Passover meal that Christ celebrated with his disciples, Jesus demonstrated service by becoming a servant and washing their feet. Scandalous. Then Jesus tells the twelve to "do as I have done." Paul admonishes us to "value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." Philippians 2:3-4

So how is our heart when it comes to putting others first? Well, where we park might just give us a little insight into how seriously we take this command. The church parking lot fills up quickly on Sunday mornings, and the cars there primarily belong to ourselves. We all know we can park behind the library in the adjoining lot next to the church; thereby freeing up the church parking lot for visitors and those who are handicapped. We have a sign that we used to put up saying "Practice Servanthood: Park behind the library", but a member of our church council demanded it be taken down, because it made her feel guilty!

So where is your car parked?

This really isn't only about putting ourselves first in terms of getting the best spot in the lot, but perhaps it is reflective of our hearts when it comes to servanthood in general. *Dear Jesus, Help us to be more like you!*

"... whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:44-55

Christian Education Corner
By: Elsy Perez

The Christian Education Committee would like to recognize Dalia Gonzalez for doing a fantastic job in her first three months as the Christian Education Coordinator. She has been working hard to make sure the classrooms and the lessons are ready every Sunday for the teachers and for our Sunday school kids. We have future plans to redecorate the classrooms too so be on the lookout for that!

We are still looking for willing teachers for our Sunday school program. Normally, we try to rotate the teachers so that they teach once a quarter but since we have been short with people volunteering we have had certain people teach more than once in a quarter. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their sacrifice and willingness to serve God and our children:

- Dalia Gonzalez – she has been teaching every single month
- David Benson
- Nicole Deliz
- Claude Burgess
- Mabel Varela

If you would like to volunteer to teach, please see me or Dalia. We could really use the help and I'm sure you will be blessed by the experience.

Vacation Bible School

We are also preparing for this year's VBS which will take place during the second week of June this year (06/08 – 06/12). We already had our first official meeting and we are excited to announce that we are teaming up with Mar Azul Church this year in an effort to reach more children. The plan is to have an English VBS session in the morning and then a Spanish VBS session in the afternoon.

Finally, our wonderful youth pastor, Gustavo Gonzalez and I are also preparing for the Youth trip to Washington, D.C. (Dare 2 Share Fearless Convention). Airfare, hotel and car rentals are booked. We have 23 confirmed! We are extremely excited for this trip and pray that it will bring a deep spiritual change for our youth.

Grupo de Conversación

Te interesas practicar el español en un ambiente segura y divertido? Pues, vente los martes a las 10 de la mañana a Second Union Church. Nos reunimos para charlar, para practicar y para aprender! Únete a nosotros!

Are you interested in practicing Spanish in a safe and fun environment? Then come on Tuesdays at 10am to Second Union Church. We meet to chat, practice and learn! Join us!

You can also join our Facebook page, "Así lo decimos" where we post a daily Spanish lesson. The focus is often the unique Spanish we hear and speak in Puerto Rico. It's open to all, just 'friend' Christie Curie Zoba and she'll add you to the group!



A mid-Lenten check-in – Day 23*

For the past few years, I've made it a habit of giving up something for Lent. This was never a part of my religious background, and I remember in junior high school, thinking of Lent as meaning 'only eating fish on Fridays'. I knew it had some religious significance, because the Catholics were the ones eating the fish, but I never gave it much thought. (Nor did I read my Bible!)

In Puerto Rico, Lent is much more noticeable than it was in Ohio. Just pick up the grocery store 'shoppers' and you'll see that fish dominates the pages throughout the entire 40 days of Lent. We see people walking around town with a cross of ashes on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday and you hear a great deal of talk about what has been given up for Lent in social circles. The newspapers publish articles about Lent. It's hard not to pay attention to it.

Years ago I began attending the Ash Wednesday evening service at Second Union Church – more out of curiosity than anything else. I still carried a sense of 'this is a Catholic thing' and thus not really relevant to me. I could have probably come up with a dozen reasons for NOT participating in any observance of this tradition. However, I have come to see Lent as a very personal observance and a way of enhancing my focus on Jesus.

So as I reflect on this experience and think about the future, I have come to two main conclusions: 1) There is great value in giving up something that allows you to replace it with a Jesus-worthy activity. 2) The forty days of Lent is a period 'marked' on the church calendar and is therefore a good time to be disciplined; however, if we truly set our minds on Christ and, then we should make the Lenten practices an everyday part of our Christian walk.

And finally, I think that this or any other decision that you make in an effort to bring you closer to Jesus, must be first lifted up in prayer. The Holy Spirit's guidance, encouragement and power are essential. Giving up something for Lent just because it's the thing to do, may be good for your body, but it won't do anything for your spirit. I hope that Lent for you is about nurturing your soul!

Submitted by Christie Zoba

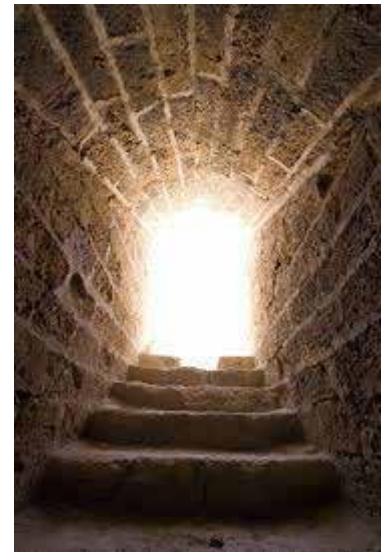
Up From the Grave He Arose

Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus, my Savior,
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus, my Savior;
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord!

Death cannot keep his Prey,
Jesus, my Savior;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His
foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark
domain,
And He lives forever, with His
saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!



Thursday Evening Prayer Meeting

We are all called to serve the Lord, and praying is one way that you can perform a mighty ministry for Jesus. Each Thursday evening at 7pm, a handful of committed 2UC members meet to praise our Lord and lift up the prayers of our congregation and beyond. We meet in the Conference Room. We encourage you to join us and pray with us for our church, our ministries and the concerns on our hearts.

Adult Sunday School (9am)

Book: 2nd Samuel

Lizzette Kelley leads a study on the book of 2nd Samuel in the conference room at 2UC.

Tuesday Lunchtime Study (noon-2pm)

Book: Girls with Swords by Lisa Bevere

Join us as we meet over lunch to discuss the study, pray and share our lives with each other. Bring your own lunch or order from Anita for \$8 (anita00926@aol.com) Contact Christie for more information: 787-717-4001.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study (7pm)

Study: Biblical Topics

Meeting at the home of Luis Alberto and Loraine Rivera in the San Francisco neighborhood, the group is open to all and anyone can join at any time! For more information contact Luis Alberto: (787) 232 - 8654

Wednesday Evening Bible Study (7pm)

Book: 12 Women of the Bible

This group meets at the home of Anita Rodriguez. for more information contact Anita: anita00926@aol.com

Condado / Isla Verde Study

Contact Pastor Bob or Laurie Foster for days and times!



April
2015

Sunrise Service at el Morro

Second Union Church

**CHRIST IS RISEN
HE IS RISEN INDEED!**

