

*Links for the Recording of the Service from January 3, 2021 and the Upcoming Service of January 10, 2021 are at the end of the News Blast.*

*Dear Members and Friends of Idylwood Presbyterian Church,*

Please keep in your prayers:

- **Linda Dono's** aunt, Marge Dono Neuberger, who died Sunday, 12-20, of COVID-19
- **Julie Tutwiler's** cousin's son, Jon Pope, in a second round of chemotherapy
- **Kate Untiedt** asks for prayers for her right eye, which is still not right
- **Kate Untiedt** also prays for swift and efficient delivery of the COVID-19 vaccines.
- **Kate Untiedt's** colleague Nancy with cancer and recent heart attack
- **Linda Dono's** friend, Rev. Tom Wade with leukemia
- **Family of Suzie Soliz**, who died in a house fire in November
- **George Petras's** cousin Marlene with lung cancer
- **Richard Williams'** uncle Bill Axline with cancer
- **Danielle Moraes'** brother Wesley dealing with social isolation
- **Danielle Moraes** dealing with a difficult work lawsuit
- **David Wolfe's** 88 yr. old father died Houston, TX
- **Joel Cline's** brother dealing with grief issues, but doing better
- **Linda Dono's** brother Brian—with mental health issues
- **Katie Adams's** sister-in-law- Leah recovering from breast cancer surgery
- **Ed Case & family** in passing of **Rae**, service postponed.
- **Cheval Opp & family** in passing of **Dana**, service postponed
- **All with COVID-19 or at risk:** medical, delivery, and teachers
- **Pastor Alice** adds a hope that the vaccines may get to the whole world.

*Reflections from the Pastor:*

Happy New Year everyone. In thinking about what to base my devotions on in the News Blast, I realized that I had received a wonderful new commentary on the books of Exodus and Genesis. It is the first volume of a series called the Eco Bible. The lead contributors are Rabis Yonatan Neril and Leo Dee. The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development published it last year. I will have to admit that I find some such efforts a bit flaky, but this one represents fine Jewish scholarship, so I thought I would begin to read through it and share with you what I consider the highlights. It is a verse- by-verse commentary, so I will simply pick the verses in which I find the commentary most enlightening. They are using the Tanach translation, which is a fairly literal translation based on the Masoretic Text, the traditional received text which is the starting point for all Old Testament translations.

Gen 1:29: God said, “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food.

In the beginning humans did not generally eat meat, except as a rare treat. Instead, they used their animals to plow the fields, turn the stone wheels for pressing olives, tread grain for winnowing, haul heavy objects, etc. They sheared off their wool for clothes, drank their milk, and ate their eggs. Animals were much too valuable to squander as food when there were many other sources of food available. They were the principal source of family wealth in the ancient world. Even today, we receive requests to buy animals for poor families because just a few animals can make the difference between poverty and a comfortable life. After the flood, humans were given permission to eat animal flesh, but only with the blood drained out – no rare steaks allowed. Even then due to the economics of their world, people did not indulge very often.

What I’ve told you so far I already knew, but what I’m going to tell you about the next verse was new to me and it is really fascinating, especially to someone like me who is a philologist (someone who studies the roots and history of words.)

I’m backtracking a bit here, but I needed to establish what Gen 1:29 says before I could then focus on Gen 1:28.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and **rule** the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”

The word translated “rule” here has caused a lot of controversy because it would seem to give us humans carte blanche to do anything we want with the animals, but as it turns out when you study the Hebrew, that is not the case. At least the rabbis have not read it that way for thousands of years. The Hebrew is based on a root *r-d-h*. It is a command form, *u-re-du*, with the first u being a conjunction and the final u being a plural ending. This word also appears in v. 1:26 in an imperfect form, they shall rule.... In 1:28, however, in the imperative form, it is ambiguous. Everyone translates it on the assumption that it is from the verb *r-d-h*, to rule. However, it could also be from the verb *y-r-d*, to go down, so it is a pun, a *double-entente*. The rabbis say that the significance of this pun is that if we do the right thing in our conservation of nature, we will rule, but if we do not then we will descend to the lowest place of all. And we are getting a glimpse of that with the havoc we have wreaked, as the sea level rises, forest fires rage, hurricanes increase in number and velocity, and the mosquitoes are having a picnic.

The ancient Hebrews loved to play with words. We do this to a degree in English: hey, it’s bad man, meaning it’s great. Or it’s cool, meaning it’s really hot. When I took Classical Arabic eons ago, the first year went fine; we were learning the grammar and basic vocabulary, which is harder than Hebrew, but not insurmountable. The second year was another matter altogether. The professor would give the four of us a text to translate. We would all go off with our dictionaries to try to make sense out of it. We would then come together and come up with a group translation. Not once did we ever get close. It was very frustrating. One of my former classmates

is now the professor of Arabic there. He is a native Iraqi and he teaches the subject in a different way. Anyway, the reason we had such a hard time is that words in Arabic mean so many different things. I used to say that they mean what they mean, the opposite of what they mean, something to do with a camel, something religious, and something illicit. But in the Nov 19, 2020 *London Review of Books*, I found a great description of the problem:

So the word for 'throne' can also mean 'a bier', the word for 'right' can mean 'duty', the word for 'family' can mean 'to shackle or fascinate' and the word for 'child' shares the same root as 'to sponge, to arrive uninvited, to be a sycophant or parasite'. Binary contrasts can tell us much about broader orientations: ask most Arabs what they think the opposite of 'tyranny' is and they will say not 'freedom' but 'chaos'. ("Isn't the Opposite Equally True?", Book Review by Lawrence Rosen)

Not exactly on puns, but funny nonetheless, Rosen writes that in the years leading up to the American invasion 40% of the marriages in Iraq were between Sunnis and Shias. Can you guess what they called the children of these marriages? Sushis!

Returning from my digression Gen 1:28-29, and for that matter Gen 1:26, which speak of humanity ruling or dominating the rest of creation probably should not be understood as giving us the right to do anything we want. We interpret these verses that way to our peril as we can easily see given the direction the planet is currently moving after our poor stewardship over the last fifty years. Rather, these verses can be interpreted to suggest that we only can rule creation when we live justly and uprightly. Otherwise, we will descend to the lowest level of creation.

### ***Lectionary texts for 1-10-2021:***

#### **Genesis 1:1-5**

1:1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,

1:2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

1:3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

1:4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

1:5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

#### **Psalm 29**

29:1 Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

29:2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.

29:3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.

29:4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

29:5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

29:6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.  
29:7 The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.  
29:8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.  
29:9 The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!"  
29:10 The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.  
29:11 May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

### **Acts 19:1-7**

19:1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples.  
19:2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."  
19:3 Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism."  
  
19:4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus."  
19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.  
19:6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied--  
19:7 altogether there were about twelve of them.

### **Mark 1:4-11**

1:4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.  
1:5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.  
1:6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.  
1:7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.  
1:8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."  
1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.  
1:10 And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.  
1:11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

***Link to Service of 1-10-2020:***

***Please join us for Worship via Zoom:***

## Topic: IPC Worship

Time: Jan 10, 2021 10:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Sun, until Jan 31, 2021, 4 occurrence(s)

Jan 10, 2021 10:30 AM

Jan 17, 2021 10:30 AM

Jan 24, 2021 10:30 AM

Jan 31, 2021 10:30 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://zoom.us/meeting/tJMtdu-hrTgoGtxB08s\\_6SDKTEmItyDq2K1M/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCvrjosE9eWshmpRowEAoj4M\\_PztnZBjbdFvk-9EB8FUSfdAsdPG6ZmNMmC](https://zoom.us/meeting/tJMtdu-hrTgoGtxB08s_6SDKTEmItyDq2K1M/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCvrjosE9eWshmpRowEAoj4M_PztnZBjbdFvk-9EB8FUSfdAsdPG6ZmNMmC)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97016933208?pwd=dFo0Z3duMi9sd0RvQ2p2VzY4ZEZBUT09>

Meeting ID: 970 1693 3208

Passcode: **pcJY1z**

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,97016933208#,,,,\*531963# US (Washington D.C)

+13126266799,,97016933208#,,,,\*531963# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 970 1693 3208

Passcode: 531963

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aeAlYJfilT>

***Link to recording of service of 1-3-2021:***

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/gt5cBIPPvPloSJtERDH3hgO9KHscdULICtWkr2Hp5ZW1b52L1T6g8nLl8qwNfDVb.saM\\_7XZtIsVKctyo](https://zoom.us/rec/share/gt5cBIPPvPloSJtERDH3hgO9KHscdULICtWkr2Hp5ZW1b52L1T6g8nLl8qwNfDVb.saM_7XZtIsVKctyo)

Access Passcode: **D\*=3pCjh**

***Link to Sermon from 1-3-2021:***

Isaiah 60:1-6, Matthew 2:1-12, Ephesians 3:1-12, Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

***Link to recording of service of 12-31-2021:***

Topic: New Year's Eve/Watch Night Service

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/R6UkXQtnAGjKA3rZUOS8qutMedq7AyKKhC-APmwWrGvodF6dXgsQUG\\_oEsupnqDA.ROPmNDRTe83L-CBh](https://zoom.us/rec/share/R6UkXQtnAGjKA3rZUOS8qutMedq7AyKKhC-APmwWrGvodF6dXgsQUG_oEsupnqDA.ROPmNDRTe83L-CBh)

***Link to recording of service of 12-27-2020:***

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/2MG9gJY\\_UUAQobGGvB8Vx9139gOO95RvaBGeD\\_TkXLhfO3zl0HJqZxWO7kYUn8ya.-md7NkuwHTZQ7bg5](https://zoom.us/rec/share/2MG9gJY_UUAQobGGvB8Vx9139gOO95RvaBGeD_TkXLhfO3zl0HJqZxWO7kYUn8ya.-md7NkuwHTZQ7bg5)

Access Passcode: **70.eEitD**

***Link to recording of service of 12-24-2020:***

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/36wsJeg58lcTRbnyI-hDZ6gDG3ut85SJxVRb9gJg04byK5mv\\_DKqEi9wHmOB5R3P.R5b4QwWCEeMfvbZy](https://zoom.us/rec/share/36wsJeg58lcTRbnyI-hDZ6gDG3ut85SJxVRb9gJg04byK5mv_DKqEi9wHmOB5R3P.R5b4QwWCEeMfvbZy)

Access Passcode: **x%?K3WE5**