

La Palabra

May 2014

www.fpcmesa.org

480-964-8606

A Message from Brant

The story below is something I wrote as part of a series called “The Rest of the Story.” The idea was to tap into our spiritual imagination and wonder about what might have happened if the parable Jesus told had come to life and continued.

I am re-printing the story in this issue of La Palabra in order to fire *your* spiritual imagination enough to have you come to the “Wild Seed Flinger’s Workshop” that will be offered here at the church on Saturday, May 17th, from 9:00-11:30. During the morning we’ll explore what we believe, and why and how we might share that with others, as we follow the example of Jesus to wildly fling the Kingdom seed that has been entrusted to us in every direction imaginable.

It is my *fervent prayer* that you will be there.

In Christ!

Brant

The Parable of the Wild Seed Flinger — The Rest of the Story Matthew 13:1-9

The wild seed flinger came in from another day’s work. The townspeople gave him a wide berth. Watching him sow seed was entertaining, but at the same time disturbing. For the entire week they had watched him throw seed everywhere, *everywhere*, and they had laughed. But the laughter was partly a defense against a gnawing deep inside. His methods reminded them of something, or perhaps of *someone*, but they couldn’t quite remember what, or who.

What the wild seed flinger did made no sense at all. No one, *no one* could expect anything good to happen by just throwing seed around. And that’s what he did—he threw, he flung, he *wasted*. It was irresponsible and just plain crazy.

And so they laughed, but they also watched. As expected the seed that fell on the path never had a chance—it was away with the birds. Then there was the seed that fell on the hard ground...it sprouted quickly enough, the husks warmed by the sun on the rock, but a day later it was dried and withered. “What a waste,” they tutted to one another, “that was good seed and could have grown if he just hadn’t been so wild about it.”

The wild seed flinger actually came all the way into town a short time later. They all knew who he was, he lived nearby, and they asked him about the whole thing. Had he been angry? drunk? Did the seed belong to an enemy that he would waste so much of it?

“No,” he said. The seed had been given to him by a man called Jesus. “You remember,” said the wild seed flinger, “he came through here about that time. He gave me a special kind of seed and then told me that I’m not responsible for the growing of it, only the sowing of it. While he was still around, and to show how responsible I would be with his gift, I set about doing what I have always done, carefully sowing up and down the

(continued on page 8)

INDEX

<i>A Message from Brant</i>	1
<i>Mark’s Remarks (Worship)</i>	2
<i>Ministry</i>	3
<i>Discipleship</i>	4
<i>Fellowship</i>	5
<i>Mission</i>	5
<i>May Birthdays</i>	6
<i>Address Change</i>	6
<i>Calendar Notes</i>	6
<i>Youth What Up?</i>	7
<i>Calendar</i>	Insert

WORSHIP

Dir. of Music (Chair) — Mark Ramsey
Worship (E) — Dan Reeves
Prayer Chain (D) — Bev Goff

Funerals/Memorials (D) — Karyn Weaver
Worship (D) — Carol Webster
Youth (E) — Bryan Tryon

Mark's Remarks

(480) 964-8606, EXT. 24; CHOIRS@COX.NET

"The final aim and reason of all music is nothing other than the glorification of God and the refreshment of the spirit." - Johann Sebastian Bach

Announcements

The Sanctuary Celebration Committee has begun a series of concerts to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary. The next concert will be presented by Organ Stop Pizza Organist Lew Williams. Lew will play a postlude-recital on our Visser-Rowland organ on Sunday, August 31st, from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.



A Native of Lafayette, Louisiana, Lew Williams began playing the organ at age ten and started formal piano studies five years later. At Texas Christian University, he won several competitions in organ playing, gave numerous recitals, and graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree and Performers Certificate, studying with Emmit G. Smith. At Southern Methodist University, Lew earned a Master of Music degree as an organ pupil of Dr. Robert T. Anderson. He also won the regional competition of the American Guild of Organists. From 1979 until 1987, he was staff organist at Organ Stop Pizza restaurants in Phoenix and Mesa. Concert work has taken him around the USA several times. He has played five concert tours in England, where he was engaged twice as a clinician at the annual Cinema Organ Society Workshop in London. A frequent recitalist at conventions of both the American Guild of Organists and the American Theatre Organ Society, he was named "Organist of the Year" by the ATOS in 1988.

The FPC Salsa Challenge will be held on Saturday, May 3rd, at 5:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. During the event, the Sanctuary Celebration Committee will present a Silent Auction as a fundraiser for our 50th Anniversary Celebration. Auction items will include gift certificates, restaurant gift cards, sports memorabilia, and craft items. Join us for our great salsa challenge, and then let the bidding begin!



Sabbatical for Mark Ramsey

The Session is pleased to offer Dr. Mark Ramsey a six-week sabbatical, beginning Monday, May 12th. Sabbaticals provide time away from daily routines in order to find deep rest, new spiritual connection, and fresh creativity.

The Session asks that you please honor this time away by remembering Mark (and his family) in prayer during these eight weeks, and by refraining from phone calls, texts, and e-mails. Please feel free to contact the church office with any needs or concerns. Mark will add some of his vacation and study leave time to this sabbatical and so will return to work on Monday, August 4th.

Humoresque

"The One whose throne is in heaven sits laughing." - Psalm 2:4

A Federal Agent stopped at a ranch in Texas and talked to an old rancher. He told the rancher, "I need to inspect your ranch." The rancher said, "okay, but don't go into that field over there..." The Agent verbally exploded and said, "look mister, I have the authority of the federal government with me!" Reaching into his rear back pocket, the arrogant officer removed his badge and proudly displayed it to the rancher. "See this badge?! This badge means I can go wherever I want... On any land! No questions asked, no answers given! Do you understand, old man?!" The rancher kindly nodded, apologized, and went about his chores. Moments later the rancher heard loud screams, and he looked up and saw the Agent running for his life, being chased by the rancher's big Santa Gertrudis Bull..... With every step the bull was gaining ground on the officer, and it was likely that he'd be gored before reaching safety. The officer was clearly terrified. The old rancher threw down his tools, ran as fast as he could to the fence, and yelled at the top of his lungs....."YOUR BADGE! SHOW HIM YOUR BADGE!" (from Nate Robinson)

MINISTRY

Clerk of Session (Chair) — Carol Gerlach
Property (E) — Sam Thielke
Personnel (E) — Jo Wilson

Personnel (D) — Tammy Miller
Nominating (E) — Barbara Walker

Nominating (D) — Mary Jane Hee
Stewardship/Finance (E) — David Frederick

Buildings and Grounds Report

Hopefully you've noticed the new bases on all the supporting posts around the church. The new post bases won't be subject to rot and damage, they will support our building for many years to come, and they look pretty darn sharp! This project was undertaken with funds in the Capital Reserve account, and so many thanks for your faithful Capital Fund contributions!

In other news we've recently learned of a mild infestation of termites in the Church Library. It's possible the tunnels we discovered were built many years ago, but we've had the entire building treated. Money for this came out of Current Fund, and so again, many thanks for your faithful contributions.

This kind of work may not be as exciting as helping a homeless person or feeding a hungry family, but keeping our buildings fit and in shape is an equally valid part of our ministry!

We are indebted to Property Manager Don Krill, Property Elder Sam Thielke, and the faithful men of Dave's Crew, who all work hard to fix broken doors, repair leaking faucets, change light bulbs, and the hundreds of other things needed to insure we can enjoy our life of worship, education, service, mission and fellowship!



DISCIPLESHIP

Director of C.E. — Jasmine Couillard
Adult (E) — Jack Oliver

Children's Ministries (E) — Carol Anderson
Family Ministries (E) — Jennifer Martin

Youth/Young Adult (E) — John Hee

Nursery News

Did you know that nursery care is now available for children up to 5 years old during the 11:30 CoffeeHouse service? Please drop in to meet our nursery staff: Vicki Moore and Kelly Woods.

Montlure

Montlure Presbyterian Church camp is a ministry that complements the Christian Education programs of our church. Registration is now open at <http://www.montlure.org> for children and youth in 4th - 12th grade. Each child at FPC is eligible for \$140 campership to help defray the cost of camp. Please submit your campership request form (available on the church website or in the office) no later than 4 weeks prior to the start of your child's camp.



Who wouldn't want to explore a tropical island, with its glittering turquoise waters, warm white sands and cool ocean breezes? Visitors to SonTreasure Island Vacation Bible School are welcomed by the scent of exotic flowers, the taste of tropical fruits and the captivating sounds of island music. But this is no ordinary tropical escape! There is treasure to be found here. More precious than gold, more lasting than diamonds, it is the greatest treasure of all - God's love! Save the date! Invite your neighbors and grandchildren!

Ages: 5 - 13

Dates: June 16 - June 20

Time: 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$15 for the entire week

Wow! This school year has flown by! It is hard to believe it is almost over! We have had a fantastic year together with 52 children enrolled! Let's celebrate that milestone during the teacher appreciation week coming up May 5th - 9th. This is a special week-long event to show our teachers how much we care. Please consider surprising them with a little note of encouragement, special gift or a good book for their summer reading pleasure.

Our Annual Spring Fling will be on Wednesday, May 7th, at 10:30 a.m. We hope that you will join us as the children sing a few songs for their families. There will also be a family picnic after the program. The preschool will provide the sub-sandwiches and the families are asked to bring something to share. Hope to see you there!

Our last day of school will be on Wednesday, May 21st. We will re-open for our summer program on June 2nd. We already have 27 kids enrolled and expect a few more. Don't forget: We are now enrolling for our Fall 2014 school year and need your help. Now is the time to think about putting your preschool child or grandchild into our high-quality preschool to get ready for kindergarten. Stop by the preschool office and pick up a registration packet today!

Thank you for all of the love, prayers and support that you continually show to us. It means so much and we truly can feel the strength of your caring!

Sincerely,
Shiloh Murillo, Director



FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship (E) (Chair) — Charlie Golden
Parish Visitor (Staff) — Lois Hildenbrand
Cards (D) — Gretchen Frederick
Older Adult (E) — Bill Lents

Transportation (D) — Ron Payton
Parish Deacon 1 — Peggy Baker
Parish Deacon 2 — Denise Worden
Parish Deacon 3 — Dale Gibson

Parish Deacon 4 — Darlene Sitzler
Parish Deacon 5 — Erin Skarphol
Presbyterian Women — Jeannette Laurie



All women of the church are invited.

PW SPRING LUNCHEON

Tuesday, May 6, 11:30

Fellowship Hall

Hostesses: Eve and Rachel Circles

Our honored guest, Major Candi Fizzell, will share with us the history and the mission of the Salvation Army as well as her experiences as an ordained minister and Soldier of God. Please bring a dish to share.

COLLECTING OLD HORIZONS BIBLE STUDIES

PW Presbytery of Grand Canyon is collecting old Horizons Bible Studies. They will be offered to mission PW groups and churches. If your old Horizons Bible Study Books are in good condition please consider recycling. A collection box will be in the church office during May.

MISSION

Pastor (Chair) — Brant Baker
Mission (E) — Phillip Pagels
Hunger Action (D) — Sandra Clark

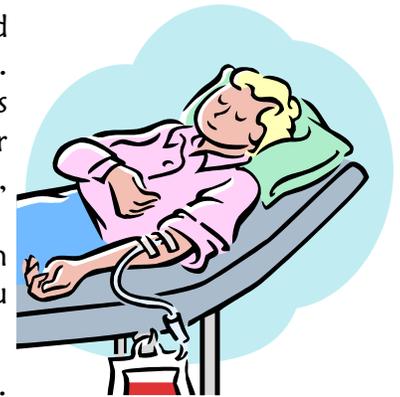
Assimilation (D) — Carol Holdhusen
Evangelism (E) — James Norris

Seasonal Ministries (D) — Sue Eisenklam
Mesa Presbyterian Ministries (D) — Jane Potyka

The Mission Commission of FPC is hosting its semi-annual blood drive. As a church we have committed to supporting this event. Thanks to all of you who have participated in the past and for various reasons can't anymore. Your giving has been much appreciated. For those of you who are still able and willing to give this precious gift, thank you for your on-going support of this vital mission.

The American Red Cross will have a bloodmobile in the church parking lot from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 18th. You may sign up to give blood four different ways:

1. Sign up directly online at redcrossblood.org, sponsor code: FirstPresbyterianMesa.
2. Sign up in fellowship hall between services.
3. Call Sue Eisenklam at 480-993-6512.
4. Email Sue at eisentouch@yahoo.com.



May Birthdays



Jan Peterson	1st
Joy Schulz	2nd
Sydney Skarphol	2nd
Raul Flores	4th
Dodie Neill	4th
Bill Smith	4th
Brent Gregory	6th
Robert Nobis	6th
Fran Gunter	11th
Peggy Baker	12th
George Wagner	12th
Leland Wilson	12th
Connie Gailfus	13th
Gail Pearson	13th
Jon Lokensgard	14th
Monica Schnuelle	14th
Malia Hee	15th
Sue Eisenklam	16th
Robert Martz	16th
Stella Bero	17th
Jennifer Smith	17th
Lisa Calhoun	18th
Mihret Gerlach	19th
Lynne Logan	21st
Robert Harbin	22nd
Graham Walker	22nd
Vivian Buck	23rd
Denise Worden	23rd
Lynne Harding	24th
Karen Eberhardt	25th
Yvonne Oliver	25th
Deanne Wyrick	25th
Margaret Ryan	28th
Patricia Wyse	28th
John Frontone	29th
Jo Godfrey	29th

Editor's Note: If your birthday is missing or we have the wrong date, please call the office so we can update our records. We wish a special day to anyone we have missed.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

Rugg, Mary
262 E. Brown Rd., #140
Mesa, AZ 85201

Calendar Notes

May 3

Officer Training
Cinco de Mayo Salsa Challenge

May 4

Youth to Jumpstreet

May 6

PW Spring Luncheon

May 7

Preschool Spring Fling

May 11

Mother's Day

May 12 & 13

Circles meet

May 18

Blood Drive
Commissions and Session meet

May 25

Monthly Food Drive

May 26

Memorial Day — Office closed

May 31

Wild Seed Flingers Workshop



Happy Mother's Day!

FPC

What Up?

May '14

Yes, this is a thing that we are doing —
Jumpstreet!!!
 Sunday, May 4th—12:30 pizza lunch at church then on to
 jump, jump, jump (and dodge, dodge, dodge). Coat is \$10
 per youth for lunch and admission. Back by 3-4:5.
 Must have a special waiver-watch your e-mail!

Sunday Mornings @ 10:30
 Sunday School with Gray and Todd

YOUTH TEAM: John —(602) 284-7311, Gray —(480) 459-8071, Katelyn — (602) 790-0373, Todd —(480) 495-6109, Mary Jane — (480) 586-7263

Save these dates
 for more summer fun!

June 11th, 6:00pm – Bowling
 June 25th, 6:00 – Dive in Bible Study
 July 9th, 6:00 – Dave and Busters
 July 23rd – Day Trip to Slide Rock

DIVE IN BIBLE STUDY!

Wednesday, May 28th

6:00-8:00pm

Hickey House

(853 N. Forest, Mesa)

BRING: \$3 for dinner

Bathing suit and a towel
(rubber ducky optional)



(continued from page 1)

rows I had ploughed, but after only a few minutes he came toward me laughing, and doing what you have seen me do, flinging the seed everywhere, almost making a game of it, laughing the whole time like it was the greatest fun he could think of. He gave me more of the seed and told me to try again. At first I wasn't very brave about it, but he just kept slinging his own seed, and laughing, and nodding at me, and finally I just let it loose. I guess that might have been when you saw me, I don't know, I was having so much fun I didn't really see anyone watching me, in fact I didn't even see that Jesus had moved on. It was so wonderful to just throw the seed anywhere, everywhere, and know that I was doing what he wanted, that he would somehow take care of the rest."

"But what" they asked, "could be so special about this seed, that you would waste it so? Fully three quarters of the ground that it hit was bad, most of it is already lost."

"Jesus said it was 'kingdom seed,'" the man replied. "I don't know exactly what that means...I guess we'll see."

And so they waited, and watched. Just as the first tiny bits of green were beginning to sprinkle the dark soil two strangers came to town. They were among those closest to Jesus, they said they were some of "the twelve," who he had sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "The kingdom of heaven has come near," they said. "That's odd," the townspeople said, "one of our men has planted 'kingdom seed.' What can you tell us about it?"

They arranged to meet the next day at the tavern, but at the appointed time there was no room left inside so they moved out to the town square. "We are disciples of Jesus," the two men began, "and we understand that one of you has become known as the 'wild seed flinger.' This they said with a smile, and at this the townspeople laughed, while a man named Speiro made his way through the crowd. "I am he," said Speiro softly, his eyes downcast.

"Be of good cheer, friend," said one of the men. "Our master, who is yours as well, would be pleased."

"But what of the seed?" asked the townspeople, thinking perhaps that there was some magical property in it, because even now the green blush on the hills made clear that something extraordinary was happening where Speiro had done his work.

"Our Lord told us a parable not too long ago," said one of the two disciples. "He speaks in this way much of the time and we often don't understand what he is saying. We even asked him why he speaks this way and when he answered many of us still did not understand! But we also asked him the meaning of the parable about sowing seed and he took the time to explain it to us."

"Yes," said the other man, "it is a parable of both soil and seed. To those who follow Jesus has been entrusted a message that is both precious and yet meant to be cast about in ways that seem almost careless, but which in fact shows very much the care of God. Our Lord knows that many who hear his message of hope, joy, grace, and new life will have it stolen away by the evil one. He knows that many who hear will receive but will endure only for a short time before trouble will arise and they will fall away. He knows that some will hear and receive, but soon the cares of the world and the lure of wealth will choke the new life right out of them."

The first disciple now jumped back in, unable to contain his excitement, "But as for the one who hears, understands, and receives Jesus' word, why, he will bear much fruit—thirty, sixty, even a hundred-fold!"

"But why waste so much?" asked the sensible townspeople. "Wouldn't it be better to make careful study of the ground before carelessly throwing away perfectly good seed?" The disciples smiled, and even Speiro had a look of amusement. There were two conversations going on, one about farming, one about something else, something much greater, but it seemed that not everyone had ears to hear it.

"I think," said Speiro, "that only God knows where the most fertile ground lies. The only thing we need to worry about is that we throw the seed as far and wide as we can."

The two disciples smiled even more, "You have spoken wisely," they said. The gathering broke up shortly after that. The disciples asked Speiro if he would like to join them for an evening meal and he gladly accepted. They talked long into the night, and the next morning everyone saw that Speiro had packed a small bag in preparation to leave with the other two.

They moved on to the next town where they flung seed with wild abandon. Most of it came to nothing, but true to its nature, the seed that hit its mark produced in abundance. Spiero began to notice that often those pockets of fertile soil, which is to say those people most receptive to the message about the kingdom, were hard to spot at first. Like a crack of fertile ground in the midst of a rocky patch, or surrounded by thorns, a place you might not notice when sowing seed because it seemed so unlikely. He began to understand at least a little about the ways of the kingdom, and realized that God's ways were usually not the ways of men.

That didn't mean that things were always easy for him. After traveling with the two disciples for several months Spiero eventually found himself with another recent convert, a man named Therismos. Together they continued the journey, going from town to town, wildly flinging the kingdom seed. But Spiero was the kind of person who found it easy to look at all the waste, easy to look at the unproductive ground, easy to hear the laughter. There were times when he began to question the work, times when the fertile ground was harder to find, times when the harvest was quite small. It was during these times that he was glad for Therismos, who seemed content no matter what. "You are good for me, my brother," Spiero he would often say, and just as often Therismos would reply, "The harvest belongs to God."

One day as they came to a new village they could sense that something was happening. It turned out that Jesus himself had come to the same village only the day before. It was a wonderful reunion as Spiero embraced his Lord and introduced his friend Therismos. Jesus put his large carpenter's hands on a shoulder of each man in a wide embrace and smiled. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" he said, "and so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

A look of confusion registered on Spiero's face. "Are we not to be sowers?" he asked. "Who are the harvesters," replied Jesus, "if not those who first sowed? As it is written, 'those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy, those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves' (Psalm 126:5-6). Come, let us eat."

Spiero and Therismos wanted to continue traveling with Jesus but he told them that he was headed to Jerusalem to bear a cross. Neither was quite sure what that meant, but it made them shudder all the same. It was clear from his words that Jesus preferred them to continue their journey, going from town to town, sharing with everyone that the kingdom of God was at hand, and explaining to those who seemed interested why that was such good news. When later they heard what had happened in Jerusalem at the Passover they set out for the holy city. They were fearful and sad, but determined to find the others. This they accomplished, as they were gathered in an upper room, 120 strong. "This," said Spiero with sadness, "is not much of a harvest." Therismos smiled and gave his friend a hug.

They decided to stay on in Jerusalem at least until Pentecost, only a few days away. It seemed clear that Peter and the others had some sense of expectation. "Jesus told us to come here," they said, "and wait for the power of the Holy Spirit and that is what we are doing." They all wondered how long that would be, but no one seemed concerned as they bathed in a sweet spirit of prayer day and night.

The day of Pentecost came and they were together, as they had been, some of them for as long as ten days. But this day was different, as the promised Holy Spirit came, and came with power, and truth, and love, and something else... It was hard to say what, exactly, but at the very least it was a certain sense of boldness, and filled with all these things it was Peter who addressed the crowd who had heard and sensed that something was happening in the place where they were, and who had gathered in astonishment. By the end of the day over 3,000 had been baptized in the numerous *mikvahs* surrounding the temple, and all of them also received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

As the long and joyous day finally came to an end, and as they shared some bread and wine, Therismos said to Spiero, "I am no great mind when it comes to the mathematics, but that appears to be at least a thirtyfold harvest..."

He was right, and it was only the beginning.