

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
LAC DU FLAMBEAU
NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER
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Our Mission Statement:

As people of God and servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, we believe our Mission to be the building of a strong fellowship, ministering to the Spiritual and physical needs of the church, the community, and the world fulfilling our Lord's command to "Love our neighbors."



THE JESUS REVOLUTION

Ever since the 2004 American movie *Sideways*, California vintners have been focussed on growing more and more grapes that produce pinot noir wine. Set in California's Napa Valley, the movie's star, amateur wine aficionado Miles Raymond (Paul Giamatti), makes crystal clear his preference for pinot over what he considers a clearly inferior varietal, merlot. At the time of the movie's making, merlot was one of the most popular consumer choices in everyday wine consumption; pinot noir, on the other hand, required something of an acquired taste.

The movie changed that. People began buying more pinot and less merlot. One study showed that after the film's release in October 2004 merlot sales dropped by 2 percent while pinot sales increased by 16 percent. Another study in 2009 by Sonoma State University found that *Sideways* slowed the growth of merlot sales volume, causing its price to fall, and at the same time increased the sales volume of pinot, causing its price to increase. Overall wine consumption in the United States increased.

Of course vineyards across California rushed to grow more pinot grapes; bottles of pinot noir lined the shelves of wine stores. Ignore for a moment the likelihood that not all of this pinot noir bonanza is actually good wine. Even my untutored palate tells me there is good pinot and bad pinot. Instead, let's focus on the somewhat astounding fact that an entire food industry, the wine making industry, could be literally turned on its head by a low budget movie. A very good movie, to be sure, (*Total Film* put *Sideways* on its list of the 100 greatest movies of all time) but a popular movie all the same. Are there any lessons to be learned here? By the recently revived Christian movie making industry, perhaps?

* * *

Hollywood, it seems, is in the process of reviewing its commitment (or lack thereof) to making movies with explicit Christian themes. The old standard tropes—deeply disturbed, utterly incompetent, and/or unbelievably lecherous ministers, for example—are still revisited frequently. But they now must share the stage with normal, competent, sometimes even chaste ministers of the gospel. Genuine Christian values sometimes find their way into these films, and seasoned actors are increasingly drawn to dedicate their talents to acting in them.

I recently watched two of these productions, a full length movie called *The Jesus Revolution* and a multi-season television drama about Jesus Christ called *The Chosen*. Both are extremely well done.

The Jesus Revolution is based on a true story from the 1970s. Those of us who lived in California in those years remember it well. It was about what we affectionately called "the Jesus people;" *Time Magazine* ran a cover story on the movement and called it the "Jesus revolution;" critics called the participants "Jesus freaks." But whatever the nomenclature, it was undeniable that the participants were having a cultural impact.

Briefly, the story centers on a local church pastor named Chuck Smith who was frustrated with the direction (or lack thereof) of his church's ministry. He is on the verge of throwing in the ministerial towel when he meets a charismatic hippie street preacher named Lonnie Frisbee. Smith vents his ministerial spleen to Lonnie. Lonnie listens and then tells Smith a surefire way to fill his church pews: "Preach Jesus and only Jesus" is his advice. Smith listens. He preaches Jesus and only Jesus. It works. He not only fills the pews in his church, but he begins to start new churches and immediately fills those pews.

A signal that this is serious Hollywood movie making is the nature of the cast—Hollywood veterans led by Kelsey Grammer, who stars in the lead role as Church Smith. And a special word is due about the actor who plays Lonnie, Jonathan Roumie. You see, Roumie also plays the lead role in *The Chosen*. He plays Jesus Christ.

The Chosen is the story of Jesus told with an eye toward digging “deeper into the people who encounter Jesus and to see Jesus through the eyes of those who met him, but also to show him in a way that is more personal, intimate, immediate.” (liner notes) Roumie excels in this role. The unquestioned quality of this many episode production (it just completed its third season) surely is due to a significant extent to the concept and script writing. But Roumie as Jesus has to be an equally important factor. He seems made for the role.

Roumie was born to Egyptian father and Irish mother; he was baptized a Greek Orthodox and became a Roman Catholic, where he has served as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. He has won both religious and acting awards. For his role as Jesus in *The Chosen*, articles have been written in the *National Catholic Register*, *America Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Irish Times*.

Good concepts, good scripts, good actors, great religious stories. But is it enough to do for Christianity what *Sideways* did for wine? Consider a couple of questions.

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First question: Are popular media such as movies and television shows adequate for communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ? Or put another way, might it not be the case that these type of media are better at communicating the current quasi-religious “merlot” (a watered-down, self centered humanism) that everyone seems so bent on embracing than they are at communicating an esoteric religious pinot noir?

I have never been a big fan of arguing that certain media are better at communicating the gospel than others. The variety of so-called “mission methods” belie the idea that certain ones are better than others. Consider: accommodation, indigenization, contextualization. Or Bible translation, church planting. Or biblical storytelling, narrative, relation building. Or colportage, demographic study. The list of methods goes on and on. And to me all seem effective, depending on what the context calls for. So my answer to this first question, is “yes” popular media are adequate for communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thus, the second question seems more pertinent: How would we measure “adequate” in this case? That is, are we talking about box office success or conversions to Christianity or increased church attendance or a cultural change of perception of religion in general, from a barely disguised disgust to whole-hearted acknowledgement of value?

I suppose box office success, conversions, and increased attendance would all be good things to measure. But it is probably true that all three are merely indicators that the last, a cultural change of perception of Christianity, is taking place. So let’s focus on answering that question. And let’s be specific in asking the question: Will *The Jesus Revolution* and *The Chosen* elevate the current cultural perceptions of Christianity to any significant degree?

Of course, the absolutely correct answer to that question from a scholarly point of view is, *Who knows?* Predicting the future of cultural change of any sort is fraught with danger—there are simply too many variables.

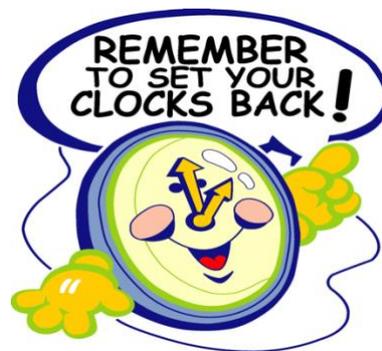
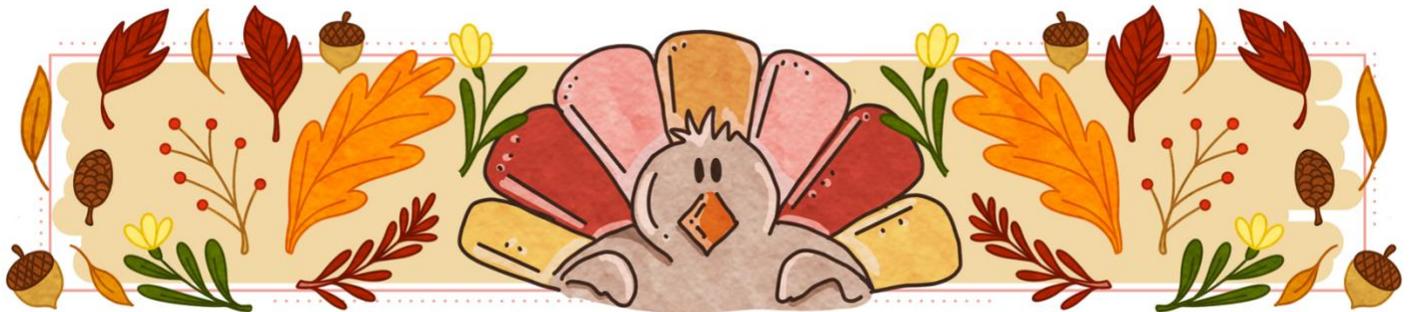
But let's step out of that scholarly role and speculate. Let's offer an opinion and give evidence we think might be pertinent. My opinion is this: I think *The Jesus Revolution* and *The Chosen* might effect positive social change. My opinion is based on three pieces of what I consider good evidence:

1. Current "religious" fashion is bad. Responsible theorists of religion, in examining why some religions have grown and others have not grown argue that in order for a religion to grow there has to be at least a modicum of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Our current watered-down humanism simply does not cut it as a viable option to historic orthodox Christian teaching. The movie will help the culturally curious see that more clearly.

2. Human history argues in favor of it. There has never been a successful, longterm culture in human history that has prospered by denying the effectiveness of religion. The Genesis/Jewish/Christian/Muslim success story is simply the most prominent example of that dynamic. There is absolutely no reason why human beings should not continue to be religious and to insist that their cultural governors reflect that.

3. The basic story the religions tell is true. The basic truth is that there is a reality beyond time and space that exists, and exists in such a way that it has the potential to help human beings achieve an essential facet of their nature—the spiritual facet.

Conclusion: The current use of mass media such as movies and television to tell the human religious story—and in particular Christianity's story—in a sympathetic and factual way may not increase overall cultural impressions of the religious worldview. But my best guess it that it will increase those impressions. May it be so.



SPECIAL DAYS FOR NOVEMBER 2024

All Saints Day
Daylight Savings Time Ends

Nov. 1
Nov. 3

Veterans Day
Christ the King Sunday
Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 11
Nov. 24
Nov. 28



Birthdays

Carolyn Anderson	Nov. 6
Ginny Stiles	Nov. 9
Barbara Metz	Nov. 14
Jillanne Consie	Nov. 16

Anniversaries

Richard and Helen Day	Nov. 24
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Scripture readings for November

Nov. 3 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Semicontinuous: Ruth 1:1-18 and Ps. 146;

Complementary: Deut. 6:1-9 and Ps. 119:1-8; Heb. 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

Nov. 10 – 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Semicontinuous: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17 and Ps. 127;

Complementary: 1 Kgs. 17:8-16 and Ps. 146; Heb. 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Nov. 17 – 26th Sunday after Pentecost

Semicontinuous: 1 Sam. 1:4-20 and 1 Sam. 2:1-10;

Complementary: Dan. 12:1-3 and Ps. 16; Heb. 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25; Mark 13:1-8

Nov. 24 – Christ the King/Reign of Christ

2 Sam. 23:1-7 and Ps. 132:1-12 (13-18) or Dan. 7:9-10, 13-14 and Ps. 93; Rev. 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

**Article Regarding the Lakeland Pantry Interfaith Outreach program
Contributed by Jill Consie (our Representative in this program)**

Community Presbyterian Church is a member of the Lakeland Pantry Interfaith Outreach program. The group meets by-monthly to discuss ways the area churches can support the food pantry. Not only do people with food insecurities receive food from the food pantry, but there are many outreach programs that support families in need including Hope in a backpack, non-perishable boxes for churches, police and fire stations, and the group is working on placing food boxes at campgrounds, trailer parks, and the Women's shelter, Headstart and Yahweh Warrior Lodge in our community. They also supply food to some school programs. They are a wide-reaching organization, and our church is doing our part to support them.

For the months of November and December, the Food Pantry is asking for donations of:

Clothing – Winter Coats and Jackets (all sizes including children's) / purses and shoes (all sizes) / only clothing that is 2X and up for men and women

Non-Clothing – quilts / comforters (all sizes) / sheets (all sizes) / blankets (all sizes) / towels and washcloths

Personal Care – toothpaste and toothbrushes / dental floss/ non-alcoholic mouthwash.

These items can be brought to church on Sunday and placed in the box provided. Looking ahead to the holidays, we can help the pantry with monetary donations for ham and turkeys that are given to families in need for their holiday dinners. Please designate on your check that is written out to the Lakeland food pantry, that the money should go to buy meat as they are greatly in need of this kind of support for the holidays.

The Lakeland Pantry and its clients thank you for your support of this quarterly program. It will be a success because of you!

Blessings,

Jill Consie

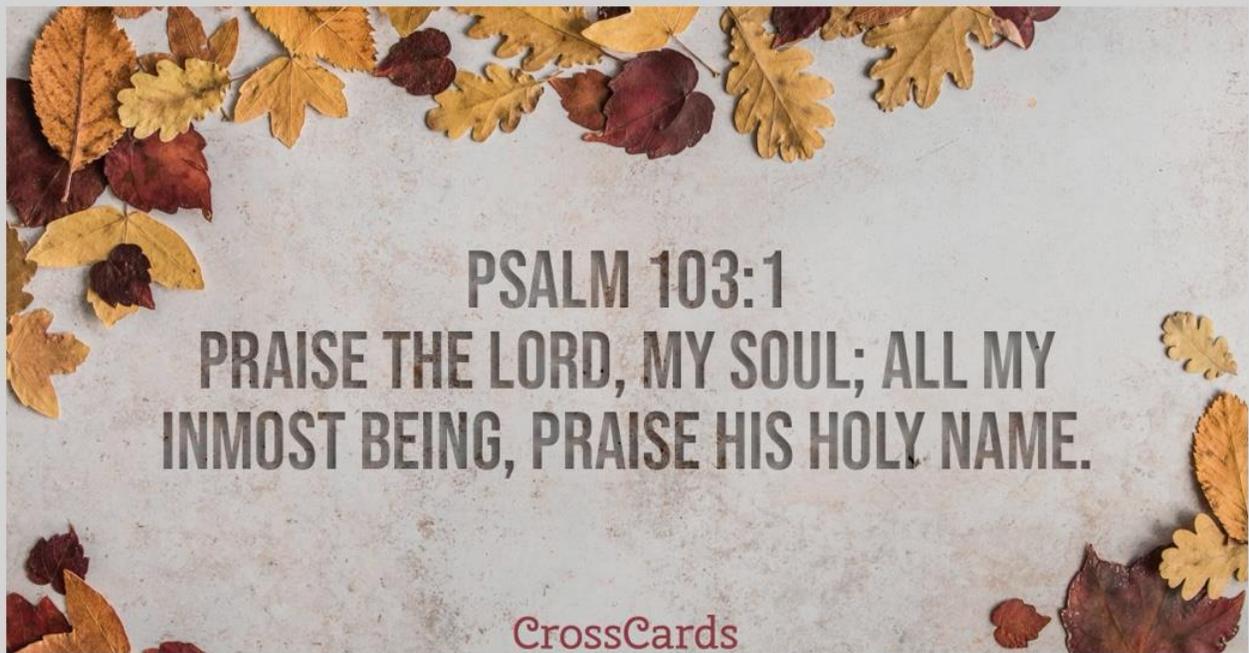
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If you have an IRA or 401 K and are looking for a tax deduction by the end of the year, you might want to consider a donation sent by your IRA provider or 401K provider. The check needs to be written by the provider, or it will not be considered a tax deduction. Please consider this thoughtfully. Thank you.

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We thank all of the volunteers from Community Presbyterian Church who worked at the "Food for Kidz" (I'll call it the packing plant) site. Below is a picture of the group +.

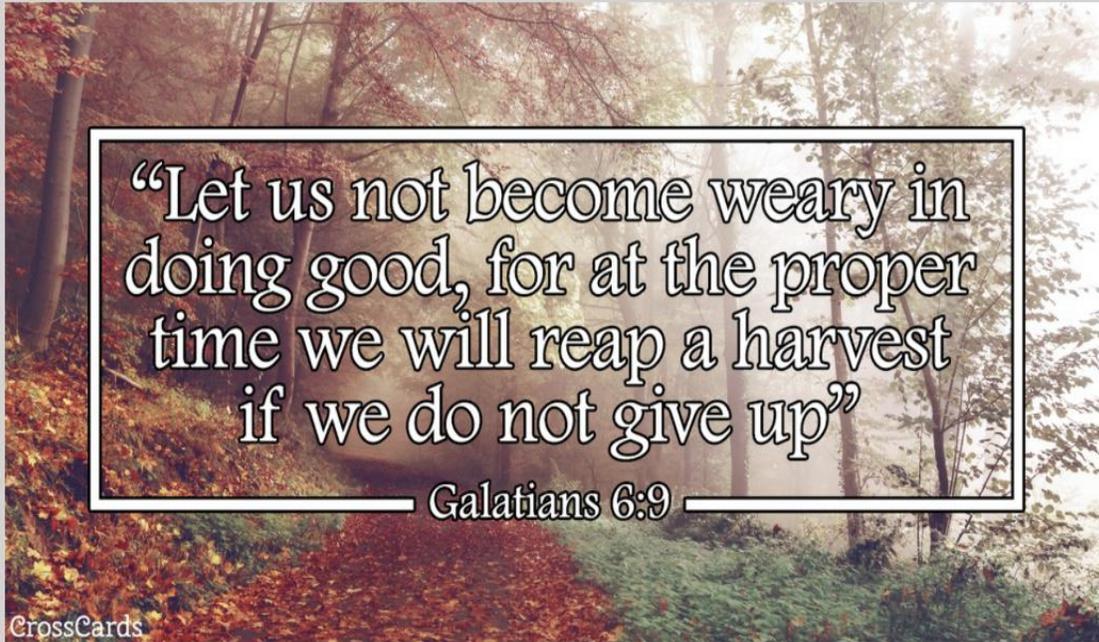




WE ARE IN NEED OF PEOPLE TO SIGN UP FOR:

- GREETER
- USHERS
- LITURGISTS
- COFFEE HOUR HOSTS





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Articles are to be submitted by the last Sunday of the month.

If you are online, the following web addresses will provide you with news and information about the General Assembly, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and the Presbytery of Northern Waters www.pcusa.org/crisis; outreach/evangelism; www.stopinfindout.org; northernwaters.net. We also have the Newsletter on our website: www.ldfchurch.com.

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THANKS TO The PEOPLE OF THE PAST,
THE PRESENT, AND YET TO BE

ELDERS:
Glenn Morrison
Owen Karlmann
Ralph Kerler
Jill Consie
Mary Jane Stevens

DEACONS:
Shirlee Gallagher – Moderator
Fran Raduege - Treasurer
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