

Days of Grace

"The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. I have no wealth to bestow on him. If he knows that I am happy in loving him, he will want no other reward. Is not friendship divine in this?"

- Henry David Thoreau

2015 SPRING FLING

April 29-30, 2015

Christ the King Retreat Center

**AVATARS OF THE WORD:
JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN
TECHNOLOGIES OF
TRANSMITTING THE BIBLE
WITH PAMELA
EISENBAUM**

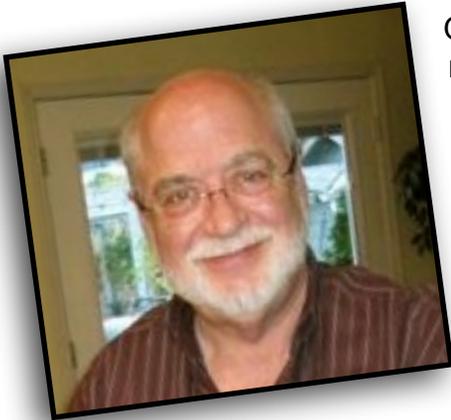


One of four Jewish New Testament scholars teaching Christian theological schools, Pamela Eisenbaum is Professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Origins at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. She is the author of *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context*, *Invitation to Romans* and most recently, *Paul Was Not A Christian*. She is a contributor to the *Women's Bible Commentary* and the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, and has published many essays on the Bible, ancient Judaism and the origins of Christianity. Two of her greatest professional passions are the apostle Paul and ancient manuscripts, and her current research involves the role of technology (ancient and modern) in the codification, preservation, and transmission of the Bible. In addition to her appointment at Iliff, she is an affiliate faculty member of the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Denver.

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Dear RCA Friends,

Grace and Peace in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to write my first "President's Ponderings" as the new President of the Board of the Retired Clergy Association. I pray that all is well with you and yours.



Our first meeting of the full board was on September 16. It was a day of joy and hope. As a group, we retired clergy are involved in a variety of ministries. In addition to travel and grandchildren stories (both very important), there were stories of commitment to communities and congregations. Jesus' message of grace and love, peace and justice, is being proclaimed in as many ways as there are messengers! Thanks be to God for all of you and all of your ministries!

During our meeting, we heard stories of the ministry offered by the UMVIM trip to New Orleans, the engaging program (and the opportunity to renew long-time friendships) for the Spring Fling, the offering of RCA Scholarships in support of students studying for the ministry who are (or will be) serving our Annual Conference.

We also heard reports from Paul Extrum-Fernandez of the Board of Pensions and Cory Parish of the Endowment Board. We are blessed to have these two boards working on our behalf. Because of the financial generosity of the Endowment Board and the

work of the Board of Pensions to provide the best possible insurance coverage at the best possible price, medical care for retired clergy and spouses in our Annual Conference may be the best in all of the connection! Both boards work very hard on behalf of retired clergy, clergy spouses, and surviving spouses.

Of great concern to the RCA Board is how we can encourage and support the care of one another. In what ways can the board encourage better communication among retired clergy, with the Annual Conference leadership, with the active clergy serving among us? There are other issues of support and relational care as well. Your input is welcome! Please feel free to contact me with any ideas you may have. My email address is djbenn7071@gmail.com or you may mail your concerns to: Dave Bennett, 10103 Berryessa Drive, Stockton, CA 95219. Or, grab the phone and call 209.470.5044 and we can talk about it.

The Board wishes to serve you in the best ways possible. We welcome your participation in whatever ways your spirits and energy allow. We all have served Jesus' church through the United Methodist Church. With the guidance of God's Spirit, and with Jesus as our traveling companion, we wish to continue to nurture and support this shared relationship. You all are invited to join in this journey!

Be gentle with yourself, with one another, with all creation.

Blessings & Peace,

Dave Bennett

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

GREETINGS and salutations! I hope this issue of Days of Grace finds your days filled with grace indeed.

It was wonderful to see all who were able to attend Annual Conference! I may have missed some of you as we navigated our new meeting space at the Burlingame Hyatt. We will be there for the next few years so hopefully we will learn our way around quickly.

Next Annual Conference will be a big one with elections for Jurisdictional and General Conferences. Please plan on attending! My advice is to watch the conference website and get your hotel room reserved EARLY!

One happy surprise we found this year was that each room had a mini fridge for use (no fee!). So you can bring a cooler with some breakfast items (milk and cereal, yogurt, juice) to help keep your costs down. The hotel did have a lunch buffet for a mostly reasonable price as well. But you could bring some lunch meats and cheeses for sandwiches and stash them in the fridge next to your breakfast fare. Dinner is still pretty much restaurant fare. The RCA Board of Directors has asked Dave Thompson to suggest the Planning Commission to request a dinner buffet similar to the lunch buffet. Dave is the RCA representative to the Planning Commission and has been asking for greater visibility and recognition of retirees.

Also, remember that the per diem, to help offset your costs, will be available. This year the reimbursement ranged from \$150 for clergy only, for one day, to \$475 for clergy and spouse, for three days. We anticipate keeping these amounts the same for 2015. Additionally, as you speak to colleagues through this next year, talk to them about their ACS plans. There were several who found they could have carpooled had they only known of the others making the same trip at the same time.

If getting to SFO Airport is easier for you, the Hyatt offers a free shuttle from the airport. Depending on where you live, this may work for

you, especially if you are able to take Bart to SFO. You can also take CalTrain to a Bart Station and then Bart to the airport. Please do talk about travel options during this next year. Your presence is valuable. Especially, in an election year.

And finally, my yearly 'plea' for news of area gatherings. This need not be complicated and I can help you with a list of fellow RCA members in your area. A potluck in a home, clubhouse or church fellowship hall. A no host lunch at a restaurant. We just need more "point people" to do the inviting and location arranging! I look forward to breaking bread and visiting with you all.



Peace,

Nancy

If you have recently moved, please be sure you send your new contact information (address, phone number(s) and email) so I can update my records.

nancydaley@frontiernet.net

Nancy Daley

9328 Elk Grove Blvd. #105-141

Elk Grove, CA 95624

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Retired Clergy Association was happy to award four scholarships this year. The awardees are pictured, left to right, Dana Gill from Drew, Michele Robbins from PSR, Suzanne Calhoun from Iliff and Thomas Widlund from Asbury. We were delighted that all four were able to attend our luncheon and give our members the opportunity to meet and encourage them as they go forward.

The cost of post graduate education is ever increasing. The RCA wishes to encourage those who are called to be in mission and ministry as United Methodist clergy to be able to answer that call without the burden of increasing tuition. While we cannot halt the rising cost, we can, in our own small way,

offset that burden with our Memorial Scholarship Program.

This program is funded by a donation from our operating budget in honor of each clergy and clergy spouse upon their death. It is supplemented by direct donations from our members. We wish to increase our scholarship amounts as we are well aware that the costs for seminarians is only going to increase as well. If you wish to make a contribution to this fund, please send it to the RCA at 9328 Elk Grove Blvd. #105-141 Elk Grove, CA 95624. Please note "Scholarship Program" on the memo line of your check.



HOW SCHOLARSHIPS HELP

Those who receive scholarship awards are thankful for the assistance. Two of this year's recipients have expressed their gratitude below. The remaining will be featured in the next issue of Days of Grace. We hear from Suzanne Calhoun and Thomas Widlund:

Thank you for your support of my continuing educational process. Your generosity makes my seminary education possible. It is difficult enough to juggle all that comes my way as a pastor, student, mother, and wife. Not having to worry about if I can afford to attend seminary is a greater gift than I can put into words. I know that together we will continue to accomplish great things as a connectional system of United Methodists. Thank you for your gift and your willingness to support the next generation of clergy. I hope you will find, through the awesome power of

God, that your trust is well placed in all of this year's recipients.

~Suzanne Calhoun

When I considered going back to Seminary to complete my Masters of Divinity, I was committed to not making this journey any more of a burden on my family than necessary. I was very concerned that I would not be able to complete Seminary

without incurring the burden of student loans and I just could not see any way around this. After much encouragement from other pastors, I knew that I had to step out in faith and that God would provide. The RCA scholarship is God at work. Receiving this and other financial aid allows me to continue to follow God's call without financially burdening my family with debt. This scholarship is an answer to prayer and it is God completing a work that was started many years ago.

~Thomas Widlund

EIGHTH!!!! Annual RCA UMVIM Trip

New Orleans, Louisiana

October 31-November 8, 2014

Who?

Betty Pagett - VIM Chair
Nadine DeWitt
Joe Hurd
Judith Pruess-Mellow
Floyd Quenzer
Sandy Roberts
Nancy Schwartz

John Sublett
Carl Thomas



How you can help this year?

Keep our team members in prayer as they serve the ongoing post-Katrina needs of New Orleans and the St. Mark's Church and North Rampart Community Center.

What if I want to go next year?

Let Betty Pagett know! The general time frame is consistent year to year so you can expect a late October/early November trip in 2015.

How?

Contact Betty and arrange to make your \$100 registration deposit for each person. There will be a limit to the number of people, so---first come, first served!

Lodging?

We will again stay at the North Rampart Community Center next to St. Marks UMC on the edge of the French Quarter. The facility includes dormitories, kitchen and meeting space plus showers and laundry.

For more information contact:
Betty Pagett 707-981-8636
bettypagett@gmail.com



Eighth Annual RCA UMVIM Trip New Orleans, Louisiana Part Two by Betty Pagett

There are nine people signed up for this year's VIM project in New Orleans and it should be a great team. The RCA budget calls for each person paying \$200 plus their own airfare. Some have asked local churches to contribute toward special mission projects in which the team will be engaged: Epworth Project no longer gets FEMA or UMCOR support so participants pay \$100 for supplies; North Rampart Community Center is trying to fund an after school music class; and the team also plans to prepare lunch for the community following the Sunday worship service at St. Mark's UMC serving about 150 mostly homeless or under-housed people.

Out of great concern for the more than 100 year old North Rampart Community Center, the team asked the GBGM to check out what is needed at the site. The GBGM staff heard the concerns about center needs and sent someone to check out the situation in July of this year. They are checking their community centers around the country, most of which are over 100 years old. It became clear that the kind of work needed at the Center was more than our team could do at this point - electrical repairs replacing big historic window, etc. - so the team will concentrate on repair work on a home assigned by Epworth Project.



Epworth Project took over the work of the different regional centers after FEMA and GBGM left the New Orleans rebuilding efforts. Methodist volunteers continue the work of rebuilding and to date over 22,000 homes have been restored by United Methodists. As of last Fall, there were still another 44,000 homes that need attention, many of which will be razed.

Our UMVIM team also suggested that a list of all churches across the country who have been involved in the rebuilding effort and stayed at North Rampart be compiled so that funds could be sought

from those churches to support the community programs at North Rampart Center. We hope to work on that while we are there.



NORTH BAY NEWS

Celinda and Jim Current

Jean Conrad tells us the story of her dog, Meibiana who was “discovered” by Lucas Films as being a talented “talker”. She was recorded by Lucas Films staff and now her opinions about things we can only imagine is in the Lucas Films Sound Bank. Meibiana was paid \$50 for her efforts and talents!

Bill and Noreen Marx will be taking a cruise, October 25 - November 4 to South America and back.

Betty Pagett reports “This year we returned to Greece for a wonderful two weeks in the back country of mainland Greece visiting lesser known ancient healing and religious centers. The other highlight of summer was being part of the ground breaking for Oma Village in Novato, 14 small apartment homes for extremely low income working families with children moving out of homelessness.”

Gayle Pickrell and John Davenport enjoyed a wonderful 2 week Viking River Cruise from Amsterdam to Budapest. Gayle will go back to Japan in October to see her 1-year old granddaughter (and daughter and son-in-law). Meanwhile, John will go back to Michigan to remodel his daughter’s home.

Jan and Dave Storpe enjoy frequent trips around Sonoma County. A favorite place is Bodega Bay as they love the fish and chips at the Boat House! They always take their dog and have a fun time.

Dottie and Gil Vieira are moving again! This time to a senior community in Petaluma come October. They enjoyed their annual family reunion at the Russian River and seeing long time friends.

Opportunities to Assist Others

The RCA has two major funds that we have established to assist others. The first is our Memorial Scholarship program to assist seminary students with their expenses. The second is our Health Care Assistance Program. In the face of increasing health care insurance premiums, some are experiencing difficulties making these escalating payments. If you are in the position to help either group, please send your contribution with a note indicating how to direct your donation. Together we can help those in need.



Make your check payable to: RCA

Send to:

RCA

9328 Elk Grove Blvd #105-141

Elk Grove, CA 95624

SACRAMENTO "IS-BEENS"

Sue Angove

JOHN AND LOIS ALBRIGHT are doing well, spending most days at home. July 17th they hosted the annual homemade Ice Cream Social at which time we celebrated Dorrie Moon's 100th birthday just ahead of her August 7th birthday. The Albrights' warm hospitality is a true joy to receive.

JERRY AND SUE ANGOVE have just returned from Maui where they celebrated their 47th anniversary. An Elvis impersonator held Sue's hand and sang "Love Me Tender" to her during an evening show. Our two grandchildren are such a joy in our lives. Sue starts her 14th year working Kaiser's flu clinic September 27th. Jerry enjoys reading books on his Kindle, being involved with Placer County Law Enforcement chaplaincy, and preaching occasionally.

NORMAN AND ARDITH CALLAWAY have hosted several grandchildren's visits this summer. Saturday, September 20th, the two of them will travel to Red Bluff to attend Norman's 70th high school reunion! FUN!

JAN DAHL appreciates our blessings, concerns, and prayers as she handles living with Alzheimers and other health issues. Her daughter, a doctor, is helping her with her situation. She is happy to have attended church September 7th for the first time in a year.

(If you wish to send cards to JAN: 4313 Glenridge Drive, Carmichael 95608 or call 916- 961-3662).

DON AND JEAN FADO celebrated their 80th birthdays by taking an Alaskan Cruise with 13 family members. "It was our first time to Alaska and we were deeply moved by the entire experience."

GARY GRUNDMAN began an intentional interim appointment September 1st in Chugiak, Alaska (near Anchorage). The situation is not one of conflict, but the sudden death of the newly appointed pastor. GARY will remain through the appointment year. DEB plans several visits north! GARY AND DEB thank you for prayers for this church family.

EVA HERSCHBACH-MARTIN AND ED MARTIN have been having some medical issues but they are now under control. We have been confined to home for some time this past year. We found some time to take an RV trip to Truckee along the river. We then went to Yosemite on the east side. We camped at a national forest campground and made a few trips into Yosemite. We had the rushing waters of Lee Vining creek at our site, amidst a grove of Aspen trees. Very relaxing!



PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Albert Schniepp

Penny Vorster sends us this note: "I send a grateful thank you to the wonderful support I've received from the Annual Conference and its members since Arnold's death. I have certainly been comforted by the loving arms of the church during this time of grieving and sadness. Both at the Celebration of Life service in Mill Valley in March and the Conference Memorial Service in June, as well as in the days immediately following his death, I have been really touched to hear of the impact he had on other people's lives. But of course not surprised. I miss him greatly, but am thankful for our 22 years together, our travels, and happy to have landed in Port Townsend, WA. Peace and love to you all." Penny can be reached by email at: vorsterpenarn@q.com



Jim & Dianne Lynn just passed the first anniversary of their buying a new (to them) home in a senior park in Newport. They are glad to be homeowners again, and are finding the park blessed with a wonderful sense of community.

The nest is a bit fuller than when they first moved, due to their disabled son's (Dianne's David) difficulty of caring for himself on his boat. The boat is sold, and now Dave and his cat reside with them. His new hobby (which brings him more joy than one might imagine) is flying drones.

The Lynns have been co-ordinating an IONS (Institute of Noetic Sciences) community group for the past 3+ years, discovering new steps for the spiritual pathway and relishing almost incredible new learning. (Hopefully this all helps the "little grey cells", as Poirot would put it.) Church connections continue with Atonement Lutheran and Trinity UMC, and they host a Monday meditation group in their home.

Dotty Dale sends greetings from Bellingham, WA. "I am sorry that I didn't make it to Conference. Our son Rev. Eric Dale and his wife Rev. Monique-Cheri Pierre were at the memorial service for our family. I certainly appreciated The Book of Memoirs from the service. Some of you may recall a few years ago when Eric presented the entire estate of Al's aunt Estelle Wyman to the bishop at conference, to be used for UMCORE and Missions. We are sad that Al will not be with the family for the weddings of two grand daughters, one in Michigan and one in Wisconsin. I leave Sept.8, taking the Empire Builder to Chicago. Al and I loved that train trip. So, life continues with new joys and so many joyous memories of the 65 years Al and I had together. Peace to you all."

They are traveling less, but have on the calendar trips to the Sacramento area for grandchildren's weddings (October and May).

They miss friends from California, but are not unhappy they moved to Oregon 8+ years ago.

Bert and Linda Schniepp spent a quiet summer in Florence, but are looking forward to some more time in their RV around northwestern Oregon and Washington. They are busy in the development in which they live, with Bert on the communication committee which is developing a website for the development and also assistant on the emergency radio base station in coordination with the disaster preparedness network on the Oregon coast. They remain active in the local UMC, which had a change of pastors in July, with Bert leading an adult Sunday School class, preaching occasionally and providing some pastoral coverage when the appointed pastor is on vacation. Linda continues being active with the United Methodist Women.

CENTRAL VALLEY - SOUTH

Sylvia Corson

Ray Alderman is feeling better although his eyes give him problems. He has a motorized wheelchair now, and looks forward to having a lift for his car. Since his son, Mark, moved elsewhere in Bakersfield, Ray lives alone. His daughter is encouraging him to consider moving into a retirement situation. He enjoyed singing with a group of men at St. Mark's UMC's for their recent Hawaiian Sunday. He is very proud of his grandsons.

David and Sherry Atkins are happy to report that their trip to Europe, originally planned for last September and cancelled at the last minute due to illness, was re-scheduled for the first two weeks this September - their first trip to Europe. They continue to be active in the music ministry at Wesley, Bakersfield. David has now participated in three tap dance recitals, and plans to resume dancing this fall. He continues his work as a MFT counselor.

Ivan and Ruth Ball are still enjoying their retirement. They are doing well health-wise and are very thankful. They participate in a book study group that meets at the Unitarian Church in Porterville. Their recorder group meets after the study group, and it hopes to play at Christmas time. Their two

sons live close to them. Forest and his wife live on the property with them, and have two daughters. Their son, Eric, is a cruise lecturer.

Dick Bayard recently finished a two-week trip to Illinois that included tremendous blessings in two settings. The first was the annual UM "Aldersgate" conference, with 1500 UM's of all ages gathering, focusing on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The next week was spent at a family gathering with all three daughters and other family members. Unlike last year's similar trip, Dick enjoyed good health for the whole time.

Floyd and Dana Castillo are moving from the old church house in Inyokern to a Planned Unit Development (condo). Their new address is 236-B Drummond Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555. In early October they will visit with children in Virginia, and have a reunion with Floyd's brother (John) and sister (Yvonne) Then, they will go on to San Antonio for their granddaughter Mari's wedding on October 25.

Alf Christiansen has moved to Grand Terrace, California. He is in an independent/assisted living facility. He is living close to his daughter, Karen. He had a warm welcome visit from the local UM pastor. Unable to get to services, he appreciates her visits. His poetry books are selling well, and he has done two public readings. He

enjoys doing this very much. His third book of poems will be published soon, as well as a book of his short stories.

John and Sylvia Corson had a spectacular January cruise to Antarctica, the 7th continent they have visited. Their next trip is to the Caribbean in April (room for friends). Sylvia is undergoing physical therapy for a problem shoulder, and John survived a spell of Bell's palsy. However, they are still on the go! Their 57th anniversary was spent in San Simeon and Cambria. They enjoy their time with their family and friends, especially their 3 grandsons in West Sacramento.

Harry and Anita Dutt took a flight to South Dakota for a summer family reunion with Harry's 7 siblings and Anita's sister and sister-in-law. In June, they took the train north to Brentwood to attend their first grandson's 8th grade graduation, and then to their oldest granddaughter's UCD graduation in San Diego. Sorrow came when the Isla Vista killings happened near them. Hope and healing occurred as the Santa Barbara community united together.

Madi Elsea and Rod Lee live in Bakersfield with a dog (Lucy), cats (Susanna and Sophie) and three desert tortoises (one named for Francis Asbury.) Madi is newly retired from the Annual Conference, but still serves (since 2009) as a fulltime chaplain for Optimal Hospice.

CENTRAL VALLEY - SOUTH

continued

They are avid birders, active leaders in the Kern Audubon Society, and enjoy camping. Madi preaches occasionally, and Rod plays keyboard in local Catholic and Lutheran churches.

Mark and Young Moon are doing well. Their health seem to be O.K. They had a lot of company last year, but that has tapered off. They plan to go to Texas for a family reunion in October for a week. They will see their two sons and two grandchildren. Mark's brother-in-law will join them, also. Mark says he really misses Annual Conference and seeing everyone. Mark reports that **Alpha Takagi** is holding his own at age 97, and is determined to reach his 100th birthday.

Don and Donita Roulsten had a wonderful two week vacation to the Northwest, and enjoyed it all. They visited Banff, Lake Louise, Glacier, the Ice Fields, Mount Rainier, and Deschutes. They have a "bucket list" with a goal accomplish it in due time! Don continues part-time ministry at Visalia UMC. Donita still plays the organ at First UMC, Porterville. Time has also been spent with family and friends, and Don's woodworking hobby.

Bob and Nancy Schwartz continue to be in flux. They enjoyed an active time when their son and grandson visited from Paris. Bob still has some medical issues: the thin air of Lake Tahoe caused panting after minimal exertion, and his slight internal bleeding continues. His eyesight has improved, and he functions without glasses mostly. Nancy practices her skills as a traveling nurse caring for Bob and her sister. She also cooks for the 1st UMC Senior Center.

Sharon Watson's went to Tibet and China this summer accompanied by her daughter, Heather. She said. "The trip was fabulous." She was surprised by the beauty, tranquility, colors, and openness of people. Even though the altitude was a challenge, Sharon handled it well. She noted a strong military presence around the new dam in China. Her son, Jonathan and fiancé, joined them in Beijing. Her next dollhouse project is similar to a Kincaid "Sweetheart" house.

Harry and Ruth Wood visited their son, Lee, and his family in Taipei, Taiwan, for their granddaughter Catherine's high school graduation. She enrolled at Duke this month in the engineering school. They also visited daughter, Robin, and her family in Miami Beach. They attended ballet performances and swim meets for granddaughters, Isabel and Carmen. Preaching, and hearing the Eagles at Tahoe, rounded out a great summer for the Woods.



California-Nevada Annual Conference the
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Retired Clergy Association
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Calendar
See website for updates
June 17-20, 2015
June 22-25, 2016
Annual Conference
Session
Burlingame, CA