

# Words of Faith

THE NEWSLETTER OF FAITH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## A Lunch of Olympic Proportions

Abraham Sullivan

Hello! This is your friendly news commentator from the television network, 'Good Morning, Faith Pres.' Today we have the full scoop on the 2015 Spring Olympics, held April 19 at Faith Presbyterian Church. We have had personal contact with one of the Olympic Committee, Bethan Sullivan. "Mrs. Pollack, Tova Forman, Elizabeth Jimmink, and I worked together to make it happen," she says.

When the day arrived, 213,000 (or maybe it was only 213) from around the world flocked in, partly to see the events, but mainly to see the world-renowned theologian, the Reverend Dr. Robert S. Rayburn, who had sacrificed his roast beef for the Olympic lasagna. Diners sat down, munching on appetizers as the magnificent opening ceremony began.

According to some news sources, such a sight had never been seen in Olympic history. Led by Dr. Rayburn—though some have claimed this was an impostor, saying Dr. Rayburn was sitting near them the whole while—the three pastors marched in, followed by the Comises, representing Seattle, the Jimminks and Lees as whale watchers, the Mellotts as rain, the Isenbergers as trees, and the Jameses from eastern Washington. Cessalie Darby began a hike (a popular Northwest activity) in search of her home, Faith Presbyterian, around the room. When



she at last joined her brothers and sisters in Christ, the torch began its way around. After circuiting the globe, or, rather, the room, Payton Chiou lit the cauldron.

As the spectators settled down to their food from around the world, yours truly was there on the scene, keeping you well-informed, as always. To inspire the diners, Mrs. Darby spoke about Louis Zamperini. As soon as the salad, garlic bread, and lasagna were consumed, children quickly vacated the room for those much more interesting activities, games. That is all from your trusted new source. Good morning, Faith Pres.!

## Men's Breakfast—Repast fit for Olympians(?), and Food for the Soul

Nearly 100 men joined Covenant Seminary President Mark Dalbey May 2 for eggs, biscuits, gravy, singing and fellowship. Dr. Dalbey braced up the men with an engaging talk on leadership, calling on men to lead by following Jesus. Faithfulness to Jesus, he pointed out, is the true bedrock of servant leadership—i.e., leadership that is collaborative, strong and active, calm in the face of messiness, gospel-centered, Holy Spirit empowered and missional. Thanks to Andrew Allen for leading the way on organizing the men's breakfast!

## “An Interview with Pastor Rayburn” Installment No. 1: The Call to Ministry

Dr. Mark Murphy

Dr. Mark Murphy recently sat down with Pastor Rayburn to talk about various aspects of his ministry, his life as a pastor, Faith Pres., etc. Herewith, an excerpt from that discussion, covering Pastor Rayburn’s call to ministry. In the next installment, Pastor Rayburn will discuss pastoral duties.

### **Call to Ministry:**

**Dr. Murphy:** *When did you first seriously consider becoming an ordained minister, and what factor(s) contributed the most to your decision to enter the ministry?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** I was, I think, halfway through high school when I began seriously thinking of the ministry. I had thought that perhaps I’d be a lawyer. I remember distinctly the impression that reading Andrew Bonar’s *Memoir of Robert Murray McCheyne* made on me. That was a turning point. McCheyne’s love for Christ and his powerful ministry captivated me. What constitutes a call to the ministry is actually difficult to say and remains controversial in our circles still today. Among other things, it is a matter of interest, passion, ability, and external confirmation. Perhaps it was easier and more natural for me since I came from a line of Christian ministers. I grew up in a minister’s home, on a seminary campus, surrounded by ministers and ministers to be. I met a great many more ministers over the course of my young life. All of that I’m sure contributed to my sense of calling, but, in any case, by the time I went to college I was preparing myself for the ministry and never wavered in my sense of that calling. I knew I would be a Christian minister, God willing.

**Dr. Murphy:** *When and where were you ordained? In which denomination were you ordained?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** After I graduated from seminary, Florence and I went to Scotland where I studied for another degree at the University of Aberdeen. So I was not ordained immediately after completing my seminary studies as ordination requires a formal “call” to some ministry. I was not ordained until I was called in May, 1978 to be the pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church, which was then a

congregation of the Northwest Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod. The RPCES and its member congregations joined the Presbyterian Church in America in 1982. So I was ordained in the RPCES, the church of my youth and upbringing.

**Dr. Murphy:** *If Calvin and the Reformed tradition that he and his followers fostered never existed, what other denomination might you feel at ease in as an ordained minister?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** Well, it is obviously hypothetical and anachronistic to speak as I will, but in some ways my answer to that question makes an important point. One of the reasons I am so grateful to be a Presbyterian is that there is so little of my theological confession that is unique to my own sect. My doctrine of God is the doctrine of Christendom in general; my doctrine of Jesus Christ similarly; my doctrine of the work of Christ is the doctrine the Church has almost invariably taught when she has been thinking and living faithfully. The only genuinely unique part of my Presbyterian confession is church government, which nobody thinks is the main point of the Bible’s teaching or of the Christian faith (and about which there is a welter of opinions even among Presbyterians!). So, were there to have been no Protestant Reformation, I would hope that I would have allied myself with all those who, such as Augustine, preached the sovereignty of God’s grace. I would have allied myself with all those, such as Patrick of Ireland, who had a clear sense of our calling to represent the Lord in speech and in behavior and to call others to faith in Christ. I hope I would have allied myself with the 9th century monk, Ratramnus, who rejected transubstantiation and formulated a doctrine of the Lord’s Supper very similar to what the Reformers would later teach. In other words, it is not as if Presbyterians in the 16th century and later were the only ones to have seen the light! Indeed, I happily say that I am a Presbyterian precisely because as a Presbyterian I am connected in so many ways to all true Christians who revere the teaching of the Word of God and confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Dr. Murphy:** *When did you first come to Tacoma, and what were the circumstances that led to your assuming the pastorate of Faith Presbyterian Church?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** It would obviously make a better story if in the winter of 1978, when Florence and I were still in Scotland and seeking the leading of God, we had looked up and seen in the sky above us clouds formed in the shape of a huge “T.” Then, that that very day, a letter arrived from the search committee in Tacoma. Alas, no such story. We came to Tacoma because I had finished my academic preparation for the ministry and Faith was the first church to knock on my door. Actually, though the temptation to embellish is almost irresistible, I think that is ordinarily the way a call to a particular ministry comes to pass. In any case, we came because I wanted to serve as a minister and Faith was the first church to offer me the opportunity.

**Dr. Murphy:** *Describe what things were like when you arrived, the condition of the church building, the size and general attitude of the congregation, or any other salient memories.*

**Pastor Rayburn:** I came to Faith Presbyterian Church a year after several years of controversy had culminated in a serious split. At a congregational meeting, moderated by my father as it happened, the proposal to leave the denomination failed to secure the necessary two-thirds by five votes out of more than 300 cast. Most of the congregation and almost all of its leadership then left, leaving a remnant behind. That group of some sixty people was largely older. Many of them were already living in retirement or were nearing the end of their working lives. On the other hand, they had retained the property, well-kept and wonderfully located, a property that has proved an immense benefit to the congregation in the years since. It is very easy to tell anyone at all familiar with Tacoma where to find Faith Presbyterian Church! What is more, the controversy had deepened the remnant’s loyalty to the Reformed faith and the denomination and it was on that foundation that the church was rebuilt. I think the troubles that had divided the church had

also convinced those who remained that whatever it was they had been doing had been discredited by the outcome. This made them more susceptible to the changes that needed to be made. With a willing spirit they made it possible for a church, quite different from what they had known, to be built on the ruins of its earlier life. I remain deeply grateful to the Lord for the sturdy people who remained through and after the troubles. Faith Presbyterian Church as it now exists is the inheritance they passed on to us!

**Dr. Murphy:** *Did you have any inkling then that you would be staying in one pastorate for more than three decades?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** I don’t recollect thinking early on that it was likely that I would remain in this pastorate for my entire ministerial life. In those earliest years I still wondered whether I might eventually move into academics, teaching at a seminary rather than pastoring a church. As so often in life, what eventually came to pass was the result of a combination of things: 1) a very happy pastorate that I was never tempted to leave for reasons of frustration, unhappiness, or even the prospect of greener grass; 2) the fact that the church began to prosper and willingly acquiesced to some liturgical and ministerial changes that I had come to believe were very important (and which changes were highly unlikely to be made at any other church I might leave Tacoma to pastor), and 3) my reading and my observation of life that began to shape my conviction in favor of lengthier pastorates. So it was that I became more and more settled here and happy to remain.

**Dr. Murphy:** *You have said that the average length of a pastorate in this country is around five years, yet you have far exceeded that. Why is that?*

**Pastor Rayburn:** The average length of a PCA pastorate is approximately the same. I hate to have to say this, but the way in which we manage ministerial changes in our denomination serves ministers, not congregations, since in our circles

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the easiest way to get promoted is to move (as it is the easiest way to escape difficulties). Our system does not work to the benefit of congregations! It doesn't take much observation of church life to realize that short pastorates are, by and large, bad for churches and bad for The Church. Churches are regularly distracted, if not actually destabilized, by such frequent changes of pastorate. At some point I discovered that almost every paradigm ministry in the Reformed tradition was either the first and only ministry a man ever had or was a lengthy ministry that followed a short assistantship or associateship somewhere else. Think of Samuel Rutherford at Anwoth, Richard Baxter at Kidderminster, John Bunyan at Bedford, Thomas Boston at Ettrick, or Alexander Whyte at Free St. George's. I began to realize that the older way was the healthy way and that what we were doing had much more to do with the self-interest of ministers than it did with the welfare of churches, and that has become something of a cause for me. In our Presbytery now we have a rule that forbids ministers from entering into any conversation with another church until they have secured the permission of the Presbytery's Ministers and Churches committee.

## **The Lady at the Bank**

Bonnie Payne

We left together and spoke of the weather  
Her plans to retire here and such  
To church she said "No", I did used to go  
But found it no benefit much.

I said "we are old and must care for our souls."  
She--"there's so much in the past."  
"Forgiveness for all is there if you call"  
But she was not willing to ask.

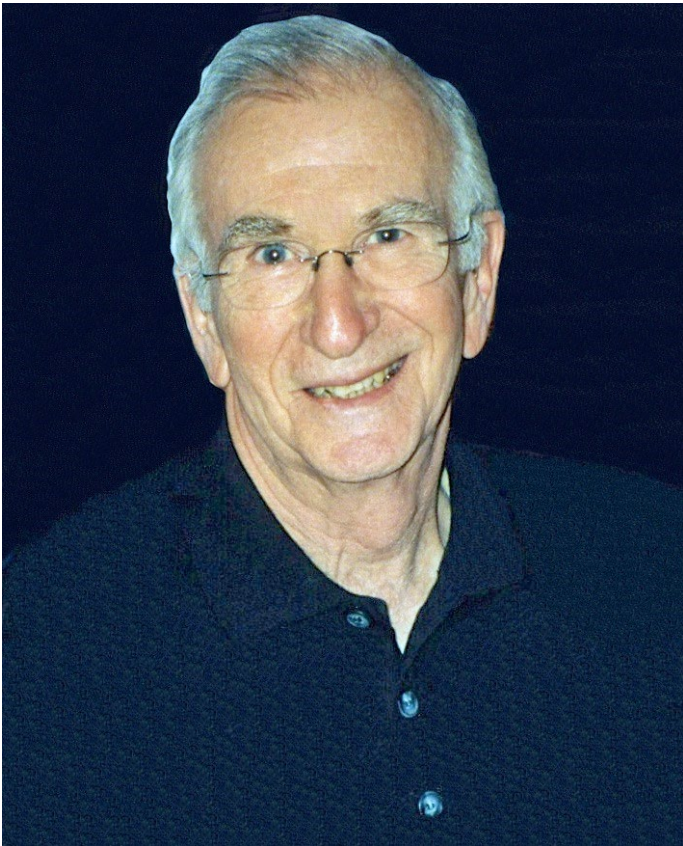
I clung to her hand as we parted too soon;  
Now I've added her name to my list  
Of those in grave danger, yes, even a stranger  
May be helped to escape the abyss.

How many today are out of the way  
And care not a whit to be told.  
But tell them we must, our cause more than just  
Let's gird up our loins and be bold.

And mayhaps another will come with the water  
And the seed that was planted will grow.  
Then in heaven some day this same lady will say  
"It was you at the bank long ago."

## Samuel James Eva

Samuel James (Jim) Eva went to his heavenly home on April 10, 2015 after a short battle with cancer. His devotion to family, church and friends, plus his unwavering faith, supported him during his illness.



Jim was born to the late Morey and Olive Eva in Berkeley, CA on Oct. 21, 1935. He, his sister Marion and family spent some early years in Placerville, CA, where they developed a great love of horses and country life. After his father's death, when Jim was 14, the family moved to Sacramento, CA where Jim attended Christian Brothers Boarding School, McClatchy High School, American River College and CSU Sacramento. Jim's military life began with the Navy Reserve and finished in the Army, where he served in Germany. As a civilian Jim worked in banking and commercial real estate before taking up farming peaches and prunes in Live Oak, CA.

Jim was blessed with a loving family. He met his lifelong love, Carol (Harmeson) when they were in the wedding party of mutual friends. After a long-distance romance while Jim was in Germany, they married on May 20, 1961. Jim helped raise their two sons, Jim and Dave, with patience, discipline and humility. During the years on the farm Jim showed the family the value of hard work. It was also during the farm years that Jim found the Lord, following in Carol's footsteps. This love for Jesus set the course for the rest of their lives. Jim found a calling of fellowship and ministry in the Christian community, where he was kind, gentle spoken and always willing to answer questions about the Bible to anyone who asked.

After farm life the family moved to Tucson, AZ where Jim was active in the Christian community, becoming director of Christian Conciliation Service.

In 1988 they moved to the Northwest, settling in Gig Harbor, WA where Jim made many good friends through church and the boating community.

Jim is survived by his wife of 54 years, Carol, his sons Jim (Liz) and Dave (Elaine), his four grandchildren Sam, Matthew, Tully and Lauren, his sister Marion Butts, nephew Steve Butts and niece Valerie Fisher.

## News Bits

### CHS 23rd Annual Spring Concert and Art Show

On May 15, Covenant High School presented their 23rd annual Spring Concert and Art Show. The concert featured selections from the musical *South Pacific* as well as pieces from Germany, Latin America, Zambia and Korea. Preludes were performed by Abraham Sullivan, Spencer Gross, Nicholas Shelden and Noelle Roberts. Spencer Gross and Abraham Sullivan served as accompanists, and soloists included Hannah Lawty, Will Lewellen, Nicholas Shelden, Amy Lewis and Kathryn Cassis. Many beautiful art pieces were on display throughout building.

### The World At Our Door

Internationals represent the fastest growing demographic in the region and individuals needing English training represents between 20,000 and 30,000 people in Tacoma alone. Most of us have enjoyed a friendship with someone from outside the US, so we know that international relationships can be enormously rewarding and great fun. That is why Better English on Sixth is going to be the most fun and interesting thing going on Monday nights at Faith, and why you will want to be a part of it.

Your new friendships can start in September, when internationals come to us to improve their English, and you partner with them in conversation. The opening activities will be provided and will teach ESL content to help our friends improve their English. After those activities, you spring into action as a language partner by answering questions, providing practice on the content, or just giving them a safe place for English conversation as you get to know them and share your life with them.

Feeling guilty about indulging in so much fun every Monday night? Don't worry about it--you've got a mandate ("Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.") and a specific commission "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (. . . or be shamelessly opportunistic if the nations are already here). Far from guilt, cups of

cold water will be on hand so you may "by no means lose your reward!"

Are you qualified? Only if you use English on a regular basis. But even if you don't, or prefer a non-partner role, there are other beautifully ripe, low-hanging opportunities in childcare, coordinating, organizing, driving, event planning and more. So don't leave the sojourners hangin' -- come be a part of the fun with Better English on Sixth. As one pastor frequently has it, "You will want to get in on the ground level."

Check out our website at [www.betterenglishonsixth.org/partner](http://www.betterenglishonsixth.org/partner)

### Women In the Church The Year in Review

Debbie Mellott

This past year, the WIC council made the decision to dispense with traditional monthly WIC meetings. The council determined that the main functions of the WIC meetings were being fulfilled in other venues, such as Bible studies and other small group meetings. It was the hope of the council that this change would allow the women of the church to give their attention to committee work, which serves our church body in so many ways, and would also free up more women to attend the frequent bridal and baby showers of our body.

Four main WIC events were retained: the fall kick-off dinner in September, the annual Ladies' retreat at Seabrook, the Christmas Brunch, and a spring event (which this year took the form of a Bunko Party). These WIC hallmarks serve to deepen fellowship among the ladies of our congregation.

Over the summer, the WIC council is seeking to fill the vacant secretary and treasurer positions and make plans for the coming year. The format for the coming year will likely be similar to last year.

## June (or nearly)–The Season of Graduation and Weddings

Covenant High School held its 23rd Commencement on May 29, 2015. The stunning sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church once again set a serious and ceremonious tone for the annual proceedings. The 19 graduates are heading off any various directions (work or college), in a variety of places (from as near as Tacoma Community College and far as Covenant College and the University of Texas at Dallas). Of the 17 eligible students, 9 (or 53%) earned Washington State Honors Awards, finishing in the top 10% of college-bound Washington seniors. Following Commencement custom, Salutatorian Andrea Ueland gave the speech reviewing the last 4 years at Covenant, reminiscing about the delights of math, reading, writing, and more. Matthew Pfefferle gave the valedictory, admonishing his fellow graduates to live their lives not as their own, but as God's, enjoying the trials to come, that they might generate perseverance. State Senator Steve O'Ban (R-Tacoma) commissioned the new graduates, challenging them to embrace humility by putting Christ first in their thoughts and deeds toward others. Congratulations, Graduates!

Katie McCoy wed Zach Raines on June 20 at Faith Presbyterian Church. The couple met at Red Robin in Chattanooga. The Raines honeymooned in the Dominican Republic--staying in a treehouse and taking day trips, and loving it. Mr. and Mrs. Raines are living in Tacoma and attending Faith.

Jake Pappuleas married Rachel Kinkella May 27 at First Presbyterian in Tacoma. The couple met at a Boy Scout Christmas Gathering in 2012, while Jake was a volunteer leader for a troop of which Rachel's younger brother was a member. They honeymooned in Hawaii, from which they returned to live in Puyallup, where they attend Resurrection Presbyterian Church. Rachel is a recent graduate from PLU with a B.S. in Mathematics and is studying to take her first actuarial exams at the end of the year. Jake currently works as an Aircraft Mechanic in Renton, WA and a volunteer Firefighter for Brown's Point/Dash Point Fire Dept.

## Presbos Go Bonkers for Bunko

Sandy Milton

Saturday, April 25, approximately forty women gathered at FPC for the first ever Women In the Church (WIC) Bunko Night. Thanks to the vision and patience of the WIC council, the women had the opportunity to learn the fast-paced game of Bunko while enjoying fellowship, tasty appetizers and refreshing beverages.

For the uninitiated, Bunko is a dice game with constantly changing partners. One achieves a "Bunko" by rolling the same number with all three dice...but the desired number constantly changes! Winning requires speed and skill...well, maybe not so much skill. And since we're Presbos, luck isn't at play either, leaving us to deduce that God's providence is manifest in the winner. And on this occasion, His providence was seen most fully in Connie Pfefferle's life, as she earned the most points. Most Enthusiastic Player award went to Crystal Comis, while Kris Pappuleas received the distinction of 1----. Well, let's just say that God's providence was least evident in her score.

No matter one's score, all came away a winner, having enjoyed an opportunity to see old friends, meet new women and have an outlet for one's competitive spirit with sisters in Christ.

Thank you, WIC council.

## Calendar

Sept 2 - Covenant High School Begins  
Sept 24–25 - Pacific Northwest Presbytery Meets at  
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Vancouver WA  
Oct 23–24 - Men's Night of Prayer  
Oct 25 - Reformation Sunday  
Nov 26 - Thanksgiving Worship Service  
Nov 29 - First Sunday in Advent  
Dec 12 - Rachael Gary & Nate Shelden Wedding  
Dec 24 - Candlelight Services

## New Members

Chris & Beth Rankin, Chris transfer from Pilgrim  
Orthodox Presbyterian, Bangor ME & Beth  
reaffirmation, 4/26  
Noel Lee, child profession, 5/3  
John & Christina Pulliam, transfer from Second  
Reformed Presbyterian, Indianapolis IN, 5/18  
Roger Hurlbut, reaffirmation, 6/28

## Baptisms

Presley Pappuleas, 5/3  
Hannah Bellarts, 5/10

## Deletions

Ben Sulser, to Clearnote Church,  
Bloomington, IN, 4/24