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The Healthy Pastor's Platter

Eight Habits for Healthy Church Leaders

Some time ago, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) replaced the food pyramid with a "Choose my plate" pictorial example of good food groups to remind us of a healthy daily diet. I would like to also suggest eight weekly habits for a healthy Pastor's Platter. They are:

God Time: Time spent in Bible reading, prayer and silent meditation.

Focus Time: Time focused on the important tasks of the week.

Reading Time: Time set aside for intentional reading, e.g., fiction or non-fiction, devotional, self-improvement, etc.

Mind Time: Time to focus on "breathing" and meditation using mindfulness exercises.

Journal Time: Time to journal about the life experiences, e.g., gratitude journal, sermon journal, work journal, family journal, etc.

Family and friends Time: Time used to connect with people (ideally in person) and

especially with people we like and who are positive about life.

Sleep Time: Time when we give our bodies and our brains a rest.

Exercise Time: Time when we move our bodies (aerobically, if possible).

How we use our time is important but it is OUR TIME and it is up to us to manage it. Some pastors abuse their time or they allow others to abuse it and dictate how their time is going to be used. In my opinion, pastors cannot have a long pastorate unless they realize how important "time" is to be used in order to be healthy.

In fact, to be a healthy pastor, all of the above time elements need to appear in a pastor's week. They need to be scheduled and they need to be held sacrosanct. Amen.

Don Booz

District Executive Minister



THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Co-editors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever – www.TheParishPaper.com

December 2012 - Volume 20, Number 12

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How to Use Our Five Senses to Experience the Wonder of Advent

Advent is a season of the senses. Scents of pine, bayberry, and Christmas cookies ready to taste fill the air. Everywhere you go, carols waft to your ears. The feel of wrapping paper and sticky tape touch our fingers. We “ooh” at the sight of outdoor lighting displays or behold the beauty of a simply decorated tree. This is also true in our church buildings and services—though many times we don’t recognize the senses for the spiritually teachable moments that they hold. Advent can be a time to help worshipers be present to life and to God in new ways. We all desire authentic spiritual experiences with God, but the trouble is that most of our teaching comes by way of sermons, books, Bible studies, and other spiritual resources. These all instruct our *thinking* but often miss our *souls*, the prime place of divine encounter.

Using the Whole Brain to Experience God

Advent gives us an opportunity to engage both sides of our brain, with all five senses and our bodies, to more fully experience God. When we’re fully present—body, mind, and soul—we learn how to cultivate an experiential faith that is attentive to a self-disclosing God.

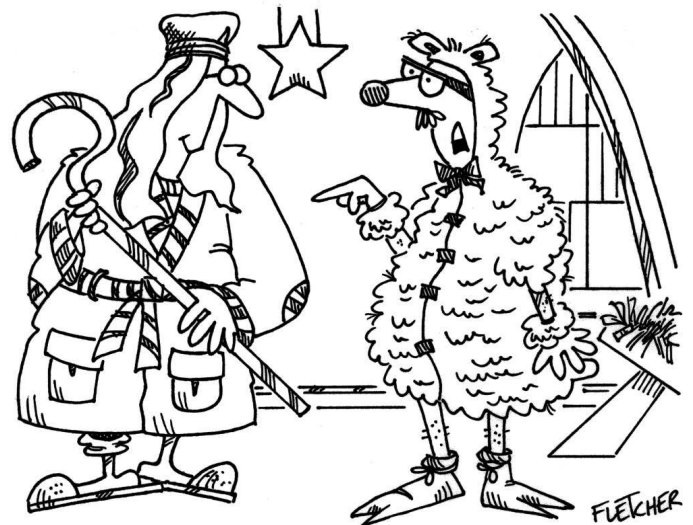
The role of the left brain. Words are the primary form of communication that we use to nurture our spiritual lives. Words are the language of the left brain, which is the logical and concrete center of our thinking that uses words to understand and interpret experiences. However, the left brain cannot experience God or anything else. The right brain does the *experiencing*. The left brain then takes *meaning* from the experiences processed by our right brain. Planning Advent worship experiences that involve the whole brain helps make faith more than an intellectual exercise for your congregants.

The role of the right brain. This creative and intuitive center of our brain communicates through images, not words. Images are anything that you en-

vision through one or more of your senses. For instance, when you *smell* the scent of pine and think “Hanging of the Greens,” you have just utilized your right brain through your sense of smell. When you listen to “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” and it brings to mind the image of heavenly choirs, you have *heard* the sound and processed it using the right side of your brain.

Because the right brain does our experiencing, sensory spiritual practices that involve the right brain open us to a heightened perception and experience of God. Such exercises position our heart for divine encounter. However, we need both sides of our brain in order to live and grow as a person of faith. In fact, neither side can do its job well without the other.

The role of all five senses. Since our lives are led mostly through the act of thinking, we often become divorced from our souls and bodies. Using our senses helps us to live in the present. This is important because the present is the only place that we can fully experience God. Advent is a wonderful time to



FOR THE LAST TIME, HAROLD...
ENGAGING MY PHYSICAL SENSES IN WORSHIP
DURING ADVENT DOES NOT INCLUDE
BEING POKED BY A SHEPHERD'S STAFF!

practice using our senses so that we can experience God in the reality of the present moment.

Scripture is filled with dozens of references to the physical senses. Many are familiar, such as Psalm 34:8: “O *taste* and *see* that the Lord is good” (KJV). And there is Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall *see* God” (KJV). These passages provide reminders about the importance of the often-forgotten art of linking senses to spirituality.

It is not difficult for us to recognize the pure, God-given sensory experiences of seeing a dramatic waterfall or smelling the delicate scent of a newborn child for the gifts that they are. Yet, we rarely think about our sensory experiences as windows into the life of the Spirit that can lead us to opportunities of experiencing God in fresh ways.

The body. Some faith traditions model how to involve the body in worship and prayer as a way to express one’s heart. And undeniably, when we involve our bodies in kinesthetic response, we reinforce what we are feeling, thinking, and doing. The actions involved in kneeling for prayer, lighting the Advent candle, singing carols, or walking to the altar for Christmas Eve communion strengthen our internal attitudes through outward expression.

Too often, however, we live mostly in our thoughts—making lists and checking them twice—and spend too little time listening to what our bodies are saying. Yet Christians throughout history have known that our bodies have much to teach us. During Advent, worshipers utilize not only their senses, but also their *bodies* to form a closer relationship with God.

Enhancing Worship through the Senses

Below are just a few ways that you can use sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch to help your congregation go deeper into their lives with God.

- Give every worshiper a piece of swaddling cloth. During the service, read the passage containing Luke 2:7 and encourage them to feel, smell, and listen to the cloth as they fold and unfold it.
- If you offer communion during Advent, before inviting congregants to participate ask them to prepare their bodies as well as their souls for the experience. Encourage them to take time to notice the tastes, textures, and scents involved in the experience of receiving communion.

- Set up a crèche at the entrance to your sanctuary. Place sticky-pads and pencils there. Invite congregants to pause there before entering for worship and imagine themselves in that scene. What do they smell? Taste? Feel? See? Hear? Have them take a sticky-note, write a word or two about it, and stick it on the wall around the crèche.

Beyond these options, take some time to think of the ways that your church traditionally celebrates Advent: lighting an Advent candle, hanging an Advent wreath, performing a Christmas cantata, presenting a Christmas play, or having a candlelight worship service. Which of them could you use to involve the physical senses and help link the right and left brain? Are there fresh ways to utilize your congregation’s Advent celebration to engage your members’ senses, bodies, and (entire) brains?

The Bottom Line

When we combine our whole brains and bodies in attention and love, we move to a new level of noticing. We get a deep, clear look at God everywhere around us. Encourage your congregation to slow their breathing, quiet their minds, and calm their hearts during this busy season. Then invite them to take a fresh look with attention *and* love.

Ask them to involve themselves in self-reflection as they consider:

- What do I see?
- What do I smell?
- What do I hear?
- What do I taste?
- What do I feel?
- When did I catch a glimpse, whiff, touch, taste, or sound of the Divine?

By inviting them to engage their senses in ways like this, you will help awaken them to the wonder of God all around them—a joyous, sensuous, spiritual awakening at Advent!

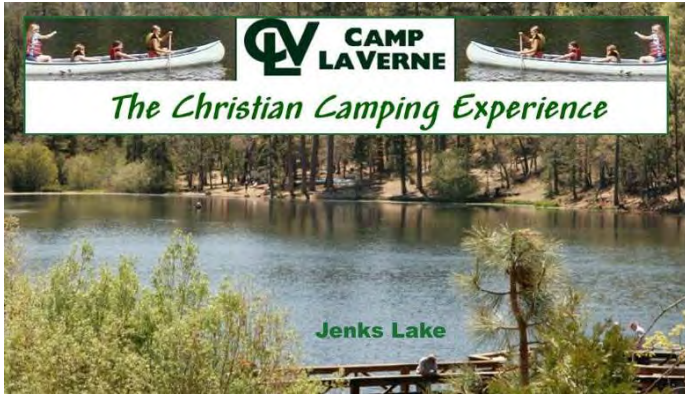
This article was adapted from *Awaken Your Senses: Exercises for Exploring the Wonder of God* (IVP, 2012) by J. Brent Bill and Beth A. Booram.1, 1999), 84.

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Content from: www.pswdcob.org/youth/camps



Camp La Verne

6,900 feet above San Bernardino, CA
 Contact Linda Costello & Peter Harrington
 909-524-8581 or 909-524-8438
www.camplaverne.org

Schedule

- February 2, 2013 – Annual Banquet
- February 16-18, 2013 – Winter Youth Camp
- July 7-13, 2013 – Sr High Camp (grades 9-12)
- July 21-27, 2013 – Jr High Camp (grades 6-8)
- July 28-Aug. 3, 2013 – Junior Camp (grades 3-5)



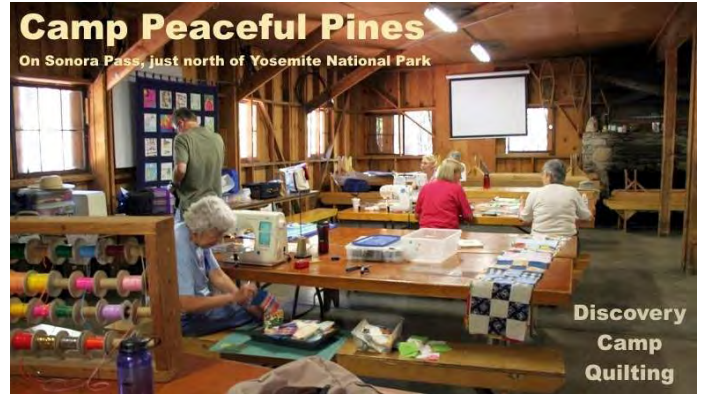
Courtesy of Church of the Brethren, Inc., photo by Glenn Riegel

Events Nationwide

Nationally sponsored Workcamps: 26 choices!
www.brethren.org/workcamps

Young Adult

- May 25-27, 2013 – National Young Adult Conference
- June 15-17, 2013 – Men's Retreat Camp, Sierras, CA
- July 4-7, 2013 – Women's Retreat Camp, Sierras, CA
- July 21-27, 2013 – Song & Story Fest
- June 29-July 3 – Annual Conference, Charlotte, NC
- July 26-31, 2013 – Discovery Camp, Sierras, CA
- November 8-10, 2013 – District Conference, Scottsdale, AZ



Camp Peaceful Pines

6,500 feet on Sonora Pass in the Sierras
 Contact Garry Pearson for information
 530-758-0474
www.camppeacefulpines.org

Schedule

- June 1-2, 2013 – Opening of camp
- June 14-16, 2013 – Men's Retreat Camp
- July 4-7, 2013 – Women's Retreat Camp
- July 14-19, 2013 – (to run concurrently)
 Junior Camp – Jr High Camp – Youth Camp
- July 19-26, 2013 – Family Camp
- July 26-31, 2013 – Discovery Camp
- August 10-11, 2013 – Beginners Camp
- August 16-18, 2013 – Married Couples Weekend

Events Nationwide

Nationally sponsored Workcamps: 26 choices!
www.brethren.org/workcamps

Youth

- March 23-28, 2013 – Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS)
- May 5, 2013 – National Youth Sunday
- June 29-July 3 – Annual Conference, Charlotte, NC
- July 22-28, 2013 – AZ Youth Workcamp, Peoria
- August 5-11, 2013 – CA Youth Workcamp, Los Angeles
- November 8-10, 2013 – District Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

Junior High

- June 14-16, 2013 – National Jr High Conference, PA
www.brethren.org/njhc
- November 3, 2013 – National Jr. High Sunday
- November 8-10, 2013 – District Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

Continuing the work of Jesus.
 Peacefully. Simply. Together.

PSWD Youth . . .

Dawna Welch, PSWD Youth Advisor
Youth@pswdcob.org



District Conference Youth Event

Twenty-seven youth, grades 6-12, joined together with the youth cabinet's own scriptural emphasis for the weekend: "So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:5 Being one body really came home to us when we joined the business session. District Executive Don Booz called the six cabinet members to the front and led them in a service of commitment to their coming year of service. The entire business session responded with a covenant to uphold the cabinet and youth with prayer and support.

Youth at District Conference beach trip

photos by Dana Roy



Becky Ullom, National Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Church of the Brethren, shared with us in the morning. We learned about opportunities to participate in programs throughout the year, including the National Junior High Conference in June that Dawna is helping to plan and will be attending!

Pelican in the midst of the game.



Beach Afternoon

We packed ourselves in tight for a bus ride through metropolitan Los Angeles toward our destination; Huntington Beach! Cold and wind could not dampen our spirits! We had a picnic



About to leave on the bus trip during District Conference.

lunch, prayed and sang songs around a bon fire, played games on the beach and a brave few even ventured into the frigid pacific ocean! It is good to be a part of the body of Christ that binds us together.

Coming Soon

The Youth Cabinet will be looking at opportunities to gather together in the early Spring so stay tuned . . .

Make sure the youth of your congregation (and their friends) make plans to see one another at camps and district activities throughout the year!

Questions? Call or email Dawna Welch
 909-267-5477 youth@pswdcob.org



left- Barbara Brandt, right- Pauline Fillmore

Live Oak: Quilts for Kids in Crisis

"Quilts for Kids in Crisis" was first established in 2000 by Anne Deis, Leta Carr and friends. In 2005 the quilt project moved to the Live Oak Church of the Brethren, whose members have been involved ever since. They provide child-sized quilts to law enforcement, fire department, and other local agencies to provide warmth and comfort to children during situations of need.

Most of the material for the quilts is donated, but there are expenses for batting and additional material. The proceeds from bottle and can recycling help. This year the church's *Alternative Holiday Faire* brought in donations that will really help during the coming year. In 2012 a total of 55 quilts have been prepared and 40 of them have been distributed.

District Conference Business Summary

Positions elected on 11/10/2012 for 2012 / 2013

- Moderator-Elect
 - Erin Matteson (Modesto)
- Clerk
 - Karen Cosner (Modesto)
- Nominating Committee
 - Karen Walters (Papago Buttes)
- Program Committee, District Conference
 - Tom Hostetler (La Verne)
 - Deb Merrifield-Carothers (Circle of Peace)
 - Kirsten Storne-Piazza (Live Oak)
- District Board of Administration
- At-Large
 - Stephanie Acker (Pasadena)
 - Brenda Dickson (South Bay)
 - John Gingrich (La Verne)
- Arizona Representation
 - Mauricio Marco Iacueli Quiroga (Circle of Peace)
- Central California Representation
 - Karen Brandt Pierson (Church of the Living Savior)
- Youth & Young Adult Representatives
 - Robert Burke (Bakersfield)
 - Paige Butzlaff (La Verne)
 - Sarah Henrichs (Circle of Peace)
- Brethren Hillcrest Homes Board Nominees
 - Roger Hanawalt (La Verne)
 - Karin Nelson (La Verne)



2012 Energy Oscars

Our **Modesto** and **La Verne** congregations were highlighted in the December 14 CoB "Called to Witness." Read all the details on the web:

www.brethren.org/advocacy/updates/2012-energy-oscar.html

California Interfaith Power and Light (CIPL), a state chapter of the national interreligious organization Interfaith Power and Light, nominated the Church of the Brethren congregations in La Verne and Modesto for a 2012 Energy Oscar. Out of four categories, the Modesto congregation was nominated for the Green Building category and La Verne was nominated for the Energy Efficiency category.

Copies of these items are available at:

www.pswdcob.org/distconf

Complete Business Book, 2012

Large PDF File with 70 pages

Minutes of Prior Year, 2011

Delegates approved the prior minutes.

Ministry Investment Plan 2013

Delegates passed the Ministry Investment Plan.

By-Laws Change

Delegates passed both changes:

Nominating Committee Proposal

District Conference Program Committee Proposal

District Constitution, 2012 ed.

Resolution: Church Planting

Delegates approved the Resolution: Church Planting

Q&A: Church Planting

Resolution: Church Revitalization

Delegates adopted the Resolution: Church Revitalization

Q&A: Church Revitalization

Sample Pages: Diagnostic Manual

2013 IRS Mileage

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2013, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- ◆ 56.5 cents per mile for business miles driven.
- ◆ 24 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes.
- ◆ 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations.

Year End Giving

For donations to be credited to the 2012 tax year, checks must be written and the envelope postmarked before 12/31/2012.

Web donations can also be made before year end at: www.pswdcob.org/donate

Thank you for your financial support of the programs you read about in *New Life*, and enjoy in your local congregation.

Pacific Southwest District 2013 Prayer Calendar

www.pswdcob.org/events/prayer-calendar (The web page has links to additional content)

Congregations are encouraged to invite people to pray for those listed, beginning on Sunday and continuing through the next week. One way to encourage use of this calendar is to list the item in each Sunday bulletin and in church newsletters.

January

- January 6 – District Board, Program Committee,
Stewards, Ministry (January 11-12)
- January 13 – Search process: Congregations & Pastors
- January 20 – Ministry Commission and our
Licensed Ministers in training
- January 27 – Glendora Church

February

- February 3 – PSWD Youth Cabinet meeting
- February 10 – Church of the Living Savior (McFarland)
- February 17 – NACC: Credentialing Interviews (Feb 22-23)
- February 24 – Camp La Verne Winter Camp

March

- March 3 – Circle of Peace Church (Peoria, AZ)
- March 10 – Cornerstone Community Church (Reedley)
- March 17 – GRC: Grant Review Committee
- March 24 – Christian Citizenship Seminar (March 23-28)
- March 31 – Glendale Church

April

- April 7 – Hillcrest and Casa de Modesto
- April 14 – District Board Meeting (April 19-20)
- April 21 – Iglesia de Cristo Sion (Church Plant in
Pomona)
- April 28 – Empire Church

May

- May 5 – Iglesia de Cristo Genesis (South Central LA)
- May 12 – PSWD Pastors Retreat, Malibu, CA
(May 13-16)
- May 19 – Bakersfield Church
- May 26 – YAC: Young Adult Conference (May 25-27)

June

- June 2 – District Camps & Campers
(Camp La Verne and Peaceful Pines)
- June 9 – National Jr High Event (June 14-16)
- June 16 – CPP District Men's Retreat (June 14-16)
- June 23 – Imperial Heights Church (South Central LA)
- June 30 – Annual Conference (June 29-July 3)
meeting in Charlotte, NC

July

- July 7 – CPP District Women's Retreat (July 4-7)
- July 14 – La Verne Church
- July 21 – National Youth Workcamp: Peoria, AZ
(July 22-28)
- July 28 – New Harvest Community Fellowship
(Lindsay)

August

- August 4 – District Board Meeting (August 2-3)
- August 11 – National Youth Workcamp: Los Angeles, CA
(August 5-11)
- August 18 – Laton
- August 25 – Modesto Church

September

- September 1 – NOAC: National Older Adult Conference
(September 2-6)
- September 8 – Papago Buttes Church (Scottsdale, AZ)
- September 15 – Pasadena Church
- September 22 – Paradise Church
- September 29 – Pomona Fellowship Church

October

- October 6 – Prince of Peace Church (Sacramento)
- October 13 – Mission and Ministry Board &
National Church of the Brethren Ministries
- October 20 – Príncipe de Paz Church of the Brethren
(Santa Ana)
- October 27 – District Staff and District Conference
preparations

November

- November 3 – PSWD All Ministers Workshop
(November 7-8) Scottsdale, AZ
- November 10 – District Conference
(November 8-10) Scottsdale, AZ
- November 17 – University of La Verne
- November 24 – Restoration Los Angeles (East LA)

December

- December 1 – San Diego First Church
- December 8 – South Bay Church (Redondo Beach)
- December 15 – Tucson Church
- December 22 – Waterford Church
- December 29 – The Precious Gift of Jesus!

New Life

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Christmas Comes

Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.
The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem
or in Times Square,
for Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way
to Jerusalem—
determinedly, inevitably. . . .
Even now it comes
in the face of hatred and warring—
no atrocity too terrible to stop it,
no Herod strong enough,
no hurt deep enough,
no curse shocking enough,
no disaster shattering enough.
For someone on earth will see the star,
someone will hear the angel voices,
someone will run to Bethlehem,
someone will know peace and goodwill:
the Christ will be born!

—Ann Weems
From Kneeling in Jerusalem

May God fill your life with Hope, Peace and Joy!
Don Booz, Dawna Welch, Joe Vecchio, Brenda Perez