

Church in the Forest

at Erdman Chapel, Stevenson School • 3152 Forest Lake Road
P. O. Box 1027 • Pebble Beach, CA 93953 • 831.624.1374
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Monday morning, October 15, 2018

Dear Friends,

As we come to the final two weeks of our sermon series on suffering and faith, it's time to ask a basic question: where do we place suffering in our lives—in a “negative” or a “positive” column?

For thousands of years our Christian faith has been ambivalent about suffering. Yes, it was held, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, suffered on the cross for us, and that was positive. But, God did not suffer—that would be negative! Traditional theology insisted that God could not suffer. A perfect being, God, would not suffer. And so suffering was placed in a “negative” column—part of a fallen and deformed world of material things that change and die. Life in the “positive” column was unchanging, undying, without passion, pure reason, all-powerful.

But, beginning in the 20th century, theologians have rethought suffering. One of the most striking developments in contemporary theology has been a new understanding that God, because he is perfect, does suffer. A perfect God would suffer when his people abandon and forget him, when they reject his wise guidance, when they misuse his creation. A perfect God would suffer when his son, Jesus Christ, dies on the cross. A perfect God would suffer when his beloved children suffer.

But God's suffering isn't the only new idea. Related to this is, “empathy.” God is now envisioned as “Divine Empathy,” a very present energy that feels our pain, hearkens to our cries and carries us when we falter. As empathetic energy, God is powerful. God is not unchanging, unfeeling, passionless pure reason.

Those two columns of “positive” and “negative” are getting scrambled in theology. Should we also rethink them in our lives? Can a good life—even a perfect life—include suffering? What have you experienced? This Sunday we'll think about these questions.

See you then,



The Reverend Joanne M. Swenson, Th.D.

Calendar

Sunday October 21, 2018 — 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

8:30 AM Bible Study in the Multipurpose Room led by the Reverend Ken Feske. Topic: Mark 15:1–39

9:15 AM Chapel Concertino **9:30 AM Morning Prayer**

Passages Hebrews 4: 14–16; Psalm 145; Mark 15 (Selected Verses)

Lector Dennis Riley **Crucifer** Rae Janzen

Fellowship Ruth Horn

Flowers Bob and Cynthia Perry

Ushers Wim and Tonneke van der Linden

Altar Care Martha Jordan, Linda Hanel, Linda Mackie, Ruth Horn

Sermon The Reverend Joanne M. Swenson, Th.D.

Title Fall Sermon Series: *Everything Happens for a Reason?*

This Sunday: “*Suffering: Positive or Negative?*”

Our new on-line Church Directory is coming; photographs will be taken October 22–25 at CitF. Sign up now! Or send us a photo to use if you are out of town. Contact Mia Jarick at (831) 917-3202 or miajarick1@yahoo.com.

A celebration of the life of **Nadya Giusi** will be held on this **Saturday, October 20, at 11:am** at CitF. Our prayers are with the family

Want to get more out of our fall sermon series book, [*Everything Happens for a Reason \(And Other Lies I've Loved\)*](#). Want to connect with others on the questions posed by illness and disability? Please join us on Thursdays, for one or all three meetings of this short-term small group: **October 25 and November 8. The meetings will be 5:45–6:45 PM**, at Lynn Goree's house: 549 Hillcrest Ave., PG. Your RSVP's will help our planning: please contact our office (terri@churchintheforest.org) or Joanne (joanne@churchintheforest.org).

PLEASE NOTE: New Sunday Worship Times

We will start with the “fall back” time change on **Sunday, November 4**

Concertino **9:45 AM** and Worship **10:00 AM**

Rejoice, O Sleepy Heads!

SMALL GROUPS: *These are gatherings where CitF members and friends can explore faith and deepen fellowship.*

- The *Small Group Bible Study* is held **each Sunday at 8:30 AM** in the Multipurpose Room where the topic is the sermon Bible lesson of the day.
- The *Men's Small Group Bible Study* gathers **October 18, 10–11:30 am** in the Multipurpose Room, studying the life of King David (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings) with inspiration from the Eugene Peterson book, “Leap Over a Wall.”
 - *Women's Bible Study*, **October 25, 10:30 am–12:00**, at the Beach and Tennis Club, studying “Women of the New Testament.” Always free and all women are welcome!
- *Sisters in the Forest* gathers on **October 18, 12 noon–1:15 pm** at Linda Mackie's home, 3110 Bird Rock Rd., Pebble Beach. All women welcome!

Music Box

OCTOBER 21, 2018

Melinda Coffey Armstead, piano & organ

CHAPEL CONCERTINO

- Partita in C MinorJ. S. Bach (1685-1750)
 - Allemande
 - Sarabande
 - Corrente
 - Rondeau
- Prelude in B-flat Op. 28 No. 21 Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)
- Fugue in C..... G. F. Handel (1685-1759)

Autumn

The leaves fall, fall as from far,
Like distant gardens withered in the heavens;
They fall with slow and lingering descent.

And in the nights the heavy Earth, too, falls
From out the stars into the Solitude.

Thus all doth fall. This hand of mine must fall
And lo! the other one:—it is the law.
But there is One who holds this falling
Infinitely softly in His hands.

— *Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)*

SAVE THE DATE: November 4 at 3:30 pm for an extraordinary musical event. **Paul Wilmot**, pianist and organist, will perform works of Chopin and Bach at Church in the Forest. General admission \$20, one performance only.

Melinda Coffey Armstead



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