

**NEW VISION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
1600 Mangrove Avenue, Suite 177  
Chico, California 95926  
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11:00 -- Sunday Celebration Worship**

**“There Is Never Enough Time for Everything”**

November 1, 2015

Preached by: Jim Peck, Pastor

Scripture Readings: Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 22

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Will you pray with me? Guide us, O Lord, by your Word and Holy Spirit that we will continue steadfast in the living of our faith. Amen.

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You’ve heard the term “bucket list” I’m sure. It’s a list you make of things you want to do before you die. Some people make them, some people don’t. I actually made one when I was ten, before the term became popular.

It included visiting every state capital - I have only 6 left. It included attending the Summer Olympic Games -- check, 1996, Atlanta, which was all the more amazing because it was in my hometown. It includes attending the Winter Olympic Games - still to do.

Do I go in 2018 to PyeongChang in South Korea, or do I wait until 2022 and go to Beijing, which makes no sense to host the Winter Olympics since neither Beijing nor the mountains where the skiing events will be held has reliable snow, but after Oslo, Norway withdrew leaving only Beijing and Almaty, Kazakhstan, the International Olympic Committee decided to go with a place they knew from Beijing having hosted the 2008 Summer games, making Beijing the first city to host both the winter and summer games, and, besides, China has more money to spend on these things than anyone else, so I just don’t know whether to plan for 2018 or wait until 2022.

The September 2015 Smithsonian magazine has an article called “21<sup>st</sup> Century Life List.” This article has “25 surprising new destinations to put on your bucket list.” I like “life list” rather than “bucket list.” There are only three that intrigue me: the Museum of Islamic Art in Dubai; stargazing at the Alma Telescope in the Atacama Desert in Chile; and Hang Son Doong, the world’s longest cave, in Vietnam.

The cave interests me largely because of its story. The entrance was discovered by accident in 1991 by a man searching for aloe to harvest to sell to perfume makers. Then he forgot where it was. Every time he went to look for it, he didn’t find it. People in the town began to make fun of him. Nearly 20 years later, a team of British cavers hired him and they found it. It must be thousands and thousands and thousands of years old, but was undiscovered, unexplored, until 2001.

The highest ceilings are more than 600 feet. The widest expanse are more than 450 feet. There is an underground river, and in an area where the ceiling collapsed, an underground jungle is growing. More people have summited Mt. Everest than have visited Hang Son Doong. Now that's a story!

But, truth is, I probably won't get to any of these places. It takes money and time to explore a cave in Vietnam, and I'm short on both.

Still, the beautiful wisdom book Ecclesiastes says there is a right time for everything, and a time for every purpose under heaven. Maybe even a time to explore and a time to stay put.

Time fascinates me. There are three natural measures of time, all based on repeating cycles of observable phenomena. Days are measured by the appearance and reappearance of the sun. Months are measured by the phases of the moon. Years are measured by the seasons which are caused by the relationship of the sun to the earth as the sun moves through the sky.

We know, of course, it is the earth moving round the sun through space that changes the relationship of the earth to the sun. It doesn't appear that way to us. It was a great shock to humanity when we learned we are not the center of the universe.

All other measures of time - hours, minutes, seconds, weeks, decades, centuries, eons, eras - are human attempts to give order to our lives. The Greek word for this kind of time is kronos - chronological - time.

In Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thought, time is linear. There is a definite beginning to all things and an end to all things. The beginning and end are in God's hands, not ours. We base our thought primarily on our observation of human life, which has a definite beginning and a definite ending. It does not appear to us that anyone ever comes back as a distinct individual. Although we certainly recognize that people live on in their descendants and in our memories.

And, from observing human and natural life, we recognize another kind of time, time measured not by the clock or the calendar. Measured, rather, by moments of meaning. The Greek word for this kind of time is kairos - blessed - time. We often say it is God's time.

Sure, the hospital records the date and time of the birth - kronos - while mom and dad and baby look at each other and say "Oh my goodness, look what just happened!" Sure, the diploma has the date of the graduation on it, but the new graduate holds it and says "Oh my goodness, look what just happened!" Sure, the marriage license has the date of the wedding, but the gathered family and friends look at the newlyweds and say "Oh my goodness, look what just happened!"

Sure, the job offer has the starting date on it, but the new employee will hold that first paycheck and say "Oh my goodness, look what just happened!" Depending on the job, the employee might say "You mean, that's all!?" Getting my first paycheck was kind of a rush, though, a validation of my capacity to contribute to the world.

And, yes, the stone in the ground or the plaque on the urn will have the date our loved one went into God's eternal care. And we will gaze at it, and remember who they were, what they

did, and, most importantly, what they meant in our lives. Oh. My. Goodness. Look at the blessing that happened to us. Why, wasn't it just yesterday we first met?

Kronos time can be measured and recorded. According to some studies, our sense of the present lasts only 8 seconds. Now becomes the past very quickly, and the future becomes the now equally as quickly. Kronos time comes and goes.

Kairos time, blessed time, God's time, is not so fleeting. Kairos time comes to rest in our lives, and moves along with us. Indeed, one of the characteristics of kairos time is that in those moments of blessing, in those moments of God being so close, so close, we lose all sense of time. Kairos time doesn't keep a schedule. Kairos time interrupts kronos time.

The poet says the ever-rolling stream of kronos time soon bears us all away, and that is true. If we ever feel like a speck in the universe, an instant in the timeline of creation, it's because we are!

We are not a speck in the eyes of God. We are not an instant in the timeline of blessing. We are unique, each contributing to the work of God. We are kairos people, blessed by God to bless those around us.

If kronos time bears us away, kairos time bears us up, carries us forward, moves us deeper into life's meaning. The Teacher in Ecclesiastes says our lives are not all toil and futility. Our lives are drenched in the love of God, and empowered by the Spirit of God to bring kairos time into our world, which, as you know, needs a blessing every moment.

Today is All Saints Sunday on the church's calendar. Today, we spend some kronos time remembering the kairos people in our lives who have been carried away into God's eternal care. I have brought our church's charter to join us at the Communion table. Almost all of these kairos people have been carried away.

Here are the names of those who were carried away from this community of faith over the past year:

Bob Ropp  
Marge Windsor  
Jack Windsor  
Marge Fredenberg  
Lee Atkins  
Lee Bonneau

We rejoice and give thanks to God for these kairos people who now rest in God's eternal care.

Amen.

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