

# Go Tell It on the Mountain

Skyland Community Church

Rev Stephen Glauz-Todrank

July 2014 Newsletter

10:30 Sunday Service

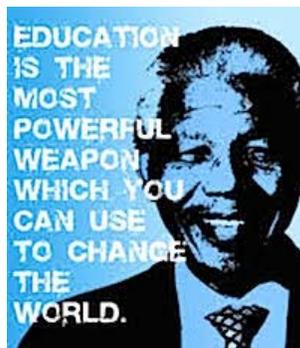
Church phone: 408-353-1310

## Meditation Moment



The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience.

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## ALP Library Helps Answer S. Africa Literacy Problem

We will ship our eighth ALP library to South Africa in early August. Angela Patterson and Shannon Edwards have been collecting donated books and used textbooks all spring from many sources, most notably from Loma Prieta and C.T. English schools. Thank you one and all!

Even though South Africa is the most developed country on the continent, it is a land of great educational and economic disparity, arguably caused by years of apartheid. For example, 65 percent of schoolchildren cannot read upon graduation from primary school; and 80 percent of these schools do not have libraries.



## [Minister's Column](#)

### [Letting Our Light Shine through IDEO](#)

Dear Friends,

I hope you are enjoying some summer fun! Please take a few moments as you read this newsletter to notice the article by our editor, Cliff Barney, about the group of five Skyland members who have been working since last fall with curriculum published by the design firm IDEO to help groups of people create new things.

I am excited about this project and hope it will lead us toward a church culture even more creative and open to new possibilities. I truly believe that God is still creating the world and doing some of that creating through us, so whenever we think up something or brainstorm new ideas or have a lively discussion or just ponder something in our hearts, we may be giving God a chance to step in and make something new happen.

So look around and see if something moves you to ask, "How might we ....?". If that happens, don't just keep that light under a bushel, but let it shine; and maybe we can get a group together to discover whatever God wants to create through us now.

Yet there is great hope there, due to their amazing leaders, including the late Nelson Mandela and his legacy of a new constitution and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

On July 20, the Mission Board will speak more about South Africa, and ask you to contribute to defray the shipping costs (\$500-\$750) to send our library. We will be collecting funds during July. If you would like to contribute, write a check to Skyland Church and write "ALP South Africa" in the memo line.

-- Anne Evans for the Mission Board  
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### Altar Flowers

Open Sundays for altar flowers are July 6, 13, 20, and 27. Please sign up in Whitaker Hall.



Giddy grasshopper  
Take care, do not leap  
and crush  
These pearls of dewdrop.  
-- Kobayashi Issa

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**Birth of an Idea**

Larry Cooke and I have been working on adapting the IDEO material for churches and other religious organizations to use. If you would like to work on a project with some others in the church and explore using this material, let us know.

-- Cheers, Stephen

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Photo by Anne Evans  
Mike Mahrle, Marcia Rollins, Kim Gautho, Jeremy Cole, and Jan Swayne report on the IDEO project at June 22 service.

## Skyland Group Incubates IDEO-based Plan for Community Service

Five Skyland Church members have been meeting regularly since last October to conduct formal discussions about how the church can better serve the spiritual needs of the mountain community. They are shaping their work using a process developed by IDEO, a Silicon Valley product design firm that has spun off a nonprofit arm that helps other nonprofits design their social programs.

Using the IDEO method, as modified by Stephen and Larry Cooke, the group has proceeded to identify those spiritual needs and suggest some ways in which they could be met. They are now about to design a prototype program for the church.

The Skylanders are Jeremy Cole, Kim Gautho, Mike Mahrle, Marcia Rollins, and Jan Swayne. They were asked to perform the task after Stephen noticed that the IDEO method resembled the process Larry had used in church meetings several years ago. These five members volunteered, or were chosen, according to their interest and as a diverse representative group of active church members.

*Kim Gautho provided this summary of how the IDEO group operated.*

1. Our first step was the interview process; here are a couple of the questions we asked of different people.

Some were church members, some were not, and they were from a variety of ages:

- \* What is most important to you at this stage of your life?
- \* Are there areas in your life that feel unfulfilled?
- \* In what ways are you connected with your community? Is it enough?

2. We broke down all our responses and organized them into patterns and themes, and then we came up with insight statements that seemed to summarize each theme.

So, for example, one grouping generated these two statements:

- \* Health becomes a bigger concern as we age.
- \* We should not go through grief and loss alone.

3. From these, we developed questions that started with "How might we...? For this example, "How might we support each other through life passages?"

4. Then we had a brainstorming session to generate many ideas for each of our "How might we?" questions. (these are on the big sheets of paper with many stickies now on display in Whitaker).

5. From the "life passages" theme, our favorite idea (as a group) was the first one presented in the accompanying story: "Have small group activities / speakers / discussion groups / classes on life transitions as a way to support each other."

We found it very difficult to whittle so many ideas into a few favorites. The displays in Whitaker give some idea of how the process went, and we're always ready to tell you more at coffee hour.

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So far the group has taken three of the steps IDEO prescribes: to become familiar with the process and with each other, to use the process to discover how community members feel about their lives on the mountain, and to form ideas expressing this research. The fourth step is the prototype.

The five agreed from the beginning that they would each attend every meeting; and they were able to keep this pledge for the entire period - though in one case, Kim had to make a virtual appearance via telephone. "We came to see each person's contribution as essential," Jan reports.

Stephen and Larry sat in on the meetings, but took no part except to clarify the process when the group needed help with it.

In the beginning not even the goal was understood the same way by everyone, and the group had to modify it. "I had no idea what we were doing," Jeremy confesses.

They began by gathering data, individually interviewing church members and others in the mountain community, of all ages, about their lives, feelings, and relations with each other. They organized the results into patterns and themes, which were brainstormed into ideas and suggested activities. (For an example of how this worked in practice, see Kim's sidebar at left, "The Birth of an Idea.")

These rough results are now visible as notes pinned to large sheets that are now on display in Whitaker Hall. The notes make up the record of organization and ideas; and these ideas in turn were summarized into suggested church activities, of which the group selected five favorites:

- \* Have small group activities/speakers/discussion groups or classes on life transitions as a way to support each other.
- \* Hire a youth leader or have kids lead a group activity as a means of teaching children about God and community.
- \* Have a whole church retreat in order to get to know each other better.
- \* Have an outdoor service in order to experience God through nature.
- \* Hold diversity training in order to better respect, accept\*, support, and welcome each other.

Next the group will pick one or two of these ideas for prototypes - models of how they might be carried out. These will be presented to the congregation, probably after Harvest Festival, in order to get feedback, which may provide different ideas.

The group will then refine the plans based on this feedback and bow itself out, turning the ideas over to the church for further refinement and implementation, Kim reports.

What happens then is up to the appropriate church boards and committees. In addition, Larry and Stephen will attempt to summarize what has been learned and to modify the workshop material for Skyland and the wider United Churches of Christ organization. Working with UCC is important to the program, Stephen says.

\* Originally "tolerate," but changed after the June 22 presentation.

-- CB

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## Financial Report for June 2014

NOTE from your treasurer:  
Nothing special to report this month.

Operating finances for June 2014 as of June 30

	Summary of Operating Finances			
	June 2014		Jun 1 to Jun 30, 2014	
	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned
Income	\$ 24,158	\$ 25,403	\$ 24,158	\$25,403
Expenses	\$ 19,955	\$ 19,958	\$ 19,955	\$19,958
Net	\$ 4,203	\$ 5,445	\$ 4,203	\$ 5,445

-- Gerald J. Alonzo

Skyland Community Church  
Web: <http://www.skylandchurch.com>  
Mail: P.O. Box 245, Los Gatos, CA 95031-0245