

# EARL PALMER MINISTRIES

1 Thessalonians 5:11

*Serving to Encourage and Build Up in Christian Faith*

## Summer/Fall 2017

### In Seattle/Western Washington

#### **The Kindlings Muse Podcast\***

(Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall, UW)

Sept. 18, Oct. 16, Nov. 20

#### **Theological Dialogue for Lay Teachers and Pastors**

Sept. 20, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 6

#### **C.S. Lewis Event**

*Storyteller: His Journey of Faith*

Ellensburg Presbyterian Church

Oct. 13 & 14

#### **C.S. Lewis Institute**

*Love and Obedience*

Meeting at University Presbyterian Church

Dec. 9

#### **Theological Seminar**

*EPM Presents: A Morning with Lewis and*

*Tolkien: Speaking to Our Generation*

University Presbyterian Church

Jan. 13 (2018)

8:30 a.m. to noon

### Around the Country

#### **Diocese of Florida/Bishop's Institute:**

*The Gospel of John*

Camp Weed, Live Oak, FL

Sept. 29 to Oct. 1

#### **The National Presbyterian Church Washington, D.C.**

Preaching at Morning Worship

Oct. 22

#### **First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley**

Berkeley, CA

Preaching at Morning Worship

Nov. 5

Email [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org)  
for more information

**I've been thinking...**Two Hebrew words show up in the Book of Psalms. One of those words, *Maskil*, in Hebrew "to discern meaning," appears at the opening of several Psalms as instruction to the reader to think about its meaning. The other word, *Selah*, which is untranslated, is used even more frequently. Because of Psalm 9, where it is attached to the word *Haga*, which we know to mean "meditate", we therefore wonder if the meaning of *Selah* is also an instruction to "meditate or ponder the meaning" of a sentence where *Selah* appears.

These two words lead us to believe that the poems in the Book of Psalms intend that we who read or hear them should seek understanding, and even ask questions about what is written. A Psalm is a teaching text as much as it is a musical song. The Psalms are remarkable; they are a mixture of praise poems, narratives of events under way, complaints, prayers, yearnings for God's help, songs of Thanksgiving, and, in a few instances, requests for vengeance. Psalm 51 is by a king who writes in personal brokenness as a result of his own treacherous arranged murder of a young officer in Israel's army who would have died for the king. The totally bad wrongfulness of this king is not hidden from our view when we hear David's grief and hope for God's forgiveness. "I know my transgressions, my sin is ever before me" (51:3).

We cannot miss the admiration of the Psalmists for the Holy Law of God. The most complete example of this is Psalm 119, an acrostic, serial poem of 176 verses. This Psalm traces the Hebrew alphabet, from *Aleph* through each letter to the last, *Tau*. Psalm 119 is idealistic and centers on two main themes: the first is praise for the Law of God as a light for our pathway; the second is the request of each poet for protection from foes who "lie in wait to destroy me" (Verse 95). Each of the poems follow the same pattern, except for the final *tau* song. Here, the writer prays to God: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek out your servant" (Verse 176). This poet asks for the Lord's rescue from his own lostness, not from the attacks against him by enemies or powers from outside who mean to do harm. The poet's crisis is his own wrongness. This poem is also a poem of inner honesty, like the third verse of David's Psalm 51. Each text raises the biggest question. As I read both Psalms, the *Maskil* and *Selah* for me is to wonder when and how help will happen for this crisis of inner brokenness that has nothing to do with punishing others who tempt and persecute.

We do not know from the Psalms how this ultimate finding and healing found in Psalm 119:176 and Psalm 51:3 are fulfilled. Almost 200 years after David wrote the Psalms, a prophet Isaiah will tell us how this biggest crisis is resolved and healed. It is by a suffering servant of the Lord: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Martin Luther chose Psalm 46 as the text for his hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". Psalm 46 hopes for peace that God will bring: "He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire" (Psalm 46:9). How and when will that happen? In 1707 Isaac Watts wrote his answer to that question: "When I survey the wondrous cross on which the young Prince of Glory died." The answer is a man, the man who broke the bow and shattered the spear. That shattered spear killed Jesus, but death could not hold him captive. It is this man Jesus who took on our human wrongness, even the cosmic evil of Satan, and the last of all earthly foes, death itself. Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the Psalms, all of them, even David's Psalms of complaint that ask for revenge against enemies. Jesus takes the place of those whom David wanted punished; even more, he takes on David's own wrongness. Because of this young prince, we can claim a treasure, David's best Psalm about the lord his Shepherd, Psalm 23: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

—Earl F. Palmer



The dynamic team of Mark DeVries, Kay Browleit, Mike Denham, and Earl in Princeton

## Meet EPM's newest board member, Alex Berezow



*Tell us a little bit about yourself, Alex.*

I'm originally from southern Illinois. I have a PhD in microbiology, but left academia to pursue a career as a science writer. I founded RealClearScience (part of the RealClearPolitics family of websites) in 2010 and worked there until 2016. Then, I

became the Senior Fellow of Biomedical Science at the American Council on Science and Health, a 501(c)(3) science education and consumer advocacy nonprofit.

*What is your connection to Earl and his ministry?*

My first visit to UPC was in 2007. I met with Earl one-to-one sometime thereafter, and he invited me to join Theological Dialogues, which he began after he retired from UPC. I've been in his circle ever since!

*What excites you about joining the Earl Palmer Ministries Board?*

It's exciting to be a part of EPM because I believe that Earl is one of the finest theologians and biblical apologists of our time. It's an honor to call such a brilliant and influential person a friend.

—Interview by Landon Bennett

## An Upcoming Reunion in Washington, D.C.

Earl has been invited to preach for Sunday Morning Worship Services on **October 22 at The National Presbyterian Church**. This event marks the 50th year of laying the cornerstone of the sanctuary. Earl served as Preaching Pastor-in-Residence from 2008 to 2010, and he looks forward to reconnecting with the congregation of this great church.

Holly Novak, Earl's administrative assistant during his time at NPC, has this to say about Earl's upcoming visit:

*National Presbyterian Church has had a special role in our nation's capital as a place where God is honored and the biblical truth of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and lived authentically. As Administrative Assistant to Earl while he was Preaching Pastor-in-Residence in 2008-2010, I appreciated his thoughtful leadership. Earl and Shirley consistently modeled how to live faithfully as Christ's disciples – and the positive impact this has on the world. Such humble, robust Christian faith is essential in a context of people serving in positions of political power and global influence on policy. We joyfully welcome Earl to preach at our 50th Anniversary celebration, with gratitude for his remarkable ministry legacy to our congregation and local community.*

—Holly Novak



Henry Chapel in The Highlands



Brian's mother, Marie Coon, and Earl in conversation at Word and Worship

## THROUGH THE YEARS WITH EARL

The May 25th Word and Worship concluded the Spring 2017 series, wrapping up a season filled with beautiful worship and powerful messages. We look forward to next year's titles. I asked Marie Coon this question.

*What keeps you coming back to Word and Worship?*

In addition to listening to my son, Brian, who is a part of the music team that leads in worship, I have returned to Word and Worship over and over again to hear Dr. Palmer speak. Though I belong to another church, I attended services at UPC when Dr. Earl Palmer was senior pastor. His sermons, always educational, made me come away with something more than I knew coming in. He gives me great comfort. Also, over the years, especially in this smaller, rustic environment, I have enjoyed informal conversations with him.

—Interview by Landon Bennett

## Mark Your Calendar Now!

**The Kindlings Muse Fall 2017 schedule has just been released!**

Join Dick Staub and Earl Palmer for an evening of teaching and discussion on a great work of literature. Kindlings Muse is held at the Walker-Ames Room in **Kane Hall at the University of Washington** from **7 to 8:30 p.m. No cost to attend. Register and more information at thekindlings.com.**

- September 18     **Alexander Hamilton: Patriot and Christian**  
*Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow
- October 16        **Explaining Her Faith: Joy Davidman** (wife of C.S. Lewis)  
*Smoke on the Mountain* by Joy Davidman
- November 20     **Christian Reflections on an Epic Story**  
*The Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien



Dick Staub and Earl dialogue with the audience

## A JOY TO TEACH ABOUT "THE JOY OF TEACHING AND PREACHING..."

Earl was grateful to be joined by Mark DeVries, Michael Denham, and Kay Browleit in Princeton, May 3-5, to encourage pastors and teachers in a thought-provoking seminar. The team offered a practical approach and strategic guidelines for expositional teaching/preaching and worship. Andrew Garbarino, a recent Harvard graduate who plans to enter Princeton Theological Seminary in the fall, had this to say about his experience as an attendee:

*Earl's wisdom shines through so clearly in his teaching. The seminar not only contained invaluable insights into how best to exegete key parts of Scripture, Earl shared his vision for how love for the scriptures, when it meets love for God's people, produces life-transforming results.*

**You can watch all sessions at [earlpalmer.org](http://earlpalmer.org)**



Earl welcomes Andrew Garbarino to Princeton Theological Seminary, the school that prepared him for ministry.

## A Special Event on November 5

Upon invitation on this Sunday, Earl will be honored in **Berkeley, California** with the words:

**By acclamation, the Session recognizes Earl Palmer as Pastor Emeritus of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley.**

It is at this church where his faith took hold while a student at the University of California and the place where he returned as Senior Pastor years later. Mary Anne Wight, Elder, writes, “*Earl was called to First Presbyterian Church, Berkeley in 1969 and grew and sustained a thriving ministry here into 1991. His teaching and preaching was so fresh and compelling that people took notes regularly and can quote him to this day.*”

*Earl has also had a vision for encouraging believers to ‘put their weight down’ by bringing the Gospel into areas of culture that we live in and areas that draw our compassion. He has been a great encourager and champion of educational start-ups in Berkeley - particularly New College Berkeley and Educational Resources and Referrals, China (ERRC). His unstinting commitment to these two ministries, started by First Pres congregation members, has been exceptional and vital to their continued work.*

*Earl is an example of his insistence that there is no theology of retirement in scripture. We celebrated his fifty years in ministry as he jogged on past that goal post, and now we salute him for sixty years and counting with great love, gratitude, and joy.”*

—Mary Ann Wight, Elder, FPCB

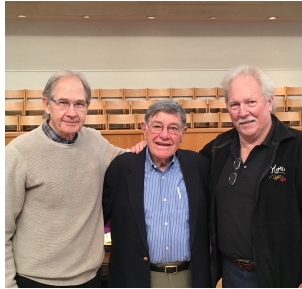
## An Adventure on the Sea

Earl was invited to speak on one of his favorite subjects - C.S.

Lewis - aboard the Sea Cloud II as the ship sailed from Honfleur, France to Dublin, Ireland in mid-June. While this was a private event hosted by a longtime friend, it was a fellowship of people who have walked together in faith over the years. Earl eagerly anticipated this lifetime adventure. The extra fun for him was that his daughter, Anne Palmer Welsh (pictured here with Earl), joined him. She knew Lewis well from listening to stories of Narnia read aloud, and on this occasion, she enjoyed hearing from one of her favorite people, Earl, as he brought the life and writing of Lewis to bear on the world we live in today. I looked forward to their return and to tales of sailing on the brisk waters of the Irish Sea where they put foot on the land where Lewis was born. —Shirley Palmer



Earl teaching with enthusiasm and pictured with friends Tom Elson, acting pastor of First Pres, Berkeley, and David Gill, co-founder of New College Berkeley and retired professor from Gordon-Conwell Seminary.



## A Record Turnout for a Day of Study in the Psalms

On April 22nd Earl was joined by about 175 people at New College Berkeley for a day of teaching on the Psalms, illustrating their deep connection with the person of Jesus. An attendee, Sharon Gallagher, reflects on her experience:

*This year Earl took us on a deep exploration of the Psalms, weaving the longing, expectation, and problems expressed by the Psalmist with the answers that are finally found in Jesus.*

*It was a very creative approach with Earl bringing the questions and answers together in ways that gave fresh insights into both the Psalms and the life and teachings of Jesus.*

**You can listen to all four sessions from this event at [earlpalmer.org](http://earlpalmer.org)**

## A Return Visit: The Bishop's Weekend

In the early fall, Earl will travel to Florida for a three day retreat with the Episcopal Diocese of Florida. **What:** He will offer an Expositional Journey through the Gospel of John. **When:** September 29th to October 1st **Where:** Camp Weed, Live Oak, Florida

**How to Register:** <http://www.campweed.org/calendar/calendar-of-events/the-book-of-john.aspx>



## On the Road with EPM ...

I had a great time at Princeton Theological Seminary with Earl on our final trip together. While there, I was able to connect with a vast array of pastors attending the conference. They were a passionate, gifted group of people. In observing these pastors interact, both with each other and with Earl, I became aware of how dedicated this group was. I met people who led churches both big and small, one of whom was the only employee of their church, and I came away encouraged by their labor of love and obvious care for their congregations.

One thing that struck me in particular, though, was the wide array of backgrounds and viewpoints represented at the conference. And yet, wherever I turned, friendships were being developed between attendees. It was moving to see; in what seems to be an increasingly polarized world, bridges were being built across theological and political lines.

This group demonstrated to me a simple yet vivid picture of the centrality of Jesus, and the beauty of letting Jesus speak for himself in word and deed. As I move into the next phase of my life and continue to learn what it means to follow Jesus, this eclectic group of pastors will be a reminder of what community looks like.

—Landon Bennett, EPM Study Assistant 2016-2017



## Looking Forward You are invited by Earl Palmer Ministries

*A Morning with C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien:  
Speakers to Our Generation.*

Earl will trace the life stories of these two Oxford friends, their faith as followers of Jesus Christ, and their brilliance as writers.

Lewis and Tolkien were both foot soldier officers in the Battle of the Somme Valley in World War I. From the 1920s onward they wrote and taught at Oxford University for more than 40 years. Their greatest stories were written during and shortly after World War II.

Earl plans to talk about these men, who wrote stories of hope, grace, and joy during times of war and to discuss the relevance for our generation of what they said and what they did, how they comported themselves during this stressful time.

This morning seminar will begin at 8:45 a.m. in Geneva Hall at University Presbyterian Church and conclude at noon. Mid-morning coffee with pastries will be served. Registration will be open this fall.



J.R.R. Tolkien



C.S. Lewis

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*-serving to encourage and build up faith in Christ*

1 Thessalonians 5:11

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If you have any questions regarding Earl Palmer Ministries and its events, or to schedule an event, visit us at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org) or email us at [info@earlpalmer.org](mailto:info@earlpalmer.org).

If you know of others who would like to receive this newsletter, or if you would prefer not to receive this mailing, email Landon at [landon@earlpalmer.org](mailto:landon@earlpalmer.org).

### Mission Statement

EPM's mission statement comes from 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Serving to encourage and build up in Christian faith." These words from the Apostle Paul inspire our ministry of teaching, writing, and mentoring. First, we seek to mentor young theologians through our internship program and monthly theological dialogues. Live podcasts through The Kindlings Muse offer regular teaching and conversation for all ages to consider major Christian themes. Word and Worship provides a setting for expositional teaching of the Bible and inspirational music. EPM's wider ministry focuses primarily on encouraging pastors and giving a case for expositional worship.

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Your support makes this ministry happen. As we approach this tenth year of ministry, we invite you to share in this outreach again with your prayers and your financial investment. To make a tax deductible contribution, please send a check made out to Earl Palmer Ministries, PO Box 85117, Seattle, WA 98145, or electronically via PayPal or credit card at [www.earlpalmer.org](http://www.earlpalmer.org).

On behalf of the EPM team, I thank you.

*Earl F. Palmer*