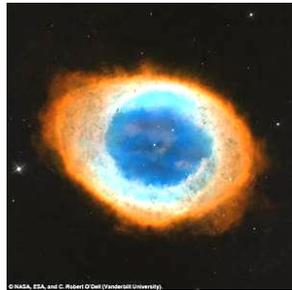


PASTOR'S PAGE

I went to the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff in late September. It was a clear cool night ... one of the first since the heat of summer finally broke. The wealthy Bostonian Percival Lowell established Lowell Observatory in 1894. Lowell is among the oldest observatories in the United States, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965. Lowell is perhaps best known for the discovery of Pluto. Additionally, the astronomers there have studied Halley's Comet, and the observatory led the discovery in 2007 of an exoplanet, which are planets outside our solar system.

The night I was there was an open telescope night. On the observation deck were six or seven telescopes. The staff operated the telescopes and had them focused on a variety of celestial objects. The planets Saturn and Jupiter were among them. It was the first time I looked through a telescope and saw those planets in real time with them looking like I've seen in pictures ... Saturn and its rings, Jupiter with its red streaks and five moons. We looked at the Andromeda Galaxy and several nebulae which are giant clouds of dust and gas in space. Of course, the planets were much closer ... Saturn a mere 746 million miles and Jupiter is 484 million miles from earth. The nebulae, however, were measured in light years. A light year is about 5.88 trillion miles. So, we saw the Ring Nebulae which is 2,300 light years from Earth. I can't even fathom what kind of distance that is.



In the end, I was totally fascinated with what I saw and learned that evening. But also, I was humbled and felt, in a very good way, so infinitesimally small. What I saw is only a speck of the totality of what God has and is creating. Somehow that comforts me. It gives me a sense of how much God has got the biggest question in life (what happens when we die) all taken care of. Without that as a worry, I believe God wants us to tend to the utmost the concerns and troubles that plague us in this life ... climate concerns, racism, poverty, hunger, war, and anything else that diminishes life from what God intended and created life to be.

I always have been and always will be fascinated by the stars. In that fascination, I am freed to tend to the brokenness of life within and around me. To always work at making life better. Any small deed to that effect has cosmological implications. The goodness of the universe is contained in any act that furthers the goodness of life that God has created and given us.

Pastor Rick

STEWARDSHIP CORNER



Our Stewardship Theme for 2020 is *Grounded in Faith – Growing to Serve*. We are nearing the end of 2019 ... only three months left in this year. That means we begin to look ahead to 2020 and how we will meet the fiscal challenges that come with every New Year. Challenges are not a bad thing. Challenges can be opportunities to grow in ways that God may be calling us. For us as a faith community, we welcome the challenge to be able to contribute to ministries that go beyond our church walls; in order for us to do that we have to be healthy within the church walls. This is where each of us plays a part in being part of the faith community we call Bethany. As we end one year and prepare for another, your weekly offerings are part of the foundation that makes ministry happen around here. We ask that you finish 2019 strong and that you prayerfully consider how you might best support the fiscal ministry of our church in 2020. In the months of October & November we will be highlighting our Stewardship theme for 2020 with Temple Talks and two congregation-wide letters that will be sent to all church members. Please read the letters, listen to the Temple Talks in church, and pray to see all this as not so much about money, but about God's call upon all of us to give back in return for blessings received.

Pastor Rick

PASTOR HEALTH UPDATE

As of the publication of this newsletter, I am nearing the halfway point of radiation treatments. Beginning October 1st, I'll have 17 more treatments to go. So far, all is going well. The side effects are minimal at this point, although fatigue is beginning to become more noticeable. My plan is to still keep a fairly regular work schedule. My visitation rounds have taken the biggest hit. That said, should you need pastoral care, please call me. If I unable to respond, I will arrange for another pastor to step in. All the pastors in our conference have offered to do so in the event that I need them. Thank you all for your prayers and support during this time.

With much appreciation,

Pastor Rick