



## Senior Pastor Sabbatical Report for

June 2014 *Bruce & Cristy Schipul*

We began June with a visit to help my brother. One area of sadness was the recent placement of my brother Mark in a care facility for those suffering from dementia. He also has aphasia which means he can no longer communicate verbally. It has been a very stressful time for his wife, their three adult children and their families. Yet, I have been so blessed to have the freedom of time to give to them on at least three quality visits so far this summer. He celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on Saturday, June 28 with family and friends.

Here are some of the places and activities that we enjoyed in the month of June:

**Genesee Home, Taylorsville, CA** - Among the many things we are doing, one favorite place we have visited is called Genesee Home, located in Taylorsville, California, north of the town of Quincy. Their moniker is "A Place for Pastoral Renewal, Excellence & Longevity." The setting is amazing: a 1600 acre ranch raising beef cattle, with a beautiful Victorian farm house renovated to serve up to five pastoral couples, prayer barn and library, canoeing, and great foo! Genesee Home's primary ministry is to provide an environment where Pastors and Missionaries, whether single or married, can step away from the pressures of ministry in order to let the Holy Spirit minister to them. Genesee Home allows one to REST, RECHARGE AND REJUVENATE.



This summer is our third time at Genesee. We met four other wonderful ministry couples, enjoyed bike-riding, hiking, playing "fierce" croquet, fellowship, and prayer. I was able to spend time in watercolors as well.

We learned again that *"The Sabbath is God's space between the activity of life."*

**Some Important Visits:** We then visited my (oldest) brother **David Schipul** in Union City, CA. We stopped in to visit and encourage **Joyce Asmius** in San Ramon, CA and celebrated the life of her husband Dick who passed away a week earlier. We also visited with **David** and **Carol Pollard** at their lovely home in Klamath Falls, OR, enjoying their hospitality overnight.

**Lassen Volcanic National Park, California:** What a great place to spend a few days! Lassen Park contains all the major types of volcanic mountains in the world. The trail to Lassen summit was closed but Bruce was able to climb Brokeoff Mountain, just under 9400 feet. Cristy enjoyed the less strenuous waterfall trail.



We took a side road to see the impressive **Burney Falls** in Burney State Park, CA. Teddy Roosevelt once called these falls "the eighth wonder of the world". We walked down to the base of the falls, located a short distance from the parking area.



**Crater Lake National Park**, while it was quite cold & rainy, with a few breaks in the clouds, the weather was so refreshing compared to summer in Arizona!

## Churches we visited:

### **Peninsula Covenant Church of Redwood City, CA,**

a congregation of about 1000, averaging 900 on Sunday with a 50+ ministry consisting of about 400 people. The leader of this ministry is a vibrant 84 year old who specializes in quality relational programs and ministries to the various age groups (50 plus) group. They focus on four key areas: Fellowship, Fun, Service, and Spiritual growth. They publish their own age centric quarterly newsletter called: Spotlight Magazine. I appreciated the church wide philosophy of programs and fees: "Everything we do that has an admission or registration price is always free to visitors, even if it's a high fee. We see that as part of evangelism." This is working for them. They also sponsor three or four secular events for the community (jazz or classical concerts or seminars.) and have no spiritual aspect or even prayer in order to be sensitive to the community, yet do invite people to check out the other opportunities of the church. This approach also seems to work well for them as they continue to grow in their community. We attended their traditional worship service and heard an outstanding presentation from a BSF leader on the life of Gomer and Hosea.



**Crossroads Community Church, Vancouver, WA,** currently about 6000 members. We had a great conversation with their founding pastor, Bill Ritchie, who started the church 38 years ago and just recently retired. He is now chair of the Clark County (Washington) Commission on Aging. He had a wealth of information for us on the issues of aging, the attitudes and interests of boomers and builders. Their age related ministry is called nxtSTP (Nextstep) and was once mostly programs, and has transitioned into a much more "relational" ministry.



**New Heights Church, Vancouver, WA,** this is the church that John (and Pat) Anderson pastored about 20 years ago. It has continued to grow and now is in four different locations. We attended the main campus worship service and talked with their pastor to the Prime-Timers and John Wright (pictured left with me), who was hired by John Anderson and has been at the church since then. We went to their Prime-Timers Sunday School class. During that weekend, we had lunch and supper with John and Pat and attended the Saturday evening worship at their former church.

Our June travels ended by starting our visit with our daughter **Joanna**, son-in-law **Luke**, and of course our grandson **Judah!** So from mountaintops to The Mountaintop!

