

# TRANSCENDENCE :

## ***Enlightening Spirit in Prints***

**Biography-Guest Curator, Rev. Jim Peck**

The Rev. Jim Peck, guest curator for "Transcendence," is the pastor at the Congregational Church of Chico, United Church of Christ. He began his ministry in Chico in May, 2008 after serving a church in Minnesota for over eight years.

A native of North Carolina, Mr. Peck grew up in Atlanta, Georgia during the 1960s and 70s, a time of dramatic growth and change in the South. He graduated from Mercer University in Atlanta in 1980 with a BA in Urban Affairs and did graduate work in City and Regional Planning at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

For 15 years, he worked in public policy and government in Georgia and Colorado before deciding to change careers and become a minister in the United Church of Christ. In 1999, he graduated with a Master of Divinity from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minnesota. He received two awards from the seminary, one in church leadership and the other for his work in theology and the arts. United has a strong emphasis in role of the arts in theology and spirituality. The project that garnered the theology and arts award was a year-long photography and research project on Christian worship architecture in the second half of the 20th century.

During a visit to The Turner Print Gallery in October, 2009, Mr. Peck introduced himself to gallery director Catherine Sullivan. Upon mentioning the theology and arts award, Ms. Sullivan asked if he would be interested in guest curating an exhibition, noting the gallery had not had a clergyperson as a guest curator. "Yes!" was his enthusiastic response, and arrangements were made.

"Transcendence, the theme of this exhibition, is a spiritual term. It describes the journey we take to understand both ourselves and the world around us, a journey that often takes us beyond ourselves. This journey includes both ordinary and extraordinary events in our own lives. It includes learning from the experiences of others. It includes reflection and relationships.

"I believe the arts are essential tools for making this journey well. In choosing the prints for this exhibition, I looked for works that would open the viewer to reflections about their own lives, their own stories, and some of the central themes of being human.

"I'm very grateful for the honor of being a guest curator for The Turner. It is one of Chico's great treasures."