

A P R I L 2 0 1 1

the SALT Shaker

The Monthly Newsletter of First Presbyterian Church

From the Pastor



“HOW HIGH CAN YOU COUNT?”

I've been thinking. Why does our denomination have such a reputation for being cold and unfriendly? Why do we ignore visitors when they come into our church? Why don't we ask them their names and invite them in? I don't know the answer but I have a theory. I think we fail to remember what we really like about our church. Let me explain.

But first let me calm you down. When I said we don't greet visitors I wasn't talking about you. I was talking about everyone else in the church. You would never do those things, would you? But just in case you have to tell others what to do, bear with me a while.

Here's a simple exercise to try. Stop and write down 20 things you like about our church or think are important about it. It may surprise you what you write down. It may surprise you that you have 20 things to write. Those 20 things are a handy tool. What they say is simply this: There are reasons why you like this church. There are reasons why you come. So why not think that others might enjoy those reasons? I actually think that someone would find it worthwhile to come to this church. You come, don't you?

So what do you do with this information? You converse with people and tell them some of the reasons why you like the church. Perhaps it will help them understand why they might like our church. Oh, by the way, this clever idea can be used in the opposite direction. 20 things I don't like about this church. Now I can tell them to visitors. Let's not go there....

Let's be careful. We are not trying to brag about our church. That would try to take the glory away from God. We are simply testifying about the good things God has done in and through the people of our congregation. If we simply share with newcomers, they may begin their own list. And you might be the first thing on their list! Start counting.

Pastor David

Youth News

“Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24



We all can remember times when we have seen the faithfulness of God, and deep inside we know that he is always faithful to us, but often in our doubt we waver when we are faced with the circumstances of our daily lives. We wonder if He will be faithful this time. And as we trust in Him, we find out that yes, he continues to be faithful to us, just like he has promised. Our family is continually finding this to be true. Thank you so much for all of your prayers, support and encouragement.

The faithfulness of our great God is also what we continually seek to communicate to our middle and high school students. Encouraging them to trust in God as they live and to seek opportunities to step out in faith and live for Him is what we are about each time that we get together. There is a lot happening this spring.

Middle School Youth Group is in action on Wednesday nights from 5:45 till 8:00. Each week we have Bible teaching, dinner, crazy games and skits and lots of time to be together with friends.

Middle School Bible Study is also back and happening on alternating Sunday nights from 6:30 till 7:30.

High School Youth Group meets on Sunday nights from 6:30 till 8:00. There is always some good food, Bible teaching, activity, and time to discuss not only the Bible lesson, but life as well.

High School Bible Study meets on Wednesday nights from 6:30 till 8:00 and is a good opportunity for students to be challenged and encouraged in their faith.

Our mission trip training for our return trip to Voice of Calvary Ministries in Jackson, MS will soon be happening. We will also be raising the necessary funds for the trip. As the weather gets nicer, if you have yard work that students can do to raise their support for this trip, please contact Jon Evans.



Fawnwander is happening April 9-10. Fawnwander is a reunion of our Deerwander Summer Bible Conference and is open to all middle and high school students. We stay over night at the church and have a weekend packed with Bible lessons, fun and fellowship, a trip to the Bennett Center and lots more. Get signed up now to save your spot!

Looking ahead, our end of the year Youth Banquet will be on Wednesday, May 18. Be watching for info about this great night where we honor our seniors and recognize our eighth graders.

For more information about anything that Youth Group is doing, please contact Jon Evans anytime at iamthird@verizon.net or 978-807-8932 or visit us at www.fpcnorthshore.com.

Jon

Children's Ministry

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 17 - Psalm Sunday Children's Palm Procession
April 20 - No Fellowship Night or Clubs
(School Vacation Week)
April 21 - No Kingdom Kids (School Vacation Week)
April 24 - Easter Sunday (No Sunday School classes)



START THINKING WARM WEATHER!

START THINKING
VBS

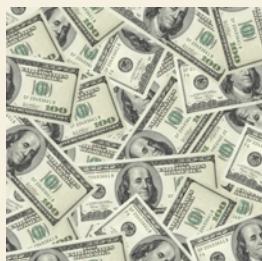
JUNE 27 - JULY 1

(IF THERE ARE NO MORE SNOW DAYS!)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION APPRECIATION COOKOUT
SATURDAY, MAY 21 @ NOON
@ JOE AND KATHY CEFALU'S HOUSE

Have you been involved in Christian Education: Adult or Children's Sunday School; Kingdom Kids, Scooters, GEMS, ROCKs, or any other C.E. program? If so, this cookout is for you & your family.

WE HOPE YOU CAN COME!



WES EVAN'S SUNDAY OFFERING UPDATE

Since January, the children have raised over \$300!
Thank You so much & Keep it coming!

Missions News

PLACE OF PROMISE

"I will walk among you and be your God, and you "will be my people. " Leviticus 26:12

February 2011

"When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him... may you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God."

Ephesians 3:14-17, 19

Dear Friends,

The City of Boston has gotten 61" of snow in 30 days and temperatures have remained frigid. There is snow everywhere! Three of our Place of Promise homes are corner properties, so shoveling has consumed great amounts of time. The biggest problem has become a question of where to put it all. We have a neighbor that likes to shovel all his snow right in front of our house. The huge mounds of snow make driving and walking unsafe for everyone.

If there are any redeeming factors from all this snow, they are the many spiritual lessons we can learn. I've noticed this month that a big issue for new residents at Place of Promise is where to put all their guilt and shame when they get sober and begin to heal. Some seem to occupy and exhaust themselves moving it around from place to place. Some keep it all deep down inside their souls and

complain constantly about their many minor physical ailments. Others pile their guilt on someone else from their past or even from their community at Place of Promise. "You made me lose my temper." "She made me so upset, I couldn't help it." "If only my mother would have..." The blaming goes on and on. Then there are those who try to rationalize, justify, and/or minimize the sin that has paralyzed their lives like the blizzard in the city. When the snow hit Boston and Lowell, schools shut down, busses stopped running, power lines fell, cars crashed: the dysfunction was massive. So, too, are the effects of repeated, unrepented sin. Often, before someone comes to Place of Promise, they have existed under mounds of sin of their own and others and the resulting consequences for years. They have been in a cold, dark, and dangerous place for so very long. Coming into the warmth, light, safety and love of Place of Promise is sometimes a bit overwhelming. It can be more frightening than being trapped in the darkness.

It has continued to snow and snow and we've shoveled it into giant mountains all around us. Those snow mountains sit there day after day and grow harder and harder. After that process goes on for a while, any attempts to move them seem utterly impossible. Anyone would be a fool to try.

Some residents come to Place of Promise because the courts and/or departments of correction mandate residential treatment while on probation and/or parole. Do they come believing they can change; begin a whole new life? The truth is most come because Place of Promise beats prison. Can they deal with all their problems? They think not! Little by little, they may chip away at their mountainous issues which, for the most part, have been there since childhood. They believe they'd be total fools to believe they could change and

become new creations in Christ. The Bible says all we need is faith the size of a mustard seed and we can say to our mountains, "Be gone," and they will move! It's just so very hard to believe! There were many days this past month when it snowed all night and into the morning hours. It would almost seem pointless to try to accomplish anything that day when all that was visible was snow. Most residents come to Place of Promise after years of living in the "night". Drugs, alcohol, and mental illness blind them, numb them, and deceive them. They don't even realize all they have lost, the emotions that have piled up, or what a total mess their lives have become until they walk into the Light present in Place of Promise. Suddenly, the shame, guilt, fear, anxiety, loneliness, depression, self-hatred is in their face and they long to run back into the darkness that hides it all for a moment. Just as an overnight blizzard makes it almost impossible to get to work, so, too, it is hard to get to work on change, recovery, and a new life. It can feel too risky to even try.

My final analogy pictures the negative thoughts and behaviors that seem to rise within us and interact between us when life becomes so difficult, exhausting and almost never ending. Have you experienced the anger and frustration that wells up inside (and is not easily contained) when you've shoveled snow for an hour, clearing a pathway to the sidewalk and driveway and the plow comes along and, in a minute's time, undoes everything you just did? Or how about driving down a narrow, snow covered street and someone else gets stuck in front and behind, rendering you powerless to go on? Sometimes, such is life for a resident at Place of Promise. Everyone is broken, in bondage, hurt, and unhealthy. Even though Place of Promise feels safe and secure most of the time, there are moments when it seems that all the work you've done on yourself can be undone by someone else so quickly. Someone else's struggles, fears, failures impact everyone else's recovery, work, and new life. It's so easy to find yourself

irritated, resentful, jealous, and completely distracted by the very people who we need for support and encouragement.

So what do we do with all this? We fall to our knees, confessing how completely powerless and unmanageable our lives have become. We identify and acknowledge all the sin that has built up through the many storms in our lives. We beg, we plead for that power greater than anything else we've ever known to come into our weak and weary lives and take over completely. We surrender to Jesus Christ who we have come to believe can remove all our sin as far as the east is from the west. We are filled with the most powerful Holy Spirit who strengthens us, guides us, and transforms us into the likeness of Jesus. Where once we were paralyzed, buried in the snows of our human natures, the front end loader/dump truck of God has set us free and given us hope for a brand new life!!

Please pray for us! This has been a cold, snow filled, and exhausting month. Pray that we endure; pray that we learn to run this race set before us at Place of Promise. We thank God for your gifts that make this place a reality in our lives. People are finding a new life here! They are coming to believe! They are learning to walk with God on this journey and we are so very grateful for every one of you who walks with us through prayer, financial gifts, and volunteer service! May we all live abundantly in the power of His love!

In Christ's Love,

Beth Kidd

CZECH REPUBLIC, HERE WE COME!

Dobre Rano! Peggy Hothem and I will be using this greeting many times this summer when we go to the Czech Republic from July 5 -21 with a group from Bayview Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Chula Vista, California. Bayview OPC has been sending a team to help missionaries Jerry and Marilyn Farnik put on a family English language

camp for the last 7 summers up in the mountains outside of Prague. As members of this summer's team Peggy and I will be assisting with English classes in the morning and then leading the crafts, games, and sports in the afternoon. The camp is a primary way for the Farniks to share the Gospel with families in their community. English lessons are based on Biblical stories and nightly messages will be given by Bayview's pastor, Rev. Roger Wagner, so the Gospel will be clearly presented throughout the week. We are excited about the opportunity to be a part of this ministry.

Because the Czech Republic is one of the most atheistic European countries, this camp provides an excellent opportunity for the campers to hear about the love of Jesus and His plan of salvation in a loving, beautiful environment. It also provides an opportunity for the Farniks to extend their ministry into their community by inviting families to the camp and then following-up with continued outreach through their church. There are typically 150 family campers from the Czech Republic and 22 American team members. Throughout the week, we will get to know the campers and they will also get to know us as we serve them through teaching, speaking the English language, and enjoying a variety of activities together.

We were very pleased to be assigned the afternoon recreational activities because not only do we enjoy games and sports, but teaching crafts will give us even



more opportunity to interact with the Czech families. Choosing the best games, sports, and crafts, however, will be a challenge for us because we want to respect the uniqueness of the Czech culture and plan activities that the campers would really enjoy. For example, we have heard that the campers usually love to wear or display the things that they make and

they also really enjoy competitive games. We will need to plan our activities well because all of our supplies must be brought with us from the US.

Each evening at camp, there will be a campfire and skits which will help to bond the American team with the Czechs and therefore give more opportunities to share Christ. The families like learning about our lives and especially American culture so we are looking forward to telling them about our new life in Christ, our families, and life in America.

How can you pray for us? Please pray as we plan the crafts and other activities - that we will choose activities that will be interesting and fun for them. We have been challenged by our team leaders to be "winsome" for the sake of Christ. We also covet prayer for spiritual and physical protection, and that the Holy Spirit will prepare us for service and sharing the gospel. Because we will not meet the other members of the team until we are in Prague, we also ask for prayer for team unity and the ability to work well together with servant hearts. Lastly and most importantly, please pray for the Holy Spirit to draw many Czech families to the camp and prepare their hearts to be teachable and receptive to the Gospel. Thank you!

Cindy Fitzgerald

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