



# FIRST and ForMOST

April 2007

## **“BEING A RESURRECTION THINKER”**

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3: 16)*

Throughout my life, I have experienced some painful and dark moments. Just to name a few...

1. The sudden and accidental death of my brother, David, just two days before Christmas in 1988.
2. A severe eye infection that blinded my left eye...only to have my sight restored by two amazing and talented doctors.
3. The death of my father, Russell, in 2003.
4. And, now watching my mother experience the devastating and sinister effects of dementia.

Whenever I have experienced a dark moment in my life, the words of John 3:16 were the first words out of my mouth. After all, what better Bible verse than John 3: 16 to provide hope for those of us who have felt devastated by life's challenges. Yes, life is full of “deaths” and “setbacks”:

- ...When we lose a loved one.
- ...When we lose our job.
- ...When the doctor tells us that we have cancer and there is nothing that they can do.
- ...When one of our dreams is crushed.

What is the answer to life's “deaths” and “setbacks”? *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

That's right! The answer is Easter! The answer is the Resurrection! The answer is as clear as the flowers that burst forth in the Spring after a long dreary Winter. The answer is as clear as the feeling of being refreshed after a good night's sleep. The answer is as clear as the lengthening of the daytime in Spring and Summer so that the sun shines brightly and longer.

Resurrection is everywhere we look! It is something that God has built into Creation. It is the basic theme of life. We even have a host of sayings that point us to what I call “Resurrection Thinking”:

- “Bad times may come, but they don't last forever.”*
- “The grass is greener on the other side.”*
- “Tomorrow is another day.”*
- “The cup is not half empty, but is half full.”*

When we look to the celebration of Easter and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are reminded to be “Resurrection Thinkers.”

Think about what the world would be like if EVERYONE were a “Resurrection Thinker!” There would be no more wars. No more hatred. No more prejudice. No more evil. **HOW COULD THERE BE?** If EVERYONE were “Resurrection Thinkers”, then no one would have any time to think about anything else but new opportunities, forgiveness, new life, mercy, love, and togetherness.

One cannot think about hate (which leads to death) if one is thinking about the resurrection (which leads to life). One cannot think about war (which leads to massive killing) if one is thinking about the resurrection (which leads to eternal life).

Sadly, there are far too many people in this world who are not RESURRECTION THINKERS. But, that doesn't mean that we can't do our part. That doesn't mean that we cannot be RESURRECTION THINKERS. As Christians, that is our only option!

This Easter season, I urge all of us to be RESURRECTION THINKERS. Whenever something bad happens to us (which leads to feelings of sadness, guilt, anger, sorrow, depression), we should think about the resurrection (which leads to feelings of joy, hope, love, celebration, and new opportunities).

Let us all be RESURRECTION THINKERS. And, let's see what a difference it makes in our lives and in the lives of others.

Your Friend and Pastor, Dr. Chris Looker

## **DR. CHRIS LOOKER'S** **SERMONS TITLES AND SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR APRIL**

### **April 1, 2007 PALM SUNDAY (10:00 AM Worship Service)**

**Title of the Sermon:** “*THE BEAUTY OF A TORN CURTAIN!*”

**Scripture Lessons:** Philippians 2: 6-11 and Luke 23: 44-49

**Lenten Series:** Session Six - “*Going the Distance with a Well-Ordered Heart*”

**Time:** 5:30 to 7:30 PM (Soup Dinner, followed by Presentation)

**Place:** Rooms 105 and Sanctuary, FPCA

*“Many of us desire a perfectly balanced, manageable life, but God wants us to pursue a much higher goal. God wants to craft in each of us a well-ordered heart. A well-ordered heart seeks to follow Jesus and do what He would do. It loves the right thing to the right degree in the right way with the right kind of love. The pursuit of a well-ordered heart is worthy of our devotion, is achievable even in the most desperate situations, and produces good far beyond our sphere of influence.”*

### **April 5, 2007 - MAUNDY THURSDAY (7:30 PM Service)**

**Sermon Title:** “*THE DAY THE LORD'S SUPPER WAS CELEBRATED ON THE MOON!*”

**Scripture Lesson:** John 13: 1-15

### **April 6, 2007 – GOOD FRIDAY – (7:30 PM Service)**

*“THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST” – Music, Meditation, and Prayer*

**April 8, 2007 - EASTER SUNDAY**

**6:30 AM SUNRISE SERVICE** (Sunrise will officially be at 6:43 AM)

and

**10:00 AM Worship Service:**

**Sermon Title:** *“WAKE UP! GOD’S MORNIN’ HAS COME!”*

**Scripture Lesson:** John 20: 1-18

**10:00 AM Worship Service:**

**April 15, 2007 - SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**Sermon Title:** *“FEAR’S POWER IS NOT ABSOLUTE!”*

**Scripture Lesson:** John 20: 19-31

**APRIL 22, 2007 - THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**Sermon Title:** *“WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW?”*

**Scripture Lesson:** John 21: 1-19

**APRIL 29, 2007 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

Guest Preacher

**WHAT BETTER TIME THAN EASTER TO PRAY FOR PEACE?**

**MESSAGE FOR PEACE AND HARMONY**

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

We all need to pray for one another, and to love one another. We should always pray for the safety, peace, love and brotherhood for people all over the world. Too bad we can't have an independence day for the entire world. A day of freedom from ignorance, hatred, war, illusions, power and control. A day where we can all love each other as human beings and toss away the weapons of war, and cast out our fears and hatreds from our hearts into the graves. We must mourn the graves of the innocents all over the world, and give the children of the world the hope of a peaceful, loving and beautiful world. A world full of love and without hatred or fear. A world where we can join hands together and accept one another, regardless of our skin color, ethnic divisions, religion or nationality. If we don't unite as a human race, then we have condemned the future generation of children a dark and very grim future. Think of love, compassion and peace always.

**PRAYER FOR PEACE AND HARMONY**

Merciful God, You made all of the people of the world in Your own image and placed before us the pathway of salvation through different Preachers who claimed to have been Your Saints and Prophets. But, the contradictions (made by us) in the interpretation of Your teachings have resulted in creating divisions, faith based hatreds and bloodshed in the world community. Millions of innocent men, women and children have so far been brutally killed by the militants of several religions who have been committing horrifying crimes against humanity and millions

more would not be butchered by them in the future, if You guide and help us find ways to reunite peacefully.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, look with compassion on the whole human family, take away the controversial teachings of arrogance, divisions and hatreds which have badly infected our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; reunite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish Your purposes on earth; that in Your good time all nations and races could jointly serve You in justice, peace and harmony. Amen.

**Message from S.A. Rehman, Peace Activist, Pakistan; submitted by Isabelle Fennig.**

## **HAPPY 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY, ISABELLE**

On Thursday, April 5, Isabelle Fennig is celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday! Isabelle is a blessed member of our congregation, and truly deserves to be honored on this wonderful occasion.

Though they were not charter members, Isabelle and Paul Fenning came close to it, having joined our church November 30, 1958. They had just returned from Asia; Isabelle had accompanied her husband Paul on his assignment to Hong Kong in 1956 and Taiwan in 1957, where their son John was born. They have been active members ever since.

Just to mention a few activities: Isabelle was ordained as an elder in 1967, a time when few women were on the session; in 1972 she was the second woman in the church to receive the Honorary Life Membership Award from the Women of the Church; for a while she played handbells, for some time she helped make puppets for the Children's Ward at Fairfax Hospital, for many years she led the Adult Church School, she belonged to the Pastor Nominating Committee that selected Dr. Looker as our pastor. At present, Isabelle continues to be active: she sings in the choir, leads the weekly Bible study, is a member of the Worship Commission, participates in two Circles and in the Book Club, helps folding bulletins every week and this newsletter every month, helps Parenting Partnership, is in charge of the Prayer Chain, and this February she was ordained as deacon! Isabelle has been a true blessing to our church, year after year.

We can only thank the Lord that he has given us Isabelle Fennig as very active member, as spiritual support, as friend.

**Come, celebrate with the family and the congregation on Palm Sunday, April 1, after the Worship Service. (There will be no 11:30 AM Adult Class)**

## **BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL**

Isabelle Fennig	04/05	Ruth Hartman	04/18
Nancy Manning	04/07	Larry Cook	04/20
Stuart Dahlinger	04/13	Daniel DeVera	04/21
Jean Prager	04/14	Sam Looker	04/21
Bev Schubert	04/16	Bob Scott	04/23



## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!**



May your lifetime glow and sparkle,  
 May your days be cheerful-bright,  
 May your home be filled with laughter,  
 May your smiles reflect God's light...  
 May your heart and mind rest peacefully,  
 May good health abound in you,  
 May God's teachings give you wisdom,  
 May He keep you in His view.  
 May you rejoice in all the pleasures  
 That stem from family and friends,  
 May you find comfort in God's mercy  
 And in the love that He transcends....  
 May you always be successful,

May your works be magnified,  
 May God continue to embrace you,  
 May all your needs be satisfied...  
 May you know that God is with you,  
 May you feel His presence there,  
 May He guide your every footstep,  
 May you thank Him in your prayer.  
 May your faith be everlasting,  
 May your hopes and dreams come true.  
 May your love exude and flourish...  
 There are [our] wishes for you.

By Patience Allison Hartbauer

## **OUR SYMPATHY TO THE LOTT FAMILY**

On the first day of March the Lord called Lockie Lott home. Her long suffering has ended, she has arrived at her eternal resting place. The congregation expresses the deepest sympathy to Sterns and his entire family. Her memory will always stay with us.

## **ADULT CHURCH SCHOOL**

8:45-9:40 AM: **A New Community in Christ** (selections from Revelation 1-3), led by Marta Strada

11:30 AM-12:15 PM: **Pastor's Class:** Dr. Looker presents **Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation**, by Bruce M. Metzger; starting April 15.



## **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

The Bible Study Group is continuing to study The Acts of the Apostles. The study group meets every Thursday in the Library at 10:30 AM. Anybody is welcome to participate!

## **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED**

Elder John Metzel has received a letter on February 28, 2007, informing him that St. Elizabeth's patients desperately need warm clothing. They asked especially for winter coats, but even if it is now late in the season, donated clothing is still helpful for winters to come! If you have clothing you want to donate, your help is very welcome! Please contact Amy or John Metzel for further information (703) 642-1404.

## **LETTER OF THANKS FROM "FOOD FOR OTHERS"**

Dear Friends: Thank you for your recent gift of \$316.63, the result of your efforts during the "Souper Bowl of Caring." For us, it is so wonderful to hear from you and feel the support of your generosity. While the work of Food for Others depends on many, many people like you, each individual donor is essential to us. We cite below the statistics about our many clients, but each one is an individual too. Food for Others is basically meeting the needs of individuals with the kindness of other individuals, people like you.

This letter also acknowledges that no goods or services were provided by Food for Others, Inc. to you for your contribution.

On behalf of all of us at Food for Others and the clients we serve, thank you for your generous contribution.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Rice, Executive Director

## **SPRING GATHERING/ANNUAL MEETING**

Presbyterian Women of National Capital Presbytery

On Saturday, April 21, 2007, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm, at the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

### ***Faithful Women: Ambassadors For Christ***

### ***Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow?***

### ***Guest Speaker — The Reverend Denise Giacomozzi May***

Minister Director of United College Ministries in Northern Virginia

Special music by women from Presbyterian churches with populations from Ghana, Cameroon, Korea and Indonesia

**How often do we ask the questions: How can we successfully do more mission work with diverse populations, and how can we attract and keep the interest of young women?**

The Spring Gathering/Annual Meeting this year focuses on reaching out to young women and church populations who have not traditionally participated with PW/NCP. We hope to learn from the experience how better to fulfill the purpose of PW -- to *build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom.*

Women from Ebenezer PC, First Korean of VA PC, Indonesian-American PC, Northern VA Korean PC, and Silver Spring PC have been invited to provide special music. And all women are encouraged to join in a preservice rehearsal to prepare music for worship. Mary Wedgewood from Fifteenth Street PC will direct us as we "sing a new song" and share our gift of music.

Please call Sandy Mori or Margaret Anderson if you have questions. Registration forms will be made available soon.

## **CRUISE ON THE DANUBE,**

## **FROM THE BLACK SEA TO BUDAPEST**

Come on Sunday, April 22, at 6:PM to enjoy a pot luck dinner and watch Marta Strada's slide show!



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS.

February 2007 Session Meeting.

The meeting was called to order and Marta Strada led a devotional based on “The Purpose Driven Life”, by Rick Warren.

Commission and Committee Chairpersons and Session Representatives for 2007 were approved as follows:

**Clerk of Session** - Margaret Anderson

**Worship Commission**- Sandy Mori, Session Representative, Isabelle Fennig, Miriam Houseworth, and Cara Lauler

**Administration and Finance Commission** - Ruth Hartman and Lee Fuller, Co-Chair, Ken Hartman and Judi Reitman, Session Representative

**Buildings and Grounds Commission** - Barb Matos, and Jack Smith, Session Representative and Co-Chairs, Phil Rodrigues, Sterns Lott, Chuck Beekman, FKPCV Elder/Deacon/Representatives

**Christian Education Commission** - Stephanie Berg and Genny Looker, Co-Chairs, Marta Strata, Session Representative, FKPCV Elder/Deacon/Representatives, Nancy DeVera, Candy Parker

**Mission Commission** - John Metzel, Margaret Anderson, and Tyler Young, Session Representatives, Nadine Dingess, FKPCV Elder/Deacon/Representatives

**New Member and Congregational Life Commission** - Betty Beal, Chair, Hugh Iwanicki, Session Representative, Norma Muller, Ed Muller, Ann Manning, Joan Johnson, Bill Johnson, Randy Meli, Deacon Representative

**\*\*Church Nominating Committee** - John Metzel, Session Representative and Chairperson, Sandy Mori, Session Representative, Tom Martin, Jan Reitman, H. Carroll Thompson,

**Personnel Committee** - Pat Hickey, Ruth Sutton, Marta Strata, Session Representative

**Stewardship Committee** - Ruth Sutton, Chair

**Audit Committee** - Dennis Matos, Lee Fuller

**\*\*The Church Nominating Committee is the ONLY Committee that is NOT a Committee of the Session. It is a Committee of the Congregation and members of the Church Nominating Committee are elected by vote of the Congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting.**

Please contact a member of a Commission if you are interested in becoming a part of any Commission.

The Pastor’s proposed vacation and continuing education schedule was presented.

Youth Elder, Tyler Young, reported that the “Souper Bowl” was a success. Monies contributed by members of the congregation were donated to Food for Others. They plan to go bowling in the near future. Acolytes will have some guidance regarding procedures and attire.

The Mission Commission reported on the upcoming 11:30 Adult Church School Classes which includes presentations by representatives from international, national and local organizations.

Session approved Worship Commission’s request that a “Free Will” offering be taken at a concert of Mystic Harmony on a date to be determined. Seventy-five hymnals will be purchased as a result of the donations from the congregation.

Elder Jack Smith discussed the condition of the building and it was decided that a thorough inspection of the building and the operating systems be undertaken.

Presbytery Representative reported on the proceedings of the January meeting with special emphasis on information about Meadowkirk, Presbytery Investment and Loan Program, Bills and Overtures proposed revisions to the Form of Government and Church Development. It was suggested that all Elders attend a Presbytery meeting at some time during the year. Submitted by Clerk of Session, Margaret Anderson



## **COMMISSIONS' ACTIVITIES**

### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMISSION**

The Commission continues to coordinate and perform the many duties that help maintain our property. A spring clean-up day is planned for March 24 – with many tasks needing to be performed, both inside the buildings and on the grounds.

During the past few weeks, the rose bushes have been pruned, the graffiti has been removed from the building, light bulbs have been replaced, tree limbs have been removed, doors have been repaired, pews have been repaired and a lot more has happened. Work with the Commission - if you notice something that needs repair or you feel should be checked – please contact Jack Smith, Chuck Beekman or Barb Matos. If you don't tell – we don't know!

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION**

As FPCA and FKPCV are working together on the CE programs, David Koo from the Korean Church School joins the meeting when he can.

The activities for Super Bowl of Caring were a success. Our church raised over \$316.63, while the total amount raised on a national level stood at \$4.5 million just one week after the event. Food for Others in Fairfax was chosen as the charity to which these funds were sent – see their thank you letter!

Sunday School is doing fine, especially the two classes for adults. The classes for youth, combined with the Koreans, are also doing well, though the attendance of the youngsters from our church varies. It is being planned to send postcards to children who are absent, encouraging them to attend Church School.

Sunday, March 25, 2:30-6:40 PM, is the day our young people play Laser Tag for a couple of hours, followed by a pizza dinner.

The Easter Egg Hunt will start at 9:15 AM on April 8. See also **YOUTH NEWS** for more details.

Youth Sunday will be celebrated on the second Sunday of June, on the last day Sunday School classes are held. We hope to celebrate worship service together with FKPCV.

A mission trip to Cumberland, MD is planned for July 22-28, with young people from both the FKPCV and FPCA congregations, like last year.

Your librarian is planning to catalog videotapes and CDs for the Library and encourage the congregation to use them. The CDs are an appreciated gift from Cara Lauler.

### **CONGREGATIONAL LIFE/NEW MEMBER COMMISSION**

Starting Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, the Commission has name tags available for members, friends of the church and visitors. The congregation is asked to use the tags each Sunday and to replace them on the rack before leaving the church. The commission requests that everyone sign the friendship books and include their addresses. This would serve as a reminder to visitors to include their addresses so that they can be contacted.

The commission continued its discussion of possible fellowship activities. A survey will be provided to the congregation to determine what types of activities are wanted.

Tom Martin is making a rolling board so that pictures of new members and pictures of church activities may be displayed. This will be a great asset to all of us.

A visitors packet of church information will be complete and ready for distribution soon.

### WORSHIP COMMISSION

We had orders for 72 hymnals from the congregation. They have been delivered and we are in the process of getting the names in the front. They will be in the pews for Lockie's Memorial service. Thank you for your generosity.

Having acolytes participate in the service is still a work in progress. We planed to have a training session during Sunday School one Sunday in March.

With the consent of the pastor, it was decided that liturgists could participate in the Prayers of the People if they choose. Two people have asked to be added to the liturgist list.

Since so many of the old hymns are not in the blue hymnal, we will be having red hymnal Sundays occasionally. Stay tuned for more details.

### YOUTH NEWS

An **Easter Egg Hunt** will be celebrated by children ages 0 – 13 on Easter Sunday. Please come at 9:15 to take part. Any one who wants to help hide the eggs is welcome a little earlier. We will have two shifts—one for 6 years and younger, one for 7 and up.

We hope to have a **bowling** event sometime soon. Keep aware of emails and phone calls.

**Youth Sunday** is coming on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendars. We will have a planning meeting in May in order to get organized.

Genny Looker



### THE STORY OF THE EASTER EGG

It is the influence of the traditional spring rites that made Easter so egg-special. And myths coming down to us from an incredibly distant past have shown man's relationship with the egg to be very deep seated one. This is caught in the Latin proverb: *Omne vivum ex ovo* ("all life comes from an egg"). From ancient India to Polynesia, from Iran, Greece, and Phoenicia to Latvia, Estonia, and Finland, from Central America to the west coast of South America, we find myths that the whole universe has been created out of an egg. Thus, it is not unusual that in almost all ancient cultures eggs had been held as an emblem of life.

In Europe an egg was hung on New Year trees, on Maypoles, and on St. John's trees in midsummer. This meant that the egg was a symbol of the regenerative forces of nature. Later, during the Christian period, it was believed the yolk of eggs laid on Good Friday, if kept for a hundred years, would turn into diamond. If Good Friday eggs were cooked on Easter Sunday, they would promote the fertility of the trees and crops and protect against sudden deaths.

Eggs were dyed and eaten at the spring festivals in ancient Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Persians gave eggs as gifts at the vernal equinox. But it is not very clear how those colored eggs have come to dominate the Easter basket. ... It is speculated that they were introduced in Europe, or, rather Western Europe, during the course of the fifteenth century, when people thought that missionaries or knights of the Crusades brought in the custom of the coloring of eggs.

In medieval times there was a superstition: the church bells which had not been heard since Holy Thursday had been to Rome for the Pope's blessings and returned on Easter Eve with colored eggs for everyone. Many of the eggs were dyed red. Red was used to express the joy of the Easter celebration. Or it was used to honor the blood that Christ had shed. During the strict Lenten fast of forty days no eggs were eaten.

[Article found on the Internet, edited by Marta Strada]



**ATTENTION!**

**Deadline for the May issue of *FIRST and ForMOST* is April 20, 2007.**