



FIRST and ForMOST

November 2007

FROM THE PASTOR

“(Let us) do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him...” (Colossians 3: 17)

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A teller at the drive-in window of a bank was having difficulty with the glaring sun. He lowered the shade. Behind the shade, he could see the customers as they drove up, but they couldn't see him.

As one woman drove in, he punched the button. Out came the bullet-like container in which she was to place her check. She put her check in the “bullet” holder and the vacuum tube whisked her check away. Seconds later, the “bullet” returned with her cash and receipt in it. She took the money and stared at the window. She couldn't see anybody, but she still said into what looked like a microphone, *“I know you are completely automated now, but I want to thank you anyway.”*

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There's something sad about how the world is becoming so impersonal that some of us (including myself) find ourselves thanking machines and robots for helping us. Truly, there are fewer and fewer actual human beings to thank in this automated and robotic world of ours.

If the truth be told, we were created by God to be thankful...thankful to one another...thankful to our parents for raising us and teaching us about life...thankful to our friends and those who have been kind to us...thankful for our church and our loving brothers and sisters in Christ...and most importantly, thankful to God.

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In his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul writes this: *“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* (Colossians 3: 14-17).

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Even though our world is becoming more impersonal, mechanistic, automated, and robotic, we must resist the temptation of becoming impersonal, mechanistic, and robotic ourselves! God did not create us to be alone! God did not create us to be robots! God did not create us to be automatons!

God created us to be human and in fellowship with other human beings. God created us to help others and allow others to help us. God created us to worship Him in a personal and loving manner. And, God created us to be thankful for all the good things He has given to us.

As our world becomes more and more impersonal, with machines doing more and more for us, there will be a growing temptation for us to interact less with other human beings and more with the machines that “serve” us. This will make it harder and harder for us to interact with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. And, it will, if it hasn't already, cause us to become more like machines than human beings.

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St. Paul wrote that we are to “*clothe ourselves in love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*” Machines and robots cannot love and do not have the capacity to “*live*” in “*perfect harmony.*”

He wrote that we are to “*be thankful,*” “*let the Word of Christ dwell within us...sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God*” and, “*whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” As advanced as the computers we create may be and as “*life-like*” as artificially intelligent robots and machines become, they cannot and will never be able to truly “*love,*” “*sing spiritual songs to God,*” truly “*do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,*” or “*give thanks to God the Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*”

Only we, as human beings, are capable of such things. And, the more we allow ourselves to become like the machines, computers, and robots who serve us, the less human we become. And, the less human we become, the less we are able to love one another, love and worship God, and most importantly, **give thanks** to a truly living God for all that we have and all that He has created us to be.

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This coming Thanksgiving season, let us all celebrate with all the wonderful and beautiful human spirit that God has given to us. Let us remember our special place in creation as God’s children. And, let us strive to resist all the temptations and pressures that may lead us to be or become any less than the beautiful, emotional, spirit-filled, intelligent, loving, living, and faithful human beings God has created us to be.

Your Friend and Pastor

Dr. Chris Looker

A BIG “THANK YOU” FROM YOUR EDITOR

This is the 12th issue of *FIRST and ForMOST* I have assembled as your current editor. In the beginning I was wondering whether I would receive enough material to put out a newsletter every month, but the Lord helped us. Now it takes a lot of editing and rearranging to get all the information supplied by you, wonderful members of our congregation, into a 12 page newsletter. This is **GREAT!**

It is time to thank all of you, our beloved Pastor, and all you contributing friends – persecuted by your editor with deadlines and reminders. But *FIRST and ForMOST* could not be what it is without your generous help, and you all deserve a heartfelt **THANK YOU!** **All your work is much appreciated – from writing articles, reports and messages, adding funny and thought provoking tidbits, to proofreading, folding, and mailing each issue!**

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU!

With heartfelt gratitude from your Editor,

Marta Strada

LET’S GIVE THANKS

***For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food,
For love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends.***

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

MORE HEARTFELT THANKS!

My sincere thanks for all the prayers and concerns sent to me during my recent illness. Your responses are very heart warming! What a caring church family you are!
Miriam Houseworth

SERMON SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

Rev. Dr. Looker Preaching:

November 4, 2007.....Scripture Lesson: Luke 19: 1-10
Sermon Title: **"A REAL RUBBER-NEAKER!"**

November 11, 2007.....Scripture Lesson: Luke 20: 27-38
Sermon Title: **"THERE'S MORE!"**

November 18, 2007.....Scripture Lesson: II Thessalonians 3: 7-12
Sermon Title: **"NOSY! NOSY! NOSY!"**

Student Intern, Susan Ennis, Preaching:

November 25, 2007

IN APPRECIATION OF ELDER BILL JOHNSON

We will miss the wonderful stature of Bill Johnson as he walked to his usual spot in church, his beautiful Joan beside him.

Bill loved FPCA and when called to serve, always said yes. He was President of the Church Corporation, served on the Nominating Committee and the Session. He had agreed to be an Elder again for the next term. He and Joan served as counters, and Bill was always willing to usher or serve communion when needed.

He was the quintessential husband, father, and grandfather. He took pride in his three children: Eric, who predeceased him, Paul and Linda, and in his grandchildren: Linda's Mathias (6), Anna (4), and Lena (1 ½), and Paul's two boys, Brady (2), and Jack (10 months.)

Bill was an electrical engineer and served as an agent with the FBI.

Linda's daughter, Anna, said to her grandmother: "Grandpa died; Mom says God had a special job for him – can I help?"

It's not surprising.

Jane Rottier



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Pat Fuller ~ November 2
Jeannie Scott ~ November 8
Sara Schmoyer ~ November 13
Brenda Johnson ~ November 15

Loraine Reitman ~ November 18
Stuart Beal ~ November 20
Larry Young ~ November 24
Yong Ping Iwanicki ~ November 28

LUNCH N' LIFE

THE NEXT LUNCH N' LIFE SPONSORED BY THE SHEPHERD'S CENTER OF ANNANDALE/SPRINGFIELD WILL TAKE PLACE ON NOVEMBER 27TH AT 11:30 AM AT ST. ALBANS EPISCOPAL CHURCH. THE SPEAKER WHO IS FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE WILL BE DISCUSSING "SAFER SENIORS", WAYS FOR SENIORS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THEFT, FRAUD, ETC. THE COST FOR THE LUNCH IS \$7.00 OR \$6.00 IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF SCAS. THIS PROMISES TO BE AN INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE TALK. ALL SENIORS ARE INVITED! RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED; SEND YOUR CHECK TO SCAS, PO BOX 1827, SPRINGFIELD, VA 22151.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF SINGING IN THE CHOIR?

Hundreds of years ago, St. Augustine said "When we sing, we pray twice." Those of us who lead music in the church know this almost instinctively. There is nothing quite like playing or singing a great hymn or anthem to get the feeling that we are in touch with God in a way that merely listening from the pew cannot accomplish. That is why the church has always sung. The effort of making music concentrates one's mind away from the physical and into the spiritual world.

Along the way, the experience of rehearsing with the choir is one of a community working toward the goal of creating a spiritual experience. The choir becomes closer to God and each other as they meet week after week and sing for our services.

I encourage you to consider joining our band of musicians. It takes some effort to come every Thursday from 7 to 8 PM, but the rewards are many. You just need to be able to sing in tune and on time, and rehearsals teach you that!

Your Music Director , *Dr. Larry Young*

SUPPORT FOR BETHANY HOUSE

OngoingAs you clean your closets to transition to colder weather, please remember that donations of clothes or other household items can support the work of Bethany House and its ministry to abused women and their families. Donations should be left in the barrel in the room behind the kitchen, and will be taken to Joseph's Coat Thrift shop for resale.

Christmas Shop for Bethany House Clients Please remember to put Bethany House on your Christmas Shopping List. New, unwrapped gifts for children ages infant to 16 years old, including books or toys, will be made available to Bethany House clients at a special Christmas Shop event in early December. Gift cards for the women (Walmart, Target, etc.) would also be greatly appreciated. Further details and flyers will be available shortly. Tax deductible cash contributions are always appreciated and should be sent to Bethany House of Northern Virginia, 6121 Lincolnia Road, Suite 303, Alex., VA 22312. Please see Norma Muller if you have any questions.

Norma Muller

EQUAL EXCHANGE INTERFAITH PROGRAM

Equal Exchange is an Interfaith Program, a for-profit fair trade company, offering organic, gourmet coffee, tea, cocoa, and chocolate bars produced by small farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia. It is building long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound. It is building a beneficial relationship between farmers and consumers.

The Christian Education Commission plans to get our young people involved in this great work, by asking them to sell packages of these tasty products to our members and visitors after Sunday Worship, starting Sunday after Thanksgiving. Profits will be used for a project of the church, still to be determined.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

The Stated Meeting of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale (FPCA), Virginia opened with prayer by Rev. Looker.

The Report from the Clerk of Session included the following correspondence and opportunities:

- “Equipping Leaders for 21st Century Ministry will be October 27, 2007 at Falls Church Presbyterian Church, from 9:30 - 3:30. New approaches for the Post-Modern church will be highlighted. All are encouraged to attend.
- Presbyterian Women’s Fall Gathering will be September 29, 2007, at Fairfax Church from 9:00-2:30. All women are encouraged to attend.
- Session endorsed Elder Margaret Anderson for consideration as a potential nominee for National Capital Presbytery Commissioner to General Assembly.
- Peacemaking Offering to be taken October 7, 2007
- The FKPCV 30th Anniversary Celebration will be on October 14, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. All are encouraged to attend.
- The Crop Walk – October 20, 2007. Elder Tyler Young will present a “Minute for Mission.”
- Rev. Looker resigned his position as Presbytery liaison for the Emmanuel Indonesian Presbyterian Church.
- The FKPCV sent a “Wish List” for Session Commissions to consider in response to a request from FPCA. Session members will receive a copy of the list to be discussed in the relevant Commissions.
- Third Representative to Presbytery meeting of September 25, 2007 will be Hugh Iwanicki.

Elder Tyler Young reported the following from the Youth:

- The youth of FPCA and the FKPCV will have a car wash from 10:00 a.m. to noon on October 13, 2007 to earn funds for future Mission Trips.
- The youth are considering activities such as bowling and laser tag.

The Pastor’s report included the following:

- Reported having resigned as Presbytery Liaison to the Emmanuel Indonesian Presbytery Church.
- Expressed an interest in serving on the Presbytery’s Camps Committee.

- Visited congregation members in hospital and homes.
- Reported on the success of the Mission Trip to Cumberland, MD. A potluck dinner will be held on September 23, 2007 to tell about the trips.

Deacon Randy Meli indicated the phone directory is being updated. She also informed Session of church members needing prayer.

Session had a preliminary discussion of the 2008 budget and Commissions were asked to email their proposed budget to the Finance Commission. Three lunches will be held to discuss budget with congregation.

Elder John Metzler gave the following report:

- The Habitat for Humanity building project, September 15, 2007, was successful to two counts:
 1. helping to build condominium units, and,
 2. building a core group for future Mission work.
- Commission is considering offering trips to work with western Indians, perhaps in South Dakota or Montana. Programs sponsored by PCUSA will be identified.

Elder Sandy Mori indicated FPCA and FKPCV will hold a joint service at Christmas time. *Mystic Harmony* will be performing December 1, 2007 here at the church. There may be a need to provide transportation for those who no longer drive. There will be a reception following the concert.

Elder Judi Reitman gave an update on Stewardship Campaign.

Elder Jack Smith addressed the concerns of the Buildings and Grounds Commission:

- There will be a work day on October 6, 2007 from 8:00 a.m. to noon.
- The situation with inappropriate activities on church grounds before and after Annandale High School functions.
- Concerns about traffic safety in parking lot.
- Students serving detention on Saturdays are being required to clean up parking lot after games.
- Elder Smith will talk with High School Principal and police officer in an effort resolve problem.
- Ants have been eradicated.

Elder John Metzler moved that a Congregational Meeting be called for October 7, 2007 following the Worship Service for the purpose of electing new officers and transferring responsibilities of Endowment Trustees to the Budget and Finance Commission.

Next meeting will be Wednesday October 17, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

There being no further business before the Session, Deacon Randy Meli closed the meeting with a devotional and prayer at 9:30 p.m.

Margaret Anderson, Clerk of Session

COMMISSIONS' ACTIVITIES

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION

The Commission met October 10. We were happy to learn that the young people of FPCA and FKPCV successfully worked together doing car wash on Sept. 22. We would like to get our young people involved in the Equal Exchange Interfaith Program, selling coffee, tea, and chocolate bars after worship service on Sundays, starting after Thanksgiving. Our Seminary Intern Susi Ennis is planning to help setting it up, but we need a member of the congregation to be the future leader who supervises the young people, orders the supplies, and helps decide what the money earned will be used for.

Another project for the young people of FPCA and FKPCV is to make Room 200, used for Church School, more attractive. A fun game afternoon is planned for October 28.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE/NEW MEMBER COMMISSION

LIFE SCREENING PROGRAM

The Congregational Life/New Member Commission will be sponsoring The Life Screening Program in February or March. This program provides painless non-invasive accurate screening test to detect potentially serious conditions that do not show up during routine examinations. This program was presented some years ago at FPCA and well received. This service is provided not only for church members but members of the community as well. More detail will be forth coming.

SUGGESTIONS WELCOME

The Congregational Life/New Member Commission has been discussing various ideas for reaching out to the community in an effort to make them aware of FPCA and to attract new members. The Commission is open to all suggestions. Please give us any suggestions you might have. Write them down and put them in the Commission's box in the church office.

WORSHIP COMMISSION

At the Oct. 10 Worship Commission meeting discussions centered on two things:

1. Publicizing the Mystic Harmony group, lead by Mary Anne Brundage, (former choir director at FPCA), in their concert here on Dec. 1.

2. Considering a "wish list" from FKPCV for improvements to the church facilities. More information will be gathered.

YOUTH NEWS

The FKPCV and FPCA Car Wash for Mission was a success, raising over \$200. In October a Kickball/Football activity was also held. The Laser Tag event has been rescheduled to

December 9th, from 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. Everyone is welcome, including friends and neighbors. Please consider asking your friends to join you. The cost is \$15, and will include pizza after the games. The Laser Tag event is held at the church, and is a great deal of fun. Please come!

Also attached is the list of Acolytes for November-December:

11-Nov	Ben Looker
18-Nov	Garrett Youmans
25-Nov	Sam Looker
9-Dec	Sara Metzel
16-Dec	Margaret Njomo
23-Dec	Carrie Rodrigues
30-Dec	Chris Fuller

OUR CHURCH IN THE WORLD

The Central School Newsletter, which goes out to alumni and supporters of educational institutions at Lubondai in the Democratic Republic of Congo, recently featured the partnership between the Lubondai Church community and FPCA:

Rev. Dr. Looker, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Annandale (VA) to the Church at Lubondai:

Excerpts: "...we believe that God is leading us to receive the Word of Jesus Christ from you and your church. We also feel called by God to share ourselves with you in ways that would glorify God. Accordingly, we would like to humbly ask you if you would be interested in starting a loving and mutually beneficial relationship with our church...we would explore ways...to communicate with one another (through the internet and e-mail, mail, and/or phone communication). We would like to explore ways that we could share our stories of faith with the people of your church and ask the people of your church to share your stories of faith with us. We would like to explore ways...to worship together, pray together, and serve Jesus Christ together. And, who would like to explore ways in which our church could become personally involved in a specific project...This particular project has to do with the restoration of full electrical service to Lubondai...If the people from our church could be blessed by God to actively and personally participate in the repairs that would bring water and electrical power to Lubondai, we would truly feel blessed by God...if it be the will of God, I dream of the day when our church will be blessed with the opportunity to share stories of faith, the blessings of God, and the love of Jesus Christ with all of you who serve the Lord Jesus Christ so faithfully in Lubondai." "As Elder John Metzel has explained it to us, the dam built by Muambi Tshihungulu (Carroll Stegall) broke some years ago, stopped the flow of water that turned the turbine at the hydroelectric plant that provided water and power to Lubondai, It is Elder John Metzel's hope and dream to assist in the repair of that dam so that water may once again flow through the turbines at the hydroelectric plant and bring much-needed electrical power and water to Lubondai."

The church leaders at Lubondai Church, Dr. Jean Bertin Kazumba Kazumba at Lubondai hospital & the staff, Martin Luboya (administrator of the Nursing School), and

the Paramount Traditional Chief Ntolo Kabenga all pledge their support and cooperation. Their letters and 29 recent digital photos of the dam are available as part of a feasibility study.

Besides the support of John's church, he has also been successfully seeking partnerships and matching grants to raise funds for this project. If you are interested in helping out financially, tax free contributions may be sent to: First Presbyterian Church of Annandale, Attn: Lubondai Dam Repair Project – Account 137, 7610 Newcastle Drive, Annandale, VA 22003-5499.

Questions? Contact John Metzel; JTMetzel@aol.com; (703)642-1404.

GOD'S COFFEE

A group of alumni, all highly established in their respective careers, got together for a visit with their old university professor. The conversation soon turned to complaints about the endless stress of work and life in general. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went into the kitchen and soon returned with a large pot of coffee and an eclectic assortment of cups: porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal - some plain, some expensive, some quite exquisite. Quietly he told them to help themselves to some fresh coffee..

When each of his former students had a cup of coffee in hand, the old professor quietly cleared his throat and began to patiently address the small gathering... "You may have noticed that all of the nicer looking cups were taken up first, leaving behind the plainer and cheaper ones. While it is only natural for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is actually the source of much of your stress-related problems."

He continued..."Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In fact, the cup merely disguises or dresses up what we drink. What each of you really wanted was coffee, not a cup, but you instinctively went for the best cups... Then you began eyeing each other's cups...."

"Now consider this: Life is coffee. Jobs, money, and position in society are merely cups. They are just tools to shape and contain Life, and the type of cup we have does not truly define nor change the quality of the Life we live. Often, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee that God has provided us... God brews the coffee, but he does not supply the cups. Enjoy your coffee!"

The happiest people don't have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything... So please remember: Live simply. Love generously. Care Deeply. Speak Kindly. Leave the rest to God.

Contributed by Don Jackson



ATTENTION!

Deadline for the December issue of *FIRST and ForMOST* is November 16, 2007. Please e-mail your announcements and reports to Marta Strada, LUXI7777@aol.com, or put them in the *FIRST and ForMOST* drawer in the church office. Thank you.