



FIRST and ForMOST

April 2010

EASTER MESSAGE
from the
ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR

And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Corinthians 5:15-17)

April is a spring month. We all learned the little ditty growing up: “April showers bring May flowers.” So as the calendar page turns over to April, spring begins. As the calendar page turns over to April we also experience Holy Week. Holy Week is a time of great emotions for all of us who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The week begins with everyone cheering as Jesus enters into Jerusalem, on a donkey.

The Jews are expecting a new life and a new beginning which will be led by Jesus the warrior king. They fully back this rebellion against the Roman authorities. They are confident in the thought that their Messiah has arrived and that Messiah will lead them in battle against the Romans and overthrow the oppression they experience. As the week progresses, they will become very disappointed.

As they gather around the table to celebrate Passover with Jesus, hope abounds. Jesus has led them into the city and surely as the meal progresses they will be called to action as leaders of the Messiah’s army. How hard must it have been to hear the words “this is my body broken for you” and “this is the cup of salvation in my blood.” The battle will be victorious because they have the one who will save their nation. They do not understand the form which this victorious battle will take. Just 24 hours later Jesus will have been arrested, he will have been crucified and he will have died. If we did not know the rest of the story, I am sure that we would join the disciples and all of Jesus’ followers in their despair and hopelessness.

But as a Christian community we know the rest of the story found in words of Scripture. We know that on Sunday morning as the women went to the tomb to properly prepare the body they found that Jesus was not there. The resurrection was at hand, Jesus is alive bringing with him new life for each and every person.

As I contemplate the meaning of this new life, not only for myself but for this wonderful congregation of believers who worship at 7610 Newcastle Drive, I believe that this new life means we must be open and ready to accept all the challenges God places before us in a new way. Spring is here and this spring we have new challenges placed before us by God who will lead us through each step if only we will allow it.

The winter of 2009-2010 had been hard on our community. We experienced record breaking snowfalls that caused damage. This damage may be in the form of broken roofs and wet basements or it may be in the form of lost trees and plants. But it may also be in the form of broken spirits as we watched loved ones struggle with illness and pass from this world to God or we lost income due to the state of the economy. But we now enter the meteorological season of spring where the plants begin to bloom. As I came into the church today to work on this article, I noticed that the daffodils are beginning to peek out of the ground and I heard that some of our friends have seen their crocuses coming out from the darkness of winter sleep. Just as Paul told the Corinthians that the old has passed away and all is a new creation, as the flowers bloom this year they may look like their predecessors from previous springs but they are a new creation. They are different from the flowers of previous years because the colors will be different, maybe more muted or maybe more vibrant; but they will be wonderful new creations.

Our new life in Christ allows us to come out of the darkness of winter sleep. I would challenge you to think about what that new life encompasses at First Presbyterian Church of Annandale. How will our new creation be more vibrant this spring season? The sanctuary renovation is progressing. As the Building and Grounds commission and the Decorating Committee do their work we need to keep them in prayer. Our sanctuary will receive new life so that we can continue to praise God in a place that honors God's blessings upon us. The Congregational Life and New Member commission continues to seek ways to spread the good news of Easter to our neighbors. Some of you will experience your new life in Christ this year as ways to support the work of this commission.

Our new life in Christ brings with it the responsibility to praise God continually. Our new life in Christ asks us to stretch and grow like the flowers of springtime. We all must search our hearts and find what newness in Christ brings new to our hearts as we are inspired to do the work God puts before us. And we need to remember that we may have tasks before us that are a challenge. But God promises to be with us through it all.

PRAISE BE TO GOD

Susi Ennis

  **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**  

Isabelle Fennig ~ 04/05

Sarah Metzler ~ 04/06

Nancy Manning ~ 04/07

Stuart Dahlinger ~ 04/13

Jean Prager ~ 04/14

Bev Schubert ~ 04/16

Ruth Hartman ~ 04/18

Larry Cook ~ 04/20

Ken Hartman ~ 04/20

Daniel DeVera ~ 04/21

Sam Looker ~ 04/21

PREACHING SCHEDULE for APRIL 2010

April 1, 2010: **MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE** (7:30 PM)

(With the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper)

Scripture Lesson: John 13: 1-20

Sermon: **"HOW CLEAN ARE YOUR FEET?"**

Elder Susan Ennis, Preaching

April 2, 2010: **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE** (7:30 PM)

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

April 4, 2010: **EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE** (6:30 AM) ---

EASTER BREAKFAST (7:30 AM)

EASTER WORSHIP SERVICE (10:00 AM)

(With the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper)

Scripture Lesson: Luke 24: 1-12

Sermon: **"DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION?"**

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

April 11, 2010: Scripture Lesson: Psalm 118:22-24

Sermon: **"WHAT A GREAT DAY!"**

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

April 18, 2010: Scripture Lesson: John 21: 1-19

Sermon: **"HAVE YOU CAUGHT ANY FISH LATELY?"**

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

April 25, 2010: Scripture Lesson: Psalm 23

Sermon: **"GOD'S COMFORTING STAFF"**

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

MEET THE APOSTLES

ADULT CHURCH SCHOOL

April 11 through June 6, 2010, 11:30 am

Come and meet the Twelve Apostles Jesus had called to be not only his disciples, but to spread the Good News all over the world. They come from various backgrounds, their nature, their temperament varies. Marta Strada has spent months putting the material together, and she is eager to share with you what she has learned about them. Come, meet the Apostles with her!

THANK YOU

Our generous Congregation donated \$ 950 to help the people in Haiti struck by the earthquake!

THE MESSIAH

by Ruth Sutton

Palm Sunday

I wait by the side of the road to see the Messiah!
Oh look! Is that he? The man riding on a donkey?
Can he really be the Messiah?
The people are spreading palms along the way
It must be true

Mid week

I sat in a group of people to listen to this man
They called him Jesus
He spoke of love and everlasting life
I'm not sure what he meant, but I want it anyway

Thursday

I helped prepare the Passover meal for him and his 12
followers
My master didn't know I stayed and hid to watch them
Jesus gave them bread and told them it was his Body!
He said it would be broken for them
So they would have the everlasting life he talked about
Then he gave them wine to drink and said it was his Blood!
He said something about a new covenant he was giving
them.

Friday

Oh how awful! They've nailed the Messiah to a cross!
Someone said he claimed to be King of the Jews
He broke the law and is being crucified because of it
I wanted to hear him speak again

Tuesday After Easter

Some one told me that The Messiah is alive!
I'll be able to hear him again and learn what
He meant about everlasting life

I can hardly wait!

MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE

August 1 - 7, 2010

Each summer Montreat Camp and Conference Center located in the western mountains of North Carolina holds a youth conference for high school students. This year the theme of the conference is **“In These Waters.”** The website for Montreat has the following words to say about the conference: *Called from the chaos, we gather in this sacred space, rooted in God’s call and purpose. We seek to provide an authentic community of unconditional love where each individual gives and receives support, trust, and acceptance from others. We will encourage and empower youth to encounter God in, through, and with each other to ask questions, embrace challenges, and be commissioned to apply their faith relevantly in the world.* A Montreat Youth Conference is a gathering of young people from all over the country for a week of study, worship, and recreation. Activities include morning energizers, music, keynote, small group meetings where the conference theme is explored, afternoon recreation activities, and evening worship.

The Mission Commission is offering the opportunity for rising high school freshmen through graduated seniors to attend the Youth Conference held August 1 – 7, 2010. While details about final cost are being sorted out we do need to begin gathering the names of those students who are interested in going on this trip. If you are interested in going on this wonderful trip, please contact Dr. Chris Looker or Susi Ennis to get on the list.

Susi Ennis

ECUADOR MISSION TRIP

July 17 - 31, 2010

As was previously reported, First Korean Presbyterian Church of Virginia is arranging a mission trip to Ecuador. The date has now been set. It will be July 17 through 31, 2010. The trip is open to all rising high school seniors, college age students and adults. This is the 2nd year for the trip. There is the possibility to attend one or both weeks of this trip. The current plan is that Elder Jonathan Shin from FKPCV will be leading the group July 17-24 and Dr. Chris Looker from FPCA will be leading the group July 24-31. There is still time to get in on this great opportunity. Please see Dr. Looker if you are interested or have any questions.

Susi Ennis

SOUND SYSTEM

The Worship Commission is looking for people who are interested in learning how to operate the sound system during worship service. You would be put on a team, and teams would rotate so no one has to do it every Sunday.

Please contact Sandy Mori , 703-876-4991, or Susan Hanson in the office if you are willing to serve the Church in this area.

Sandy Mori

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

February 17, 2010

This time the Session meeting started right after Ash Wednesday Worship Service. For the devotion, Elder Ruth Sutton read from A Gentle Thunder, Hearing God Through the Storm, by Max Lucado, telling us that God, the Author of Life gives us light in darkness.

Clerk of Session, Elder Marta Strada reported that a letter has been received from former member Lois Tichenor who has transferred to First Presbyterian Church of Naples, Florida. She is transferring with a heavy heart, as she has loved FPCA dearly for so many years. She even donated a generous gift of \$ 500 to show her gratitude. Elder Strada also reported that the Letter of Agreement for Margaret Whitfield as Interim Organist/Choir Director has been signed. She will be Interim Organist/Choir Director for 8 weeks, that is, until the organ has to be protected from dust due to the renovation of the Sanctuary.

Next, the Session was informed about the progress the Architects Group Practice Ltd. (ArGP) has made, meeting and planning with Buildings and Grounds Commission and the Decorating Committee on the Church Improvement Program Chancel Design. Elder Paul Malone, Representative of the Buildings and Grounds Commission, welcomed the architects Andrew Schiefer and Garret Nicholson from ArGP, and the Session members walked over with them to the Sanctuary to learn about the design planned for the chancel area. The pews had been moved to the proposed position, and the layout of the chancel area was designed on the floor. Impressed by the excellent plans, the Session approved the motion to accept the dimensions, size and basic chancel design presented by ArGP.

After the architects had departed, the Session approved the motion to elect the following members nominated and elected as officers for FPCA, Inc. for 2010:

President: Elder Ruth Sutton, Vice President: Elder Thomas Martin;
Treasurer: Elder Judi Reitman; Secretary: Elder Marta Strada.

As the Commissions had not been able to meet during the past weeks, due to the heavy snow storms, only one important report was presented to the Session. Elder Judi Reitman informed the Session that only few members of the congregation have paid the \$31.00 Per Capita, which is assessed to all Presbyterian churches, paying the administrative costs of Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly. The envelopes on the table in the back of the Sanctuary are not being widely used by our members. It was agreed that the Session must communicate better to the congregation how important it is for individual members to pay the Per Capita for 2010.

Marta Strada, Clerk of Session

TO MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

*Thank you for your contributions to the memorial fund at FPCA
in remembrance of Smitty. You are truly a loving church family.*

With love,

Lois Little

THINKING GREEN AGAIN

For so long the view outside my window was bleak and snow-covered, but now the miracle of Spring is apparent everywhere, and our spirits are celebrating the return of sunshine and longer days. It's easier to think about our connection with the earth when we can get outdoors and enjoy its many blessings.

Having just read the book Animal, Vegetable, Miracle by Barbara Kingsolver (a former Book Club selection) about a family's year-long attempt to grow their own food and eat what is available locally, I am anxiously awaiting the return of the Farmer's Markets in our parks and the taste of fresh summer produce. Planting a garden, or just putting a few tomatoes in pots or herbs on the windowsill, is one of the things we can do to help maintain our connection with the source of our food.

April 22nd is Earth Day, with activities and celebrations to remind us of our interdependence with our fruitful planet and of the need to ensure its health and abundance for future generations. But just as we need not wait until Easter Sunday to realize and appreciate the gift of Christ's resurrection, I hope that each Spring day will remind us of the gifts of Creation and increase our desire to protect them. Take a walk. Plant a tree. Drive less. Eat fresh, local, organically grown food. Skip meat products for a meal. Skip the plastic bag.

To quote Meister Eckhart (1260-1328 AD), "Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. ...Every creature is a word of God." Happy Springtime!!

Norma Muller

FLORIDA COURT SETS ATHEIST HOLY DAY!

In Florida, an atheist created a case against the upcoming Easter and Passover Holy days. He hired an attorney to bring a discrimination case against Christians, Jews and observances of their holy days. The argument was that it was unfair that atheists had no such recognized days.

The case was brought before a judge. After listening to the passionate presentation by the lawyer, the judge banged his gavel declaring, "Case dismissed!"

The lawyer immediately stood objecting to the ruling saying, "Your honor, how can you possibly dismiss this case? The Christians have Christmas, Easter and others. The Jews have Passover, Yom Kippur and Hanukkah, yet my client and all other atheists have no such holidays."

The judge leaned forward in his chair saying, "But you do. Your client, Counsel, is woefully ignorant."

The lawyer said, "Your Honor, we are unaware of any special observance or holiday for atheists."

The judge said, "The calendar says April 1st is April Fool's Day. Psalm 14:1 states, 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God.' Thus, it is the opinion of this court, that if your client says there is no God, then he is a fool. Therefore, April 1st is his day.

Court is adjourned. "

Contributed by Isabelle Fennig

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

April 11
April 18
April 25

Carrie Rodrigues
Ben Looker
Joshua Musih

YOUTH NEWS!

Easter Egg Hunt

On Easter Sunday, April 4th, after the church service at 11:30 a.m., we will be having an Easter Egg Hunt for those children 6th grade and below. We would ask the older youth to help us set up and run the event. Please invite those in the community to join us to celebrate Easter and hunt for Easter eggs!



Donations Needed!

Sarah Tariq Javed has been chosen to attend the 2010 Youth Triennium in Indiana this summer, and we would like to help her fund this important

trip for Presbyterian high school students. We may have a car wash this spring, so keep your eyes and ears peeled. Also, church members may donate dollars if so moved to help Sarah attend this moving event, which Christina DeVera last attended from our church.



Souperbowl of Caring Results

FPCA Youth collected \$230.00 and more than 2 dozen canned items for our local food bank, Annandale Christian Community for Action, or ACCA. Thanks to all of you who helped. All participants have raised more than \$9 million so far in 2010 for local mission groups.

A Week in Montreat, North Carolina?

The Mission Committee is thinking of sending our youth to the Montreat Youth Conference this summer, rather than participate in another Mission Trip this summer. If anyone is interested, please see Chris or Genny Looker, or Susi Ennis.

Genny

Looker

CRUISING THE MEDITERRANEAN **from ISTANBUL to BARCELONA** **October 31 through November 15, 2009** **by Marta Strada**

On Saturday, October 31, 2009, I joined Richard and Betty Ford's group to participate in the Grand Cruise of the Mediterranean, my 19th tour with them!

We arrived in Istanbul Sunday afternoon and took a long bus ride to our hotel. This ancient city, the former Constantinople, bridges Europe and Asia, its history going back to the 7th century B.C. We got a flavor of its age as the bus took us along the comparatively new city wall dating back only to the 1400s AD.

The hotel where we stayed was a fascinating building: it had been constructed by connecting two houses on two sides of the street. Carriages used to pass where the main lobby and restaurant are now located. We had our dinner "on the street," and ... surprise! As we ate, we were greeted by a very familiar couple: Randy and Don Meli! Don't we live in a small world? They stayed in the same hotel, and were ready to start on a tour of Egypt.

Even on our short bus tour of **Istanbul** we could not miss the Egyptian, Mohammedan atmosphere of the city, from the Yopkapi Palace with its jewelry and clothing on

display, the Grand Bazaar with some 4000 stores attracting the tourists, to the Kariye Museum, which used to be a church with wonderful mosaic pictures to tell Bible stories to illiterate worshipers. The highlights of our stay in Istanbul were two impressive mosques, located on top of a hill. First, we visited the Hagia Sophia, originally the Christian St. Stephen's Church, which was converted into a mosque in the 15th century, at the time the Ottomans conquered Constantinople. As the Hagia Sophia is still under reconstruction, we could admire it only from the outside. Close by stands the impressive Blue Mosque which we were allowed to enter and admire its gorgeous blue decorations. Also very impressive was the Basilica Cistern in which water is kept underground, illuminated by lamps. As we walked around the pond, we saw precious medieval sculpture standing in the water. Our last stop was the Spice Bazaar, a covered market dating back to the 17th century, with some 2000 shops offering spices and sweets.

The next day we boarded our ship, and the cruise of the Mediterranean began. We sailed towards Izmir, so we could tour the famous ancient city of **Ephesus** the following day. I had been there in 2006 and thought it would be interesting to visit it again. Once, as we read in the Book of Revelation, it was considered to be "*the most magnificent of the magnificent cities of Asia.*" It dealt with "*cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth, ... ivory, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incenses, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is human souls.*" (Revelation 18:12, 13). The Apostle Paul came here to set some of those souls free. He stayed there for two years, teaching and preaching. We spent only a couple of hours in this city of ruins, overcrowded with tourists. We had problems. Our group could not get on the same tour bus. I was glad to team up with a couple from our group, who were just as lost as I was. In Ephesus there must have been thousands of tourists, and we had a hard time not only to hear our guide, but to stay with her group. Fortunately I knew something about the history of this great biblical place – because our guide did not even mention references you find in the Bible, not even mentioning St. Paul. We walked past the ruins of the basilica where St. John the Evangelist lies buried – our guide did not mention that either. But I did have a pleasant moment during this unpleasant time of confusion. Somebody tapped my shoulder – and when

I turned around, there was Randy Meli, who also toured Ephesus the same day. Imagine, in this huge crowd of tourists we were at the same spot at the same time. We greeted each other, took a couple of pictures, but had to go on. A short time later I ran into Don, Randy's husband, who wondered whether I had seen Randy – he had lost her in this confusion. To top it off, a thunderstorm and heavy rain hit us, and by the time we got to our bus, we were soaking wet. What an interesting day.

In the evening we sailed towards Greece, landing at Piraeus, the Port of **Athens**. The Fords had signed up to climb up to the Acropolis, but as I had done it in 2006, I preferred to stay on the ship and visit **Athens** only in memory.

The next day we sailed across the Ionian Sea – relaxing on deck, watching the waves, listening to bagpipes playing *Amazing Grace* in the background. We arrived on the coast of the Adriatic Sea at **Dubrovnik**. The prosperity of this Croatian city has always been based on maritime trade. In the Middle Ages it became the only eastern Adriatic city-state rivaling Venice. A bus took us to Old Town along the ancient city wall, where we visited the Franciscan monastery. We had a delicious pizza-lunch which, in my opinion, was too Italian to fit the atmosphere of Venice's rival, Dubrovnik.

We continued our cruise, and the rain stayed with us all the way to **Venice**. The first time I visited Venice with my husband Frank, 38 years ago. At that time I thoroughly enjoyed its beauty, the churches, the gondola ride, and the pigeons on St. Mark's Square. Exactly 7 years ago, in November 2002, I was there again, on a tour led by Richard Ford. At that time I noticed the difference – this ancient city, built on more than 100 islands linked by some 400 bridges was slowly but surely sinking into the sea. In the morning, *St. Mark's Square* was entirely under water, and we had to walk over raised walkways to reach the places we wanted to visit, but a few hours later the water was gone, and the pigeons were looking for their breadcrumbs. And now? It was raining when Richard, Betty and I took the shuttle boat to the pier at St. Mark's Square, and stepped on land. On land? The water was higher than 7 years ago, the wooden walkways were higher too. We did walk up to St. Mark's Square which was all under water. We heard that there was water even inside St. Mark's Cathedral. *Water, water everywhere, and no drop to drink?* Well, we did not want to drink water anyway - we preferred the most delicious hot chocolate we found in a coffee shop close by. Soon it was time to return to our ship. Good-bye Venice!

From Venice we sailed south, all around the foot of Italy, in rain, sunshine, thunderstorms, till we landed at the port of Naples. The Fords and I had been to Naples before, so we preferred to take a tour of the Island of **Capri**. A hydrofoil took us to this famous island. It has been a resort since the time of the Roman Republic. White houses overlook the sea, sitting on the slope of the mountain amidst gardens, shadowed by trees. No wonder that when we visited St. Michael's Church, we noticed that its majolica floor portrayed scenes of Paradise on Earth. Our bus wound its way up the narrow streets, so we could take the chair lift to the summit. Up we went – our feet dangling in the air, enjoying the scenery below. From the top the view was even more gorgeous – the town, the rocks rising from the sea --- what beautiful, peaceful scenery. No wonder this island has been loved for centuries by its visitors, from the Roman Emperors to today's hordes of tourists.

Our next big event was visiting **Rome**. The Fords and I had signed up for the Angels and Demons Tour – of course, we were the angels. I wish we could have spread our wings and fly from our port Civitavecchia, to Rome, but we had to ride the bus for over 2 hours to get there. The streets were crowded with traffic, and we walked for hours, visiting churches, the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain, and rested enjoying an Italian lunch on Square Navona admiring two beautiful fountains. The lunch restored our energy to visit St. Peter's Basilica. You almost feel lost in this huge place of worship and hardly know which sculpture you should admire more – at the same time keeping an eye on your group so you don't end up with the wrong one. And we had to watch the clock, to get back to our ship on time. No wonder our guide got irritated when I stopped to take pictures. The devil was acting up! No wonder our tour was called "Angels and Demons." This was Rome in a few hours..... the last time we were there we stayed for a few days and could not see it all.

After another day of peaceful sailing, we arrived in Spain to visit **Barcelona**, the cultural and political center of Catalonia. We disembarked early in the morning, and went on a bus tour of Barcelona before we checked in at our hotel. Our guide explained that the popular language there was Catalanian, which is different from Spanish. We got a glimpse of the city on an orientation tour, admired the older Gothic Quarter with its Spanish architecture and wide avenues, stopped at the Church La Sagrada Familia (Holy Family Church) which has been under construction for centuries. You could observe the architectural style changing from Gothic to more modern. After lunch the Fords and I took a cab and visited

a wonderful Gothic church, the Cathedral of Barcelona. We spent quite some time there, just sitting in the pew, listening to organ practice, meditating. What a great conclusion of our interesting, thought provoking, even relaxing Grand Mediterranean Cruise Tour full of memories. If you want me to share them with you, come to the slide show planned for a Sunday evening after Easter, The exact date will be announced soon.

GOD CREATED A BEAUTIFUL WORLD. LET'S NOT RUIN IT!

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Deadline for the May issue of FIRST and ForMOST is April 15, 2010. Please e-mail your announcements and reports to the Editor, Marta Strada, LUXI7777@aol.com, or put them in the FIRST and ForMOST drawer in the church office. Thank you.