



FIRST and ForMOST

April 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT TO THE PASTOR

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, [the women] came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Luke 24:1-5)

On April 12 we will celebrate Easter Sunday with joy and excitement. Easter is a time of new life and of new beginnings. The passage from Luke tells us that the women who came to the tomb, expecting to find Jesus' body, were perplexed when they discovered the heavy stone rolled away and the body gone. They were confused as they contemplated what this meant. How had the stone been moved? Where was Jesus' body? What do we do now? What does this mean for our future? These are all valid questions which have been contemplated by Christians across the ages.

Scripture teaches us that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ means new life in the present and a hope for eternal life with God. Once we have met Jesus our lives are never the same. If we truly have Jesus Christ in our hearts, then we are full of new possibilities and new dreams. It echoes the words from Luke 1:37, *"For nothing is impossible with God."* Change may seem impossible, but it is not. Letting go of old habits, old hurts, old sins may seem impossible, but it is not. Taking on new habits, new ministries, new ways of living may seem impossible, but it is not.

Over the past several months the session of this congregation has been presenting a vision of new life for this church. I know that together we have taken the step to make our facility a safe and welcoming place to worship God and to learn together about God's will. There are additional ways in which we each can individually and corporately move forward into the new life to which God calls us. I would ask that you prayerfully consider where God is leading you in new life, in new ministry, in new opportunity. It may be that you are called to participate in the Pastor's class, join a commission, or participate in one of the ministries or activities that you hadn't previously considered.

In 2008 the New Member/Congregational Life Commission held a day of prayer for our neighborhood. Many of us participated on that day. I would like to ask that we all remain in prayer for our neighbors, especially those who have not found a church home. Help us all to find a way in which we can be the light of Christ to those who are living in darkness. We are asked by God to go and be light to those in darkness, to provide hope to those who are in despair, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. My challenge to you this Easter Season is this: How is the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale called by God to provide light and hope to our neighbors.

Love in Christ,

Susi Ennis

HOW IS FPCA GOING TO GROW IN MEMBERSHIP IN THE FUTURE?

The answer to this question is, in part, that we all need to become "CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIANS!" That is the topic which Dr. Looker will continue to focus on in his Pastor's Class in room 105 after the worship services on April 5th (Palm Sunday), April 19th, and April 26th. This DVD series, "*Becoming a Contagious Christian!*", was developed by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg, Willow Creek Ministries, and the International Bible Society to help churches that sincerely want to grow in faith and membership learn exactly how to do it! Together, we can grow in our faith in Jesus Christ **and** in membership so that our next 50 years will be ones filled with excitement, joy, and service...all to the glory of God. Thank you.

ADULT CHURCH SCHOOL IN MAY

Beginning on May 3, Susi Ennis will use the Pastor's class to introduce (or reintroduce) members of the class to the Book of Confessions. The Book of Confessions is Part 1 of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and contains the creeds, confessions and catechisms which inform our beliefs. The confessions are those which have been developed by the church across the centuries to help us better understand how God speaks to us and how we relate to God. This class will end on June 7.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING

Some 60 years ago, in response to the devastation of World War II, there was a radio broadcast in which Americans were asked to give their churches funds to meet the needs of the country. Today the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is one of the denominations which receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Easter Sunday. The offering is divided by the church to support several programs. The Self-Development of People program, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program all benefit from the funds received in this offering. If you would like to learn more about the programs which benefit from this offering, please visit the PC (USA) website at www.pcusa.org.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!!

We welcome Kyle Hanson and Helen Sanders to FPCA! We thank the Lord that He led them to FPCA, and we are looking forward to worshipping Him together.

PREACHING SCHEDULE for APRIL 2009

Sunday, April 5, 2009: 10:00 AM

Palm Sunday/Holy Communion

Scripture Lesson: Mark 11: 1-10

Sermon: *"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HARRY POTTER?" Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

Thursday, April 9, 2009: 7:30 PM

Maundy Thursday Holy Communion Service

Scripture Lessons: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and John 13:1-15

Meditation: *"PLEASE DO NOT FORGET ME!"*

Friday, April 10, 2009: 7:30 PM

Good Friday Service

Sunday, April 12, 2009

Easter Sunrise Service (6:00 AM)

Easter Sunday Celebration and Worship Service (10:00 AM)

Scripture Lessons: John 20:1-18; Mark 16:1-8

Sermon : *"EASTER: A TONIC FOR THE SOUL"*

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

Sunday, April 19, 2009: 10:00 AM

Second Sunday of Easter

Christian Mission Service Sunday

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: *"FINDING LIGHT IN LUBONDAI"*

by Elder John Metzger

Sunday, April 26, 2009: 10:00 AM

Third Sunday of Easter

Scripture Lesson: 1 John 3:1-7

Sermon Title: *"WHAT WILL WE BE?"*

Susan Ennis Preaching

  **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**  

Isabelle Fennig
Nancy Manning
Stuart Dahlinger
Jean Prager
Bev Schubert
Ruth Hartman

April 5
April 7
April 13
April 14
April 16
April 18

Larry Cook
Ken Hartman
Daniel DeVera
Sam Looker
Bob Scott

April 20
April 20
April 21
April 21
April 23

LENT - TALKING WITH GOD

by Ruth Sutton

I love the seasons of the Church, God

We start with Advent

That joyous season of waiting for your Son's birth!

Next we have Ordinary Time

I've never understood how we can call a day ordinary

When You are there with us.

Maybe we can rename it Special Time.

We approach Lent a day before it starts with a

Raucous party, singing, dancing
With little thought of You
Ash Wednesday starts Lent
A mournful, yet joyous season
Lent asks us to be aware of your Son.
We reflect, sacrifice, fast.
We study about your never ending love for us.
We approach Palm Sunday with Joy! Happy Hearts!
And then we share that final supper with Jesus
Wail at His capture.
. Hide from the soldiers.
Cry at His crucifixion.
We sleep and wake up on Sunday knowing something is different.
Christ has risen!
Christ had risen, indeed.
Thank you, God for that wonderful gift of forgiveness.

COMMUNITY EASTER EGG HUNT

This year there will be a Community Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday before Easter, April 11. FPCA and FKPCV are preparing together for this casual outing. It will consist of egg hunt, games, music, and food! Watch for more information in the near future.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

February 18, 2009

Co-Clerk of Session, Elder Nadine Dingess, reported that the Annual Presbytery Statistical Report was turned in before the deadline. The Annual Church Report is 95% complete and will be printed the following week. Co-Clerks Matos and Dingess are planning to review the roles and records, and update the books.

Youth Elder Tyler Young reported that the result of the Souper Bowl youth event was excellent, and the young people had a great time on Superbowl Sunday at the Looker house.

Assistant to the Pastor Susi Ennis announced that she successfully passed Final Assessment. She has been asked to facilitate a youth retreat for Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church the weekend of March 13-15.

Dr. Looker informed the Session that the contract with Susi Ennis runs through June 2009. FPCA is interested in finding a new seminary intern from Wesley Theological Seminary or Virginia Theological Seminary. He also reported that on April 29 there will be a joint meeting of the Worship, Marketing and Stewardship, and the Congregational Life/New Member Commissions to make plans for a contemporary worship service. Dr. Looker also told the Session that Judi Reitman will resign as Church Treasurer at the end of 2009, and a replacement will have to be found by October for proper training with Judi. She will continue to be Corporation Treasurer till the end of 2010.

Chair of the FPCA/SHPS Task Force, Judi Reitman, reported that negotiation with Sleepy Hollow is planned, to extend their lease for 2 more years, ending in 2012, involving various issues like custodial care and the use of the Activities Building.

Reporting for the **Congregational Life/New Member Commission**, Elder Cara Lauler put forth a motion that on February 24 the sanctuary could be used for games when hosting the Mardi Gras Pancake Dinner. The Session approved the motion.

Reporting for **Worship Commission**, Elder Sandy Mori reported that a skit will be included in the worship service on March 8, when Susi Ennis is preaching on the Gifts of Women. The skit will contain the conversation between two women and John Calvin. She also emphasized that the commission would like to find a way to attract more members to worship on Ash Wednesday. Elder Mori also reported that the choir of St. Barnabas will not need our sanctuary for practice in the summer, as was originally planned, as the choir director had to resign for health reasons.

Reporting for the **Mission Commission**. Elder Nadine Dingess reported that on February 23 the Commission is putting together bagged breakfast/lunch foods for 45 people. The bags will be taken to the Baileys Crossroads Community Shelter for the homeless. Elder Dingess also reported the delivery of clothing from the January adult drive to the shelter. A welcome home party for Elder John Metzel is planned for March 8th after Worship Service. Elder Dingess and Dr. Looker also spoke briefly about an upcoming 3 day long Creation Festival in June which may interest our youth.

Reporting for **Building & Grounds Commission**, Elder Jack Smith reported that work on the roof has started. It will be done in stages, in a very organized manner.

Reporting for the **Christian Education Commission**, Elder Marta Strada reminded that the elders had received the commission's report by e-mail. She emphasized that a "Movie on the Lawn" may be a great plan for a summer activity.

Reporting for the **Marketing and Stewardship Commission**, Elder Ruth Sutton reported that the three luncheon held in February were a great success; some good ideas were expressed by the participants. The overall reaction was very positive.

Based on Minutes of the Session Meeting by *Nadine Dingess*, Co-Clerk of Session

SPECIAL CALLED ECCLESIASTICAL AND CORPORATION CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

February 22, 2009

After our Worship Service on Sunday, February 22, we had two required congregational meetings to vote to approve a loan of \$200,000 from our Presbyterian Church (USA) Investment and Loan Program (hereafter referred to as "PCUSA Loan Program"). The purpose of the loan is to make needed refurbishment of our church, including the repair and replacement of roofing, replacement of the boiler, improvement of the sanctuary interior (flooring, electric upgrades and lighting, organ care, painting and seating), resurfacing and lining of the parking lot, and sound/multimedia system.

During the **Special Called Ecclesiastical Congregational Meeting**, Elder Ruth Sutton presented a motion to borrow \$200,000 from the PCUSA Loan Program, with an interest rate of 5% for the first 5 years. After this

time the interest rate will be subject to review. The term of the loan shall be 20 years. Discussion followed, during which Elder Sutton explained that after 5 years the interest may either increase or decrease, but the highest interest ever charged by PCUSA Loan Program has been 7%. It is hoped that the loan will be paid off in seven years. The congregation approved the motion unanimously. Next, Elder Nadine Dingess presented a motion to elect Church Trustees to serve as elected representatives and official signatories to complete the process of transferring the church's deed from the church to the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale, Inc., Corporation. This motion was also necessary to satisfy the conditions for getting the loan. The Active Members serving as Church Trustees are Sandy Mori, Ken Hartman, Ruth Sutton, Pat Hickey, and Paul Malone. Their term will take effect immediately, and end December 31, 2009. This motion was also approved unanimously.

This meeting was immediately followed by the **Special Called Corporation Congregational Meeting**. Elder Paul Malone moved that FPCA approve the borrowing \$200,000 in the form of a loan from the PCUSA Loan Program, with the interest rate of 5% for a period of five years, after which time it is subject to review. The term of the loan shall be 20 years. After discussion, the congregation approved the motion unanimously.

Both congregational meetings were opened and closed with prayer.

CARE OF GOD'S CREATION - ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Congregational Life and New Member Commission will be sponsoring a series of discussions of what we can do, both as individuals and as a church, to better care for God's wonderful Creation. Please plan to attend our first presentation on Sunday, April 19th, at 4 PM. Our speaker will be Rev. Pat Watkins, an ordained minister and former missionary to Nigeria, who currently serves as a church and community worker for the United Methodist Church, assigned to a ministry to God's creation.

His presentation is engaging and interactive, humorous, thought provoking, and based on Biblical teachings about humankind's relationship with the earth. Refreshments (finger foods) will be served after the presentation. Mark your calendar for April 19th and plan to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Norma Muller at nbaileymuller@aol.com.

ACCA THANKS FPCA AND FKPCV

Whatever you do to the least of these
My brethren, that you do unto Me. *(Matthew 25)*

On behalf of ACCA, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude your donation of \$449.13. Thank you for caring.

Sincerely,

Sue Mukim

TO THE YOUTH GROUPS

What a great gift! This money will help feed many families.

You are great to spread the love of Jesus!

God Bless all of you!

FPCA YOUTH!

Join Laura Hall and others on an expedition to the shores of Maryland to hunt for fossils!
Saturday, April 25th is the day. We'll leave from the church parking lot at 9:00 a.m., and return by 4:00 p.m. Friends are welcome to join us. Please let Laura or Genny Looker know if you plan to attend.

ACOLYTES in APRIL

12-Apr: Andrew Lauler

19-Apr: Nathan Youmans

26 Apr: Carrie Rodrigues

AND GOD SAID THAT IT WAS GOOD

God Created "Down Under"

by Marta Strada

Australia / New Zealand – what an awe inspiring part of our world! When I traveled through those magnificent countries, I could not help reflecting on Genesis 1 while enjoying the beauty of this varied, wonderful landscape. Let me share my impressions with you.

And God said: "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:3-4)

"Let there be light" – what a meaningful command when you have spent around 15 hours in darkness, flying all night, and suddenly light appears on the horizon, becomes brighter and brighter, until the sun appears.

And God said that it was good.

And God said: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. (Genesis 1:9)

Yes, there was water – reflected in the surf of the ocean, in powerful and very fine waterfalls cascading down the steep sides of a fjord in New Zealand, deep blue lakes, snow covered mountain ranges, glaciers with their eternal ice.

There was dry land – miles and miles of sand and rocks without any life in the red mountains rising abruptly: the Olgas and the famous Ayers Rock. Frightening, yet beautiful.

And God said that it was good.

And God said: "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kind, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. (Genesis 1:11)

After having seen all that lifeless landscape in central Australia, what an impressive sight to see a small plant, a little flower raising its colorful blossom from the sand. As you leave the outback, grass appears, green fields, bushes, trees, trees you do not know by name, yet enjoy their lush foliage. You see crops on farmlands bringing forth their seeds, gardens full of spring flowers, tropical rainforests with their abundance of ferns, all sorts of plants, mossy trunks.

And God said that it was good.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." (Genesis 1:20)

Have you seen the marine labyrinth of the Great Barrier Reef with its swarms of colorful fish swimming around the magnificent coral formations? Or penguins emerging from the surf, parading on the shore looking for their nests? Cockatoos displaying their pink and white beauty? Have you seen thousands and thousands of sheep grazing in the lush green meadows of New Zealand? Have Australian kangaroos nuzzled your fingers, begging for

tidbits, jealously watched by emus? Or have koalas looked at you with their big eyes, waiting to be petted? Have you seen the unique, flightless kiwi birds hopping around in their dark enclosure, black swans and other water birds resting on the unspoiled beaches, little black seals sunning themselves on the rocks of a peaceful fjord? Have you ever passed the dark, silent waters of a cave, gazing at the thousands of shining glowworms making the ceiling appear as a star studded sky?

And God said that it was good.

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have domination over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26)

We saw humankind – a multitude of tourists from all over the world bustling in the streets of the cities – Americans, Europeans, Japanese, Chinese, Indonesians.... We saw primitive Aborigines of Australia, in their simple huts, dirty outfits, yet finding consolation in their “dreamlands,” recreating their mystic world in the stories of their ancestors. We saw Maoris of New Zealand, passing on their customs, songs, art expressed in wood carvings from generation to generation. They carve mythical figures, figures with three fingers symbolizing life: birth – life – death. But on some they add a fourth finger – this finger symbolizing life after death.

And God said that it was good.

Yes, what God has made for humankind was excellent. You are very much aware of this when you enter the little Church of the Good Shepherd at Lake Tekapo in Southern New Zealand. There stands a cross on the Lord’s Table, and behind it, through a big picture window, you see the lake, the snow covered mountains ranges, and you know God is there, close to you.

What God has created, is good.

COME TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND!

May 3, 2009

Want to take a trip to the Land Down Under – at least in your imagination? Come to the slide show on Sunday, May 3. First we feed our stomachs with a delicious pot-luck dinner, then we feed our minds when we imagine hopping along with kangaroos, sitting on a tree branch with koalas, climbing Ayers Rock, trying to find Mount Cook in the clouds over New Zealand, grazing the meadows in the company of the countless sheep, rubbing noses with the Maoris, and much more. Come and join us!

The potluck dinner will start at 6:00 PM, followed by the slide show. I hope you won’t mind providing the goodies! Thank you.

Marta Strata

NOAH'S ARK,

by Debra Frometa

There is wonderful new picture in our Church Library, above the desk! Come, take a look! It is Noah’s Ark! Debra Frometa grew up in an American military family and has lived in various places, including Turkey. Her mother and father are both artists and Debra has been painting since she was a child. Debra is fluent in Spanish and has done extensive volunteer work with the Cuban refugee program. Some of her favorite things are cooking and working with children. She and her husband now reside in Clinton, Maryland.

Diane Malone

LIVING WATERS FOR THE WORLD

Motto: *Jesus Christ is living water for our bodies and our souls.*

Some sobering statistics:

* Over 3 million people die each year from preventable water-borne diseases; and most of them are children. * More than one billion people worldwide do not have access to clean water. * Every 15 seconds, a child dies from a preventable, water-related disease. * 40 billion hours are lost annually to hauling water, a chore primarily undertaken by women and girls. * By the year 2025, there will be another 2 billion people on the planet. Will there be enough clean water? * In this century, wars will more likely be fought over water than over oil. * Scarcity of water has caused more refugees than all the wars in history.

Submitted by John Metzel, who has just returned from his missionary work in Lubondai, Congo.

EASTER CUSTOMS IN HUNGARY

There are a lot of interesting folk customs still alive all over Hungary. Many of them are connected with religious holidays, while others have older origins, from early, sometimes from prehistoric years. The two, most known customs of Easter are the "sprinkling" and the egg-painting. Both are very common in both urban and rural areas, among people of every age-group

Sprinkling: [Originally, men sprinkled women with water, sometimes even dragging the girls to a well to pour water on them with a pail; today they sprinkle with cologne.] The possible reason for this very old tradition is that people believed in the cleaning, healing and fertilizing effect of water.

Easter is a two-day holiday in Hungary. On Monday boys and men visit all of their women relatives, friends, neighbors.... Boys in small groups, fathers with their sons, or single men leave early in the morning and their "tour" lasts all day long. They greet girls and women with ... poems ... about "Easter sprinkling," and sprinkle them with cologne. Women ... treat men with desserts and beverages – and with hand-painted eggs. Women usually prepare ... by cleaning up the house thoroughly, decorating, cooking and painting a couple dozen eggs. There is a competition among young girls – who gets the most "sprinklers" wins. It is a shame if the girl is not ready early morning when the first visitor rings the bell. ... Many times, sprinkling continues on the next day.

Egg Painting: There are many different painting methods alive. The simplest way is to cook the egg [within a] ... leaf, in [colored] ... water. The covered part of the egg remains white and will show the pattern of the leaf. Painting liquid can be made from onionskin, wild pear, green walnut or other vegetables yielding different natural colors. Sometimes women "write on the egg." They draw folk patterns on the egg by melted wax and put the eggs into [liquid paint.] ... The egg remains white below the wax and will show the pattern. The most beautiful eggs are painted by hand in different colors, following traditional folk patterns.

[Quoted from an article on the Internet by your editor, who has watched "sprinkling" when living as a child in Hungary. Fortunately, she was too young to be sprinkled her!]



ATTENTION!

Deadline for the May issue of FIRST and ForMOST is April 17, 2009. 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