



FIRST and ForMOST

February 2010

FROM YOUR PASTOR

As I was prayerfully preparing for Lent, I once again read a little piece called **ONE SOLITARY LIFE**. It's only 232 words long. Yet, I'm not sure that anyone has ever written a more succinct and powerful narrative about Jesus Christ.

One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where he worked in a Carpenter shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place he was born. He never wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of these things that usually accompany greatness.

While he was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends deserted him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had - his coat.

When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave.

Twenty long centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of humanity upon this earth as powerfully as that one solitary life. (Author Unknown)

I share these amazing words with you because, beginning on Sunday evening, February 21, 2010, the FPCA Lenten Series will focus on a wonderful series written by Lee Strobel called, **THE CASE FOR CHRIST**. I will be leading this six-week DVD series every Sunday evening from February 21 through March 28, 2010. A simple supper of homemade soup will be served in Room 105 at 6:00 PM and the DVD presentations will follow at 6:45 PM in the sanctuary.

I am so excited about this series because it focuses on one of the theological disciplines I love the most, apologetics. Simply put, apologetics is the field of Christian theology that aims to present a rational basis for the Christian faith and defend it against objections. Christian apologists base their defense of Christianity on historical evidence, philosophical arguments, scientific investigation, and rhetorical persuasion.

Such is the case in Lee Strobel's **THE CASE FOR CHRIST**. This series has been viewed by over 2,000,000 Christians the world over and is a compelling defense not only of the Christian faith, but of Jesus Christ Himself.

As we move through Lent toward the joyous celebration of Easter, I hope that you will join me every Sunday evening, starting on February 21st. I invite you to come and see why the **ONE SOLITARY LIFE** of Jesus Christ has, and always will have, more influence on the life of humanity than any other.

Your Pastor and Friend, **Chris**

PREACHING SCHEDULE for FEBRUARY 2010

- February 7, 2010: Sermon Title: **"WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE?"**
Scripture Lesson: I Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11
Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching
- February 14, 2010: Sermon Title is **"GOD SHOWS LOVE"**
Scripture Lesson: Luke 9:28-36.
Elder Susan Ennis, Preaching
- February 17, 2010: **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE** (7:30 PM)
Special Service of Wholeness and Healing
Meditation: **"GO AHEAD, TAKE A DO-OVER"**
Scripture Lesson: Joel 2: 12-14
Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching
- February 21, 2010: **THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**
Sermon Title: **"I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY"**
Scripture Lesson: Deuteronomy 26: 1-15
Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching
- February 28, 2010: **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**
Sermon Title: **"LOOKING FOR BLESSINGS IN OUR BURDENS"**
Scripture Lesson: Genesis 15: 1-18
Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

LENTEN SERIES Sunday Evenings February 21 through March 28

"THE CASE FOR CHRIST"

A seasoned journalist chases down the biggest story on record in The Case for Christ. Retracing his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith, former Chicago Tribune legal editor Lee Strobel cross-examines a dozen experts with tough, point-blank questions in search of credible evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was positively the Son of God. This riveting quest for the truth about history's most compelling figure reads like a captivating, fast-paced novel, yet it's anything but fiction! An ideal paperback for skeptics! Come to a homemade soup supper at 6:PM, and the DVD presentation at 6:45 PM! You can also find the DVD in our library: The case for Christ: the Film, by Lee Strobel. La Mirada Films, 2007. (DVD St)

ASH WEDNESDAY

At the time you read this issue of FIRST and ForMOST, people in Germany celebrate *Fasching* – the time to rush from one “Maskenball” (mask ball) to the next, dance, sing, drink beer..... fun time like our Mardi Gras in New Orleans, only it lasts for weeks. But then comes Ash Wednesday, which people take so seriously, that, though it is not a federal holiday, they are allowed to take time off work to attend church services, to have put ashes on their forehead, and repent.

Well, we have a mini-Mardi-Gras in our church on the 16th of February, followed by our service on the 17th, Ash Wednesday, when we too will have ashes placed on our foreheads and will repent our sins. Roman Catholics may take Ash Wednesday more seriously than many Protestant denominations – but it is a beautiful tradition with a long history.

Ash Wednesday always falls on the Wednesday of the 7th week before Easter, and is the first day of Lent. It gets its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful as a sign of repentance; ashes that were gathered after the palm branches used the previous year were burned. We do not know the origin of the custom of using ashes as sign of repentance. Laying on ashes as a sign of penitence goes back to Old Testament Times. It is mentioned in several O.T. books, like, for instance, in [Job 42:5-6](#), where Job says to God: “*My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.*” Another example is [Daniel 9:3](#): “*So I turned to the Lord God and pledged with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.*” In the New Testament Jesus himself refers to the use of sackcloth and ashes as sign of repentance, as we read in Mathew 11:21: “*Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes.*”

During the first millennium of our church history only few records of the use of ashes have been preserved. We do have records that the sprinkling of Ashes was part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy in the Romano-Germanic pontificate of 960 A.D. We also have the notes of Abbot Aelfrie from the 11th century, telling us that it was customary for all the faithful to take part in a ceremony on the Wednesday before Lent that included the imposition of ashes. By the end of the 11th century, Pope Urban II called for the general use of ashes on Wednesday, the first day of Lent. However, the name Ash Wednesday was used only at a later date. Interestingly, we learn that at first the men had the ashes sprinkled on their heads, while the women had the sign of the cross made on their forehead with ashes. Now both men and women get the sign of the cross on their forehead. That the ashes came from burning the leaves of the palm branches used on Palm Sunday of the previous year, goes back to the 12th century.

Yes, let us follow the example of so many faithful Christians, let us have our Pastor make the sign of the cross on our forehead with ashes, remembering the words found in Genesis 3:15: “*Remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return.*” *Marta Strada*

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

On **Shrove Tuesday, February 16th**, we will have a time of pre-Lenten **Food, Fellowship, and Fun!** Come, and enjoy!.

CHURCH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, Phase 3

The Church Improvement Project, Phase 3 is underway. This phase is the renovation of the sanctuary area of our church. The plans for this renovation are being made in order that our worship of God will be facilitated. The Building and Grounds Commission has been hard at work. This commission is finalizing plans so that contracts may be made for any work to be done. The Decorating Committee was formed in the last quarter of 2009 and is at work discerning how our new sanctuary will look and how it will be furnished. If you have any questions or concerns, please see a member of the Building and Grounds Commission.

Susan Ennis

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING



Super Bowl Sunday is an important day for football fans. But that day has another very important designation – Souper Bowl Sunday. Notice that the spelling is slightly different.

Brad Smith, seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina began this ministry in 1990. That year he wanted to get across to his youth that there are hungry people around us everywhere and in our coming together we should use this event for a greater good. The youth were challenged to collect donations of money and canned goods to be donated to the charity of their choice. The very first Souper Bowl of Caring collected \$5,700 for charities around Columbia.

Those young people had so much fun that they invited other area groups to join them in 1991. By 1993 the effort had gone nationwide with churches from 36 states joining in the effort. In 1997 the Souper Bowl of Caring broke the \$1 Million mark and received 50 (c)(3) status. In 2009 youth from 13,868 groups around the country collected \$10,382,035.

Today the Souper Bowl of Caring equips and mobilizes congregations, schools and businesses to positively impact their communities by collecting money or food on or near Super Bowl weekend. 100% of the collections are donated directly to the charity of each group's choice.

On February 7, 2010 you will find youth from our congregation collecting canned goods and money following the 10:00 AM worship. They will gather that evening to enjoy the football Super Bowl and select a local charity to receive our donations.

*Susan
Ennis*

**At 6:00 PM there will be have a party held at the Looker house!
There we will decide which charity will receive the donations.**

IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT DICKSON LITTLE
"Smitty"
July 14, 1920-December 25, 2009

Smitty, an elder and long time member of FPCA, passed away peacefully on Christmas morning, in Woodbridge, VA. He and Lois have been part of the Westminster retirement community there for several years and have continued their connection to our congregation as well. Smitty, a retired Colonel, U.S. Air Force, was formally known as Robert. But at a very young age he was told that he resembled a cartoon character described by Lois as a "fair-haired, freckle-faced boy" called Smitty. The nickname stuck and he was known as Smitty ever since.

"A native of Raleigh, Smitty was the son of James Crawford Little and Alma Marsh Little. An 'Ole Raleigh Boy' of the 1930's, he attended Needham Broughton High School and worshipped at First Presbyterian Church of Raleigh in his youth. Smitty graduated from Duke University in 1941 where he was a varsity boxer, a member of Kappa Sigma Fraternity, and President of his Senior Class. He graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill Law School in 1949 and was a member of the North Carolina Bar Association.

'Smitty had a distinguished 26-year career as an Air Force Officer. Entering military service during World War II, he was instrumental in rebuilding the security and police forces in post-World War II Germany, then as a B-47 Stratojet pilot for the Strategic Air Command during the Cold War, and later as a contract lawyer for the Air Force and the General Services Administration."

"Smitty was an active member of his church and community. He taught Sunday School when his own children were Junior High students and were in his class. (A challenge to be sure!)

" He also coached Little League and youth Basketball teams, and was a true family man. He was beloved by all who knew him for his upbeat nature, integrity, generosity, and gentle sense of humor."

Smitty is survived by his wife Lois Juengel Little, sons Robert, Jr. and William, daughter Mary, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Written by Stephanie Berg, quoting from the obituary, with the permission of Bob Little

A memorial service is planned for January 23 at 2:00 PM at FPCA.
Interment at Arlington National Cemetery will be April 19.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Nell Logwood ~ February 7
John Rockett ~ February 7
Elaine Marler ~ February 10
Sarah Angelina Tariq ~ February 13

Aggie Jo Millard ~ February 17
Dorothy Sheffert ~ February 26
Wolfgang Schubert ~ February 26

MISSION OPPORTUNITY

Two years ago, Pastor Kim from the First Presbyterian Church of Virginia went to Ecuador to start a new church. With support from FKPCV and FPCA as well as another congregation in Los Angeles, California, Pastor Kim has succeeded in bringing this new ministry to life. FKPCV is planning to send a group to Ecuador some time in July to help further this ministry. It is anticipated that this trip will be two weeks with people going for a week at a time. Members of both the FKPCV and FPCA congregations will join together to provide witness and outreach to the people of Ecuador. If you would like to join this group and travel to Ecuador, please speak with Chris Looker or Susi Ennis.

Susan Ennis

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

February 14: Danny DeVera
February 21: Chris Fuller
February 28: Sandra Malone

JESUS AND THE UNITED STATES MAP

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl. She wanted to know what the United States looked like. Finally, he tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the country. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to her and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together. This will show you our whole country today."

After a few minutes, she returned and handed him the map, correctly fitted and taped together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then our country just came together."

Contributed by Isabelle Fennig

SEASONS

There was a wise Indian Chief who had four sons. He wanted each of his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly; so he took each son separately on a quest, to look at a certain pear tree that was a great distance away. He took the first son during the winter, the second son during the spring, the third son during the summer, and the youngest son during the fall. When they had all made the trip, he called them together to hear them describe to each other what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree he saw was old, ugly, bent, and twisted.

The second son said no, the tree was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed with the first two; he said the tree was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said the tree was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

The wise Chief then explained to his sons that they were all right, but they had each seen only one season in the tree's life. He explained that you cannot judge a tree, or a person's life, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy and love that come from their life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up from a winter season, you will miss the promise of spring, the beauty of summer, or the final fulfillment of fall. He concluded: Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult season, and better times are sure to come later.

Seasons of failure keep you humble.
Seasons of success keep you glowing.
Seasons of sorrow keep you human.
Seasons of happiness keep you sweet.
Seasons of trials keep you strong.

1 Sam 16:7 "For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Author unknown

 **ATTENTION!**

Deadline for the March issue of FIRST and ForMOST is February 18, 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.