



# FIRST and ForMOST

First Presbyterian Church of Annandale

July/August 2011

## FROM YOUR PASTOR

Jesus told the following parable, ***“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.” (Luke 8: 5-8)***

\* \* \* \* \*

Early this year, you and I took a Sabbatical to pray, think, dream about what the future would be like for FPCA. Under the able leadership of the Rev. Bob Harris, you reflected about this church’s wonderful 55 year past. You faithfully examined who and what we are as a church in the present. And, you prayed and dreamed about what God would enable our blessed church to be and do in the immediate and long-term future.

While in the Holy Land, I prayed and reflected on my ministry with you. I praised God for how much love I feel for all of you, and from all of you for me. I prayed for each and every one of you. And, I reflected on what Christ had been able to do in and through me over the past six years that I have been blessed to be your pastor and friend.

To be honest, I reflected on the ***“seeds”*** that we had scattered over the past six years. Like Jesus’ parable, some of the good seed that we scattered together ***“fell”*** on ***hard paths*** and was trampled. It did not grow at all.

Some of the seeds that we scattered together also fell on ***“rocky ground.”*** They withered and died as well.

Some of the seed fell ***“among thorns”*** and were choked before they could grow and blossom.

But, most of the seeds ***“fell on good soil”*** and yielded a crop that was ***“a hundred times more than was sown.”***

What does all this mean?

What did Jesus mean?

He tells us later on in Luke 8: 11-15: ***“This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those***

***with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.***

\* \* \* \* \*

Which type of surface is God sprinkling His glorious **“seeds”** on today? And, what type of surface will God be spreading His gospel Word on in our future?

While I was on my Sabbatical, if there was one thing that God inspired me to think about and feel in response to my prayers, it was this: **FPCA is built on very good soil!**

While we have labored in the vineyard together these past six years, God has done so many miraculous things here that I just want to dance for joy just thinking about it!

\* \* \* \* \*

But, what is going to happen in the immediate and long-term future? God promises us that if we are the **“good soil”** on which He spreads his Word, we will be able to produce a **“crop that is a hundred times more than was sown.”** We will grow in faith and numbers. Our hearts will continue to become more and more **“noble and good.”** And, nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

To be honest, I look forward to the next six years that we will be together worshipping and praising the Lord here! I just know that by placing all of our trust and faith in the Lord, we will continue to be inspired to do whatever we can and give whatever we have to so that our **“soil”** remains very **“good”** indeed.

Your Friend and Pastor,



## **PREACHING SCHEDULES for JULY AND AUGUST 2011**

### **July 3, 2011 Service of Holy Communion**

Sermon Title: **“COME TO ME ALL WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN”**

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 11: 25-30

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

### **July 10, 2011**

*The Rev. Tariq Javed, Preaching*

### **July 17, 2011**

Sermon Title: **“CHILDREN OF HOPE”**

Scripture Lesson: Romans 8:12-25

*Elder Susan Ennis, Preaching*

### **July 24, 2011**

Sermon Title: **“EVERYTHING WORKS FOR GOOD?”**

Scripture Lesson: Romans 8: 28-30

*Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching*

### **July 31, 2011**

Sermon Title: **“DINNER TIME”**

Scripture Lesson : Matthew 14:13-21

*Elder Susan Ennis, Preaching*

## **NEW PREACHING SERIES FOR AUGUST, 2011!**

For the month of August, 2011, Dr. Looker will be preaching a series of sermons entitled: **“Hey Pastor, What Does This Bible Passage Mean?”** Dr. Looker invites every member of our church to submit Bible Passages or Theological Questions that you find to be hard to understand, troubling, confusing, and/or even controversial. **Please submit your suggestions to Dr. Looker at [fpcapastor@vacoxmail.com](mailto:fpcapastor@vacoxmail.com) by Sunday, July 24, 2011.** Dr. Looker will look over all of the submittals and choose four of them to preach on during the Sundays in August. Dr. Looker promises to keep the identities of those submitting Bible or Theological Questions strictly private and only focus on the specific passages or questions asked. Please be as specific as you can when you submit your requests, including the Bible Passage or Theological Question/Doctrine that concerns you and the reason(s) why you want Dr. Looker to preach on your particular submittal. Thank you!

### **August 7, 2011**

***“What Does This Bible Passage Mean?” Sermon #1*** Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

### **August 14, 2011**

***“What Does this Bible Passage Mean?” Sermon #2*** Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

### **August 21, 2011**

***“What Does This Bible Passage Mean?” Sermon #3*** Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

### **August 28, 2011**

***“What Does This Bible Passage Mean?” Sermon #4*** Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

## **WHY IS IT SO HARD TO SAY GOODBYE?**

**by Dr. Stephen W. Hiemstra, Pastoral Intern**

When someone dies or retires or graduates, life continues, but we grieve the passing of our cherished friends, family, relationships, and roles. At yearend, I retired and said goodbye to my office. At the end of April, I completed my training and ministry at Providence Hospital and said goodbye to my patients and fellow students. At the end of June, I say goodbye to First Presbyterian Church of Annandale (FPCA) where I have interned this past year. Saying goodbye has become a theme in my life during recent months.

According to William Worden (*Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*, New York: Springer, 2009), grief is a process with 4 stages. In stage 1, we accept that something has changed. In stage 2, we take stock of the losses embedded in the change. In stage 3, we adjust to the losses in daily life. In stage 4, we reinvest emotions in our new life. The process of grieving someone dear potentially lasts for years. In saying goodbye to FPCA, announcing my departure to friends has been difficult but it helped me deal with stage 1.

Saying goodbye becomes harder with age. Jesus said, *“No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God”* (Luke 9:62 NIV). This is a hard lesson for those of us that cherish relationships. With age, we feel the seasons of life a bit more acutely because we have experienced more than a few. In my case, I have learned to honor my grief and celebrate life's changes. In the process, I have coped better with the transitions and found new meaning in life.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



### JULY

Todd Anderson ~ July 2  
 Carol Campbell ~ July 6  
 Jo Hickey ~ July 7  
 Lauren Parker ~ July 9  
 Rob Parker ~ July 9  
 Dana Herr ~ July 12

Chris Looker ~ July 12  
 Mitchell Youmans ~ July 16  
 Patience Ossom 07/21  
 Lois Tichenor ~ July 22  
 Miriam Houseworth ~ July 23  
 Margaret Mistretta ~ July 30

### AUGUST

Richard Graham ~ August 3  
 Nessell Beekman ~ August 6  
 Mariam T. Javed ~ August 6  
 Paul Malone ~ August 7  
 Tyler Young ~ August 9  
 Madeleine Anderson ~ August 10  
 Susi Ennis ~ August 10  
 Chuck Beekman ~ August 16

Carrie Rodrigues ~ August 18  
 Guy Hunter ~ August 19  
 Dennis Matos ~ August 19  
 Tom Martin ~ August 21  
 Mike Lauler ~ August 22  
 Diane Malone ~ August 22  
 Betty Youmans ~ August 2

## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

**May 18, 2010**

Dr. Looker called the meeting to order with prayer. Dr. Stephen Hiemstra led the discussion based on Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers, by Joan S. Gray, Chapter 5, Sailing Skills for Church Leaders. The Session looked at FPCA as a church emphasizing multicultural outreach, was encouraged to be willing to risk and fail, to be willing to use the gifts God has given the Session. Are the church leaders fulfilling the church's call under authority of Scripture, is FPCA obedient to God? FPCA does reach out by helping the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by serving meals, participating in mission trips. Dr. Hiemstra pointed out the difference between *chronos* (time measured by clock or calendar) and *kairos*, the time of God's choosing. Session concluded that FPCA was acting in God's time when working on the roof, replacing the boiler, doing all the refurbishing, and was successful. God was blessing FPCA. Dr. Hiemstra closed the devotion with prayer.

Dr. Stephen Hiemstra shared with the Session his plan to lead an Adult Church School class in June, based on the book Listening & Caring Skills, a guide for groups and leaders, by John Savage. He will preach on the last Sunday in June, his last Sunday at FPCA. Dr. Hiemstra is planning to leave FPCA by the end of June, so he will have more time to focus better on his studies.

The Session discussed what it has learned while Dr. Chris Looker was on Sabbatical during the past three months: Pastor Rev. Bob Harris had recommended that the doors of the two offices (Dr. Looker's and Susan Ennis') should have a window to avoid being accused of sexual misconduct when the doors have to be closed for private discussions.

Now, that Dr. Looker had returned, the Session should start planning what to do next, and pray to get ideas from God, and gifts and talents received as gifts from God should be used properly.

Next, Dr. Chris Looker showed the Session fascinating pieces he had brought with him from his trip to the Holy Land: a handmade wooden cross with icons of St. Catherine's monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai, a beautiful copy of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century icon of Jacob's well, and a wooden cross from Jerusalem to be put on the communion table in the Sanctuary. Based on his studies and experiences during his Sabbatical, Dr. Looker emphasized the need for planning for the future of FPCA. Now that the refurbishment of the Sanctuary is finished, the Session should concentrate on "what is next?" He had some ideas: the gift and talents God has given this congregation have to be highlighted in order to draw people to the church; in addition to the traditional worship service, FPCA could have a contemporary, multicultural service, involving the praise team in partnership with FKPCV, to attract the younger generation of worshipers. Also, plans will have to be made how the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rooms will be used after Sleepy Hollow has left.

Reporting for the **Worship Commission**, Elder Sandy Mori reported that in June there would be a workshop led by a Presbyterian pastor on "transformational worship" which she and Dr. Chris Looker plan to attend. Elder Mori also called the beautiful new banner in the sanctuary to the Session's attention.

Reporting for the **Christian Education Commission**, Elder Marta Strada emphasized the fact that it was very hard to get the young people interested in attending church school. To invite more young people to listen to the "children's sermon," the Session decided to call it "For the Young at Heart" to include all "children" of God.

Reporting for the **Buildings and Grounds Commission**, Elder John Belz talked about the following plans: There will be a clean-up day in June 2011; brackets for the pews are needed; termite inspection should take place soon.

Reporting for the **Mission Commission**, Elder Susi Ennis shared with the Session that Fairfax County Transitional Housing was providing homes for homeless families within a mile of FPCA, subsidizing their rent, and offering them training on finances, life skills and job skills. They need a place where the county staff can do the training once a month, and have asked FPCA to provide a room for training and one for child care. Elder Ennis made a motion that FPCA offer the needed space for the probationary period of the next 4 months. Session approved the motion.

Elder Ennis also told the Session that the Commission was asking those members who donate to 5 cents a meal, to do this on the last Sunday of each month to make it easier for the Counting Team to report the amounts in the monthly financial report.

Reporting for **Administration and Finance Commission**, Elder Tom Martin handed out a mock up of a new summary page of the Monthly Financial Report he was suggesting, outlining the basic categories of the report. After revising it further, he will e-mail it to the Session for comments.

*Marta Strada, Clerk of Session*

# HELP!

## OUR LIBRARY WILL BE MOVING TO ROOM 107

You remember that rooms 107-108 have been separated by a wall a few months ago? 108 is being used as nursery – but 107 is still waiting to be assigned. Dr. Stephen Hiemstra used it for his Adult Sunday School Classes, but those have discontinued, Dr. Hiemstra has left us to be able to concentrate more on his studies. Room 107 is still waiting.

Well, the big event will take place on Friday and Saturday, August 26 and 27. Your librarian has made detailed plans, will borrow book trucks to transfer our collection. The shelves will have to be moved! That cannot be done without your help! Young People, Strong People, the Library needs you! Please help us! I trust we can count on you, and I can see God smiling when he sees us setting up our new Church Library!

*Marta Strada, Librarian*

## MEMORIES OF AN IMMIGRANT

*by Marta Strada*

July/August 2011 – what a time full of memories! 60 year old memories, because it was during the end of July – beginning of August 1951 that my life changed when my parents and I, a homeless refugee family, emigrated from Linz, Austria. We had lived there at my grandmother's place after we had fled from the Russians advancing in Hungary. Now we were on the way to our future home, the United States of America.

Towards the end of July we started packing our meager belongings, among them the most precious ones, my father's paintings of the beloved Austrian scenery, into a trunk which was shipped for us. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 1951, we said farewell to our relatives, climbed on the train and headed for Bremen in Germany.

I traveled with mixed feelings. I was sad, because I did not want to depart from my close friends, school-mates in Linz, from my cousins and other relatives, from beautiful Austria which I loved dearly - yet I saw the emigration as a challenge, as an adventure waiting for me.

In Bremen many emigrants were gathering – refugees from Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia – all who had fled from their homeland, all who had found refuge in Germany and Austria, and were now headed West, to find a new home. We gathered in a school building to learn about the US, to practice English, to sing --

*My Bonnie lies over the ocean  
My Bonnie lies over the sea*

*My Bonnie lies over the ocean  
Oh bring back my Bonnie to me*

This Scottish folksong still rings in my ears. Well, we had no “Bonnie” waiting for us “over the ocean,” only a very unknown, uncertain future.

They took us by bus to the port in Bremerhaven, driving through deserted streets where there once stood homes and stores. Now we saw only empty lots, cleaned up after the buildings had been destroyed by bombs. Six years after the end of the war, rebuilding had not yet been started --- too much had been destroyed. More time was needed to rebuild the new Germany.

In Bremerhaven we boarded the US troop transport ship which would carry us to New York. We were assigned bunk beds in fairly large cabins – bunk beds two on top of each other, my parents and I in different cabins. I climbed on the upper bed, enjoying my independence...

Of course, as we did not pay for our transportation, we had to work, and I was sent to wash dishes in the kitchen. But we also had free time to spend on deck. I clearly remember seeing the White Cliffs of Dover far in the distance, as we passed the British Isles.

Then we entered the great Atlantic Ocean with its big waves --- the ship went up and down and up and down --- washing dishes in the kitchen made my insides go up and down and up and down – and one emigrant after the other became seasick. Of course, I followed the example of my co-workers. Consequently, my dish washing duties did not last very long. I was excused, and could spend more time on deck. My sea sickness disappeared, and I could enjoy the peace and beauty of the ocean, dolphins jumping around the ship, and, watching gorgeous sunsets, I could dream of my past and my future.

And there it was – our new life in America. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 1951, the Statue of Liberty greeted us as we approached New York. Crowds of immigrants stood on deck quietly, wondering what was waiting for them. We landed, had to pass immigration, received \$ 2.00 each, yes “two” Dollars, and women and young girls got a lipstick! I got one too – I still have it, have never used it. The Church World Service also paid for our train tickets to Cleveland, Ohio, where a bunch of World War I Hungarian refugees had settled, and now helped the new batch of immigrants.

In Cleveland a Hungarian family, immigrants who had settled two years earlier, gave us shelter till we earned some money and found a place to live on our own. Our new life had begun. My father found work, using his artist’s hands to scratch rust from ships on Lake Erie. I mended corsets in a department store. We had to take English classes for immigrants where I met my beloved husband, Frank. After a couple of years, I got a job as typist in the Cleveland Public Library, where my future as a librarian began. We married in 1956, I attended Cleveland College majoring in Literature, studying in the evening, working during the day, till our daughter was born who needed most of my time. But I continued my studies, taking evening courses when Frank could be home with Margaret. In 1962 I got my Master’s in Library Science and went back to work at the Cleveland Public Library, this time as professional cataloger. In 1965 we moved to Virginia when Frank, also a librarian, was offered a job at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and I ended up working as cataloger in the library of the National Geographic Society, where I still work, but as an independent contractor.

Yes, in August 1951 my new, happy life had started - and whom can I thank for it? Only Almighty God, who directed my life, who gave me the strength to face difficult times, who led me to my happy present. I can only thank Him for His guidance, encouragement, and love!

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORIES YOU WISH TO SHARE WITH US?**

Your *FIRST and ForMOST* Editor would love to include YOUR stories in future issues of our monthly newsletter. Each of your lives has been filled with important history. Think of the amazing events you have witnessed in your life! Think about the countries to which you have travelled or in which you have lived! Think about all that you have learned in your life and how your wisdom could help future generations!

If you would like to submit an article about your life to be published in *FIRST and ForMOST*, please feel free to send it to Editor Marta Strada, at [LUXI7777@aol.com](mailto:LUXI7777@aol.com), put it in the FIRST and ForMOST box in the Church Office, or send it to her home address, 7908 Inverton Rd., Apt. 102, Annandale, VA 22003-4834. Thank you!

## **BOOK CLUB NEWS**

The Book Club will meet on Tuesday, July 5 at 1:00 PM in the church library. The group will discuss the novel, World Without End by Ken Follett. Newcomers are welcome.

## **ABOUT OUR BANNER...**

For the June issue of our newsletter, Betty Beal has written an articles about our banner, giving credit to those who have helped in different ways. However, she is the one who did the majority of the artistic hands-on work and for that we are thankful and grateful. Hats off to Betty for her many hours of dedicated work to see this project come to fruition!

Thank you, thank you, Betty!

## **YOUNGSTERS AND THE POLICE**

While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, 'Are you a cop?'

'Yes,' I answered and continued writing the report.

'My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?'

'Yes, that's right,' I told her.

'Well, then,' she said as she extended her foot toward me, 'would you please tie my shoe?'

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me. 'Is that a dog you got back there?' he asked. 'It sure is,' I replied. Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally he said, 'What'd he do?'

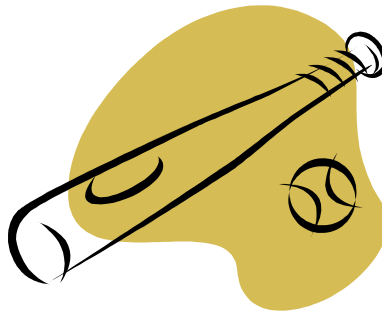
*Contributed by the Rev. Dr. Richard Ford*

## YOUTH NEWS!

*Genny Looker,*

**Youth Sunday was Fantastic!** On June 12<sup>th</sup> we enjoyed messages from four seniors from FKPCV, Kiyong Choi, Caroline Yi, James Shin and Jeremy McAndrew, as well as Scripture readings from Carrie Rodrigues and Gifty Boake. Other youth also led worship, while music was provided by Chris Fuller, Isabella Jackson, Ben Looker, Sam Looker and Andy Lauler. Study Bibles were handed out to the six graduating seniors. Thank you to all who participated.

**Baseball Anyone?** Keep your eyes and ears open for a trip to a National's baseball game sometime this summer. Look for emails discussing dates



## Acolyte Schedule

7/10/2011 Sam Looker  
7/17/2011 Mitchell Youmans  
7/24/2011 Elisha Musih  
7/31//2011 Garrett Youmans

8/14/2011 Sarah Metzel  
8/21/2011 Andrew Lauler  
8/28/2011 Mariam T. Jave

## HAVE YOU FOUND THE 30 BIBLE BOOKS? HERE IS THE SOLUTION

There are thirty books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a **most remarkable** puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, **keeping** him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much; he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his **john** boat. Another friend studied it while playing his **banjo**. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend **judges** the **job** of solving the puzzle so involving; **she brews** a cup of tea to help her nerves. **There** will be some names that are easy to spot. That's a **fact**. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a **jam**, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. **Truthfully**, **from answers** we get we are forced to admit **it usually** takes a minister or scholar to see **them at the worst**. Research has shown that something in our **genes is** responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Delta **Phi lemonade** booth set a new sales record. The local papers, The **Chronicle**, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As **Daniel Humana** humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight. " **Those** able to find all of them will hear great **lamentations** from those who have to be shown. One **revelation** that may help is that books like **Timothy** and **Samuel** may occur without their **numbers**. Also keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are **normal**. A **chipper** attitude will help you **compete** really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad **exodus**, there really are 30 books of the Bible **lurking** somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

Amos  
Mark  
Luke  
John  
Joel  
Judges  
Job  
Hebrews  
Esther  
Acts

James  
Ruth  
Romans  
Titus  
Matthew  
Genesis  
Philemon  
Chronicles  
Daniel  
Nahum

Hosea  
Lamentations  
Revelation  
Timothy  
Samuel  
Numbers  
Malachi  
Peter  
Exodus  
Kings

 **ATTENTION!**

***Deadline for the September issue of FIRST and ForMOST is August 18, 2011. 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.***