



FIRST and ForMOST

May 2009

FROM YOUR PASTOR

“When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave the power...and there were added that day about three thousand souls.”

(Selected verses from Acts 2).

Many Christians today believe that Pentecost is purely a Christian holy day. But, just as all of the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, Pentecost was a Jewish holy day (and continues to be today) **before** it was a Christian holy day.

The term “Pentecost” is derived from the Greek word, **“Pentekostos,”** meaning **“fiftieth day.”** For the Jews, Pentecost is the celebration of the fiftieth day after the Passover, when the Great Feast of the Weeks is celebrated. The Great Feast of the Weeks is the holy time of the year during which the Jews harvested their crops and presented 10% of their **“first fruits”** or harvest to the Lord. From the Great Feast of the Weeks, came the command by God that God’s people give a ten percent portion of their best crops to God, presenting this **“tithe”** at the Temple. After the harvest presented at the Temple was dedicated to God, the priests and the poor would be given a fair share so that they would have food to eat and would not starve.

Thus, Pentecost is an example of how God led His people to take care of the priests and the poor. It was, and continues to be today, a powerful way that God commands His people make sure that no one goes hungry and the poor and needy are taken care of by those with worldly wealth, possessions, shelter, and food.

In the New Testament, Jesus made many statements to continue showing that God commands us to take care of the poor and needy. He said in Luke 12: 48, **“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”**

Thus, it makes sense that on this very charitable and holy day (which this year will be celebrated on Sunday, May 31}, God would send His Holy Spirit to **“feed”** the first Christians who were struggling to survive. Jesus was gone. He had ascended into heaven. And, they missed Him. They had grown in number to 120 disciples, yet they had also given up their former lives, their jobs, and devoted themselves completely to sharing the Good News of Jesus and His resurrection. But, that left them hungry, thirsty, and frightened about how they would survive.

And, then the Holy Spirit came upon them with truly spiritual food. And, the **“harvest”** that God shared with them was more than they could have ever expected. Suddenly, they were able to speak in languages that they had never even learned. And, since Jews had come from all

parts of the world to celebrate the Great Feast of the Weeks, they were able to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with anyone and everyone. And, they did.

As a result, 3000 people converted to Christianity that very day...and the Church was born.

We are told later in Acts 2, that from that day forward, "**All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need.**" No longer would there be any among the first Christians who would starve, thirst, be without shelter, or fear for their survival.

So moved by the Holy Spirit were these very first Christians, that instead of simply following the Old Testament custom of giving up 10% of their harvest and wealth to the poor and needy, **THEY GAVE UP EVERYTHING SO THAT NO ONE WOULD SUFFER!**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if God sent His Holy Spirit into the world today in such a way that no one would suffer? Wouldn't it be amazing if everyone in the world were moved by God's Holy Spirit to share enough with each other so that no one would starve, go thirsty, be homeless, or be killed in wars? Wouldn't it be fantastic if those of us who have so much would be moved by the Holy Spirit to voluntarily share more of our excess wealth with those who have little or nothing?

Well, maybe that's what God has in mind for this coming Pentecost? Maybe...just maybe...God will make that happen this coming May 31, 2009?

Just maybe?

Your Friend and Pastor, *Chris*

PREACHING SCHEDULE for MAY, 2009

May 3: Scripture Lesson: John 10: 11-18

Sermon Title: "**EVERYONE IS VALUABLE TO GOD**" *Dr. Chris Looker*

Preaching

May 10: Scripture Lesson: 1 John 4: 7-21

Sermon Title: "**PERFECT LOVE**"

Susan Ennis

Preaching

May 17: Scripture Lesson: John 15: 9-17

Sermon Title: "**HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LOVE?**" *Dr. Looker*

Preaching

May 24: Scripture Lesson: Acts 1: 1-11

Sermon Title: "**DON'T THINGS THAT GO UP EVENTUALLY COME**

DOWN?"

Dr. Chris Looker Preaching

May 31: Scripture Lesson: Acts 2: 1-11

Sermon Title: "**GOD'S VERSION OF CPR!**"

Dr. Chris Looker

Preaching

LET US CELEBRATE THE JOYFUL MONTH OF MAY!

What is so special about the month of May? It is just the fifth month of twelve others, and yet, when you look around in our great world, people celebrate its arrival all over.

The name comes from the Latin *Maius mensis* (month of Maia), Maia, the “great one”, being the Italic goddess of spring. Here in our area spring arrives earlier, but in regions farther north, May is the time when warmer weather, spring flowers, blossoming trees arrive. A German folksong expresses what people feel about May:

*Wan's Mailüfterl weht, geht im Wald draust der Schnee,
Da stecken die klein Veigerln die Köpferln in d'Höh.*

(When the May breeze is blowing, the snow disappears in the woods.
Then the little violets raise their heads)

The first day of May is celebrated in various countries where spring arrives late. In Germany it begins with the *Walpurgis Nacht* (Walpurgis Night), a festival that goes back to pagan times. But, *Walpurgis* was an Anglo-Saxon nun who worked as missionary in Germany in the 8th century. It is not clear why a pagan festival was named after a missionary who preached for Christ – does May symbolize a transition from the cold dark winter, to sunny, blooming spring? From a dark pagan world to the light and warmth Christ brought to us?

In many countries Mayday, the first day of May, is celebrated as a holiday. Schools and banks are closed, and people sing and dance, glorifying the arrival of spring. In England you dance around the Maypole, in Germany you drink your beer, in Scotland you may visit funfairs and enjoy the music played by the piperband, the Hawaiians greet the day wearing a lei, the garland of flowers, worn as a sign of welcome, welcoming the joys of summer.

But the month of May brings more joy. We celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday, expressing our joy and gratitude. This year we also celebrate Ascension Day in May, the day Jesus' body ascended to heaven in the presence of the apostles 40 days after his resurrection, a public holiday in many countries. This year we also celebrate Pentecost in the month of May – Pentecost, the birthday of our church, the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon us giving us the power to spread God's Word among mankind. Yes, May is leading us from the joy of Jesus' Resurrection to the joy of Pentecost, the day of a new beginning. Yes, we can dance around the Maypole celebrating God's presence among us, yes, we can wear leis welcoming the great day when we were sent out by the Holy Spirit to spread the Word of God. Yes, let us celebrate the joyful month of May! *Marta Strada*

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

We are beginning our new session on Sunday, **May 17**. This time we are going to study “**1 & 2 Thessalonians: Living in the End Times**,” Bible studies by John Stott, based on selections from Paul's letters. We know that Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. The author leads us to find encouragement and hope by studying these letters, and looking forward to Christ's return.

We are meeting once a month at 7:00 PM at the church in Room 105.

EMILY BROOKS HELM

3/2/1923 - 3/19/2009

This is a small part of my experience and feeling for a woman that I loved and admired for the past 24 years, my mother-in-law and advocate, Emily Brooks Helm. She showed me about support, generosity, and toughness. They say the best things come in small packages, well, that was Emily.

Emily was born in Roanoke, VA, the 10th of 11 children of Robert Brooks and Pearl Steger. Her father was an engineer on the Norfolk & Western Railroad and her mother was a school teacher from Asbury College. We will never know what gave Emily her determination and strength of will. Maybe it was her French Huguenot background or maybe it was having 5 sisters. Emily was the smallest on the playground but always the first to defend someone against a bully. Brave and smart, she skipped 2 grades, and graduated from Jefferson H.S. in 1940.

Emily's father was killed in a railroad accident in 1939 in the middle of the Great Depression. She was 15 years old. Her mother continued to feed people who would come around looking for odd jobs, even if it were only an apple pie she could spare. That kind of compassion ran through Emily's veins. She was always doing something to help others. Her mother Pearl, came to live with her and Bill in 1955 until 1982.

During WW II, at the age of 18, Emily came to Washington to work for the Federal Government. She returned to Roanoke to work at the Veterans Affairs office and started dating Bill after the war ended when he returned from the Navy. They married in 1950 and both worked while he earned his Bachelor of Science. Emily retired after 29 years having earned the Department of the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award. She continued to study after retirement even taking up Spanish. She had wanted to be voted "most intellectual" of her high school class but lost.

"Brooksie" (as her friends called her) travelled a lot before she was married; making cross-country trips when speed limits were 25 mph. Her classical side included being an accomplished pianist but she was also an excellent shot with a rifle. She played the piano for Christian Endeavor in Roanoke but had also shot an elephant gun when given the opportunity. She never shied from competition or physical activity and climbed the Cahokia Indian Mounds in Illinois at 63 years old. In later years, she had an illness that caused her to fatigue easily but she continued to encourage others. One of her nieces coined the phrase, "Everyone needs a little Brooks in them to get through life."

Emily and Bill were founding members of this church where their daughter and granddaughter, Diane and Sandra, were baptized. When her "Princess," Sandra, was born, many hours were spent playing at the Helm's. Emily beamed when Sandra walked into the room and most recently saw Sandra and I perform with the Praise Band on Christmas Eve in this church. Emily stayed with us where she could keep up with all the activities after Bill passed away. She was Diane's most adamant supporter and most recently made the trip to Louisa with us to look over the property we used for hunting. She was still game for anything and feisty as ever.

When the doctor said she had 24 hours to live that Sunday, she said, "I want to get out of here and go home" at 25 hours. She rallied as we had grown to expect from Emily. "Everyone needs a little Brooks in them to get through life." The doctor said she had defied medical literature but God had other plans. Her mission on earth had been accomplished. A life filled with meaning and support for her family and others, she helped establish and nurture this church. God put her here for a purpose and that purpose having been fulfilled; he called her home on Thursday.

(A condensed version of Paul Malone's Eulogy on 3/25/09 for Emily Helm)



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



John Fennig - 05/01
Elizabeth Rockett - 05/02
Alissa Anderson - 05/03
Debbie Bademian - 05/04
Judi Reitman - 05/06
Dan Parker - 05/09
Bud Simon - 05/09
Nadine Dingess - 05/10

Phil Rodrigues - 05/11
Marianne Artherholt - 5/15
Larry Dronfield - 05/16
Candy Parker - 05/17
Christopher Fuller - 05/19
Genny Looker - 05/23
Calvin Reitman - 05/23

THANK YOU FROM MARIANNE ARTERHOLT

I would like to thank everyone for all the love, prayers, cards, visits and food. It has been a long road but with all of you it has been much easier. Thank you for everything.

Love, *Marianne*

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

New member **Kyle Hanson** is Susan Hanson's son. Born on a May 24 in distant Bethesda, Maryland, he has lived almost all his life in the Lake Braddock area of Burke, Virginia. He will graduate shortly from Lake Braddock Secondary School. He plans to attend Northern Virginia Community College for two years, transfer to a four-year college (probably George Mason University) to complete his degree, and join the U.S. Navy as an officer to train and serve as a dentist. His household includes a yellow Labrador Retriever named Citrine, a black Lab named Onyx, and a chocolate Lab named Hershey Kiss. He is always happy to help out at church. Welcome Kyle!

Stay tuned to our welcome for **Helen Sanders!**

NEW AND EXCITING YOUTH TRIP

This year the Mission Commission is sponsoring a new kind of a trip for all of our youth and for anyone in the congregation who would like to take part in this exciting experience. **June - 24-27** we will be going to **Agape Farm in Mount Union, PA**, for the nation's largest **Christian Music Festival**. This 3 day event will feature top musical artists and kids activities. There will be seminars and a worship tent, plus much more. We will be camping and cooking out together.

If you would like to have an opportunity to get to know our youth better, have a fun family time together, or would like to send your youth please contact Nadine Dingess by e-mail.

[Ticket and event information - www.creationfest.com](http://www.creationfest.com)

[Nadine's e-mail - nadine.louise@yahoo.com](mailto:nadine.louise@yahoo.com)

CHURCH IMPROVEMENT FUND

as of April 14, 2009:

Pledges received to date: 24

Amount pledges over 9 months: \$9178.00

Monthly pledge amount (for 9 months): \$1019.77

Required minimum monthly loan payment: \$1329.00

P.S. There is the story of a parson who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

IS THE THIRD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH!

For many years, we have had Soup Group at 12:30 on the first Thursday of the month. We now add to that Family Game Night at 7:30 on the third Friday of the month in room 105. There will be games: Twister, Scrabble, Pictionary, or whatever you like. There will be snacks: grapes, pretzels, ginger snaps and other non-greasy delicacies. Most importantly, your church family will be there. It's fun and fellowship for ages 4 to 400! Mark your calendars.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 18, 2009

Co-Clerk of Session, Elder Nadine Dingess, reported that FPCA is happy to welcome two new members, Kyle Hanson and Helen Sanders .

Pastor Dr. Looker reported that from July 13 to 31, he and his family will go on vacation to Australia and New Zealand. Dr. Looker also shared with the Session that he did not have much hope to find a new Student Intern, now that Susan Ennis is hoping to be called by a church looking for a full time pastor. He received word from Wesley Seminary that no student signed up to interview; Virginia Theological Seminary has promised to contact him if there is an applicant.

Assistant to the Pastor. Susan Ennis, is presently working on her Personal Information Form, hoping to receive a call.

For the **Congregational Life/New Member Commission**, Elder Cara Lauler reported that on Friday, March 20, a Family Game Night is planned. She also informed the Session that Tom Martin is stepping down as chair of the Commission; Cara Lauler will be interim chair until a new chairperson is found.

For the **Mission Commission**, Elder John Metzel reported that for the worship service on April 19 he is planning a special presentation in the form of Scripture lesson, followed by a report with pictures on his impressions gained on his mission trip to Lubondai. It will be entitled "Finding Light in Lubondai." Elder Metzel also reported that the work on providing generators for electricity in Lubondai is making progress.

The Commission made a motion that a group from both FPCA and FKPCV attend the Creation Music Festival, a Christian festival which will take place at Mount Union, PA, June 24-27, 2009. The motion was approved.

For **Building & Grounds Commission**, Elder Barb Matos reported that a clean-up day was planned for April 4, 2009, to make the church look great for Easter. She also said that the roof work was progressing very well..

For the **Christian Education Commission**, Elder Marta Strada reported that this year a Community Easter Egg Hunt was planned for Saturday, April 11; it will consist of egg hunt, games, music and food, Both FPCA And FKPCV will participate. It will be open to the surrounding community.

LIFE IN BAGHDAD

By Hugh Iwanicki

The time had finally come to head home for the Winter Solstice. The process started with a shuttle bus ride to the helicopter (helo) landing pad, then a short helo ride to Baghdad International Airport; where I was to stay overnight at the "hotel." The hotel normally consists of multiple two bedroom dry trailers. Only, so many people wanted to head home to celebrate the Solstice that the hotel was full so my accommodations consisted of sleeping in a tent with 25 of my best friends in a 25 man snoring chorus.

The next morning after getting no sleep (because of the snoring along with the tent shaking caused by continuous low flying planes and helicopters) I arose to a cold grey morning. After breakfast, I went over to the military terminal and waited for the flight to Jordan. Upon landing in Jordan, I felt like I was in Disneyland. There were stores, gas stations and even fastfood restaurants and no concrete T-walls with razor wire lining the sides of the road. It felt even better when, three days after my journey started, I saw my beautiful wife at the airport in Washington DC. The very next day, we drove nine hours to see my folks for Christmas, and it felt strange to not encounter a single military checkpoint along the way. The following night we went to the Christmas Eve service at my parent's Church. I was amazed at the lack of security at the Church entrances; a perfect opportunity for a suicide bomber to come walking through the front door... Then I realized: it was GOOD to be home.

But all good things must come to an end, and the time had come for my wife and my Mother-in-Law who had recently come from China to take me back to the airport. My flight back to Jordan was delayed for over four hours in London. With the delay, I didn't get to the hotel until 3:00am and was up at 7:00am to make the trip to the military airport.

We hopped out of the C17 Military plane in Baghdad to a blast of cold clammy air. The clouds had rolled in, and a light misty rain began to fall. Everywhere I looked was mud or brown muddy water. We walked across the runway, having to drag our suitcases through the coarse gravel trail again, now a trail of mud, to await our helo flight to the New Embassy . Compound (NEC). 36 hours after my flight took off from DC I was in my adopted home. I slept like a baby in my government-issued bed.

The following Saturday morning I eagerly awoke, hoping for sunny day. I looked outside and nervously saw a foggy mist. I dressed quickly as this was a special day. To begin with, this was

the first time I was to go to church since being in Iraq. The service was held in a conference room at the NEC. Joining me were seven women, 21 men, and five guns. I thought to myself this is the first church service I've been to where parishoners are openly armed. We sang songs to the accompaniment of a guitar. The Chaplain's department used to have a keyboard but someone had stolen it a few days before. Despite this, it was a joy to be in Church praising the Lord.

Unfortunately I had to leave early to attend my next event: The Tour.

There are two prerequisites to sightseeing in Baghdad; a car and a gun. Since I have neither, I felt quite stranded at the NEC. Thankfully, a friend of mine has both, So after I asked if he was carrying and he replied with a smile, we were off on our tour of the day. Our first stop was the 14th Street bridge. We parked the car at a grungy parking lot with a plethora of

crushed water bottles and cigarette butts. To our left was a small line of cars waiting to clear the checkpoint and head over the bridge into the red zone. Trying not to get too close to the cars in case one would blow up, we walked to the pedestrian side of the bridge, looked out over the murky water of the Tigris River and took some photos. Next stop on the tour was the Ski pond. Saddam had made a special pond lined with gravel, like a gigantic swimming pool the size of a lake, where his sons and no one else could go water skiing. There is a narrow road separating the Tigris from the Ski pond. Along the road are a couple of beat-up park benches. So we stopped the car and stepped out, trying to avoid the mass of trash that completely covered the shoreline and into the river of broken beer bottles and plastic bags etc. I had finally found a place in the world that has more garbage on the side of the road than parts of China.

Our travels next brought us to Camp Liberty, famous for its large outdoor swimming pool. As we parked across the street, my friend told me that, a few months ago, in that very parking lot, he and his co-worker had returned to their SUV and found two Iraqi's leaning over each side of its front bumper. Thinking the men were planting a bomb, the agents pulled their guns and went to either side of the car and yelled at the guys, whose nefarious plot was restricted to urination.

The next stop was the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. After the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) Saddam constructed this enormous complex the size of a hockey stadium and at the center is the coffin of the unknown soldier. There were several Iraqi guards with AK-47s at the entrance, so my friend asked if it was okay if we were to go in. After a few minutes of Arabic chatter on his two way radio, we were giving the go-ahead to enter but not before we emptied our weapons. Since the guard spoke no English and I speak only 10 words of Arabic I lifted my jacket to show that I wasn't carrying and that seemed to satisfy him. The AK 47-toting guard insisted on escorting us around the complex while wearing a big smile the entire time. He was a non-stop talker; speaking in Arabic very clearly and slowly, but what he was slow to realize was no matter how slow he was to speak to us, if you don't understand it's not going to do any good. I wish I had paid more attention to my language tapes a few nights back. The Tomb is located on a small hill, but the structure is at least five stories tall and over looks an area the size of several football fields giving you a bird's eye view of Baghdad. After taking some photos, it was time for lunch at Camp Prosperity.

Camp Prosperity is located at the al Anang Palace. The story behind the palace is that Saddam's daughter and son-in-law defected to Syria, and the son-in-law started bad-mouthing the regime. Saddam decided to lure his daughter back by building a big palace for her and her

husband, saying he missed them and would forgive them if they returned. Well, they did, and shortly thereafter Saddam nabbed the son-in-law and had him killed. The Palace was heavily damaged in the 2003 war and was never repaired. But within the compound and gardens is Camp Prosperity, where several shops and restaurants are located. So I was able to have my first authentic Iraqi meal since arriving in the country. After lunch, the tour was over and it was back to the NEC.

**STUDENT FROM KOREA LOOKING FOR A ROOM TO LIVE AND
PRACTICE HER ENGLISH**

We have met a lovely young lady, Jiseong Son, from Korea, who has come to **this** country two months ago. She is learning English at ESL (English Second Language) at 7535 Little River Turnpike. She is looking for a place to live within walking distance from her class. She would like to rent a room in the house of an American family so she has to speak English all the time, as her dream is to speak English very well!

For more information, please contact Rebekah Yang

e-mail: jiseung-art@hanmail.net ~~~~~ Tel.: 703 727-5144

YOUTH NEWS!

In April, FPCA and FKPCV youth participated in the Community Picnic and Easter Egg Hunt. Some also went a fossilized shark teeth expedition, led by Laura Hall. Next, we will be planning for Youth Sunday on June 14th. Please let Genny Looker know if you would like to participate in playing bells that Sunday, or providing any other special music.

Acolyte Schedule

May 10	Chris Fuller	June 14	Tyler Young
May 17	Danny DeVera	June 21	Mitchell Youmans
May 24	Kyle Hanson	June 28	Ben Looker
May 31	Sandra Malone		

 **ATTENTION!**

Deadline for the June issue of FIRST and ForMOST is May 15, 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.