



FIRST and ForMOST

October 2011

LET US CELEBRATE REFORMATION SUNDAY!

October 30, 2011

It is October 31, 1517. We are in Wittenberg, Germany, standing in front of the Schlosskirche (Castle Church, also known as All Saints Church). We hear the loud hammering – are looking at the entrance to the church, and there stands a monk, Martin Luther in his robe, fastening a sheet of paper to the wooden door. It contains the 95 Theses, which sparked the Reformation.

So the story goes. Scholars are not convinced that Martin Luther had hammered the 95 Theses on the church door, but it is true that he wrote them. Good works, such as acts of charity, were considered to be in and of themselves salvific, whether these good works were done as a result of faith or some other motive. In the years 1516-17 the Roman Catholic Church needed to raise money to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. According to Roman Catholic teaching, faith alone could not justify human beings. The benefits of good work could be obtained by donating money to the church – culminating in the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were tokens that Christians were pressured to buy in order to spend less time in purgatory, a concept that was also rejected by the Reformers of the Church.

Martin Luther wrote to the Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg, protesting the sale of indulgences, enclosing a copy of the "Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgence," known as The 95 Theses. Most likely Luther had no intention of confronting the Church, but saw his disputation as a scholarly objection to church practices. They protest against clerical abuses, especially the sale of indulgences, which is clearly stated in Theses 85: *Again: Why are the penitential canon laws, which in fact, if not in practice, have long been obsolete and dead in themselves,—why are they, today, still used in imposing fines in money, through the granting of indulgences, as if all the penitential canons were fully operative?* Martin Luther wanted to lead the church back to the right track – to re-form the church.

Luther's dream and effort were eventually realized. Our reformed denominations, of which Presbyterianism is one, are convinced that we cannot buy our salvation with money nor good deeds. We believe in the fundamental teachings that were a direct result of the Reformation:

Sola Scriptura – Only the **Holy Scriptures** will teach us the correct facts about Divine truths and salvation through Jesus Christ. As the Westminster Confession states, the 66 books contained in the Old and New Testaments of Scripture are, "the infallible rule of faith and practice. All other books and letters written by human beings throughout history are considered by the Church to be, by whatever small or large degrees, fallible and inferior to the Scriptures.

Sola Fide – Only **faith** will lead us to salvation – nothing else. By themselves, good deeds, charity, and/or sacrifices are worthless if they are not accomplished as a direct result of our faith. Just as faith is a free gift from God, so too is salvation. It is never earned. Rather, salvation is a free gift given to those who believe (i.e. have faith) that anything we do that is good or righteous is, in fact, God working in and through us.

Sola Gratia – Only **grace** will save us. We may wish to do good things, but we do not always succeed. Even Apostle Paul said that he wants to do good but does bad things. We depend on God's grace. God does not want us to perish – He sent His Only Son, Jesus Christ, to graciously save us from sin and lead us to eternal life.

Solus Christus – our only way to eternal life is through the Word, who descended to earth, God in Human form, Jesus the Christ. He is our only Mediator, in whom we can most fully know God Himself.

Jesus Christ is the true foundation of Reformation! We can truly be grateful to Martin Luther and a number of his contemporaries for leading the Church back on the right track and can celebrate Reformation Sunday with a thankful heart.

Elder Marta Strada and Dr. Chris Looker

PREACHING SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 2011

October 2, 2011 - Service of Holy Communion

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 21:33-46

Sermon: "WHEN THE 'UNDERDOG' IS ACTUALLY THE 'OVERDOG'!"

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

October 9, 2011

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 22:1-14

Sermon: "HOW ARE YOU ATTIRED?"

Elder Susan Ennis, Preaching

October 16, 2011

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 22:15-22

Sermon: "GIVE IT BACK!"

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

October 23, 2011

Scripture Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-8

Sermon: "HOW TO PLEASE GOD"

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

October 30, 2011 - Reformation Sunday

Scripture Lesson: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Sermon: "WHAT IS THE 'NEW COVENANT?'"

Dr. Chris Looker, Preaching

KAY JEFFRIES BEDSOLE - MY MOM

by Jeff Bedsole

Where does one begin describing the life of one so dear and special; a woman who lovingly touched the lives of so many with her warmth, kindness and spirit of generosity.

How does one begin putting into words someone who saw strangers as would-be Angels in earthly disguise, and who always had time and a smile to share with others.

I cannot give literary justice to Mom who, along with my Dad, laid a foundation of Family and Love; while confirming the importance of imparting both roots and wings to children.

The Gratitude, Respect, Admiration and Love I have for my Mom cannot be adequately expressed or measured with words or platitudes... Mom is a lifetime of experiences with attributes demonstrating Strength, Determination, Hope, Faith, Courage, Perseverance, Stability, Love, Conviction, Prayer, Joy, Commitment and Family to name but a few.

There was nothing ordinary about Mom; she was extraordinary... No Saint mind you (and she'd quickly admit to that), but she was our Family Angel and she faced her earthly journey with perpetual Cheerfulness, Optimism and a Smile lighting up a room.

Mom was up for almost anything, and her final 25 month battle with pancreatic cancer was just more evidence of the woman she was. Her Heart-of-Gold, Will of Iron, Unwavering Faith, Concern for Others (even in the most difficult of times) and Spirit of Joy and Thanksgiving left an impression on all whose path she crossed.

Never afraid to speak her mind or the truth-in-love, Mom was anything but forgettable...and while occasional feathers-ruffled – a heart of grateful kindness managed her ability to leave both people and situations better than she found them...

Mom and Dad were the light of each others' eyes and the love of each others' heart; with a foundation of selfless love from which all else sprung. I suppose, these days, truly having each others' best interest at heart is rare, but not so much if you are soul mates as my folks were. Never were they more happy than to be near each other holding-hands; speaking volumes and never saying a word. They each felt the sun rise and set on the other, and their eyes sparkled with the depth of their love.

I found a copy of a note from 1964 written by my Mom to her Church Family in NC shortly after Mom and Dad moved our family to VA. In the note Mom said, she had found a group of people she really liked at a Presbyterian Church in Annandale, and she thought and hoped it was going to work out well as her new Church Family...47 years later, Mom was right again.

A Believer, Wife, Mother, Sister, Grandmother, Great-Grandmother, Friend and Patriot; Mom was proud of all these things but fortunately her life cannot be adequately put into words. She was much too Special to be defined in print; Mom was felt everytime she entered your presence.

A twinkle in her eye – a hop in her step – a smile of warmth and passion. Mom was giving, caring, loving and kind, and those who called her friend have all they need to remember her by...

A colleague at work once said, "it's odd your Mom is your best-friend."

I replied, "my Mom is not my best-friend – my Mom is my Mom..."

Indian, Chief, Warrior, Peacemaker, Mediator, Cook, Chauffeur, Advocate, Jury, Judge, Protector, Coach, Teammate, Disciplinarian, Challenger, Nurse, Doctor, Healer, Angels-Advocate, Friend, and the list goes on and on and on... Simply put: "Mom." She was everything, and I could never say anything more meaningful, more special or with more pride than, "my Mom is my Mom."

Mom was defined by her Faith, her Marriage, her Children, her Family and her Friends. A woman small in height and large in stature.

MaMa, I miss you more than words permit and my heart aches to the core of my being...but mostly, I will do my best to honor the love and life you and Dad shared and share again...

Angels rejoice at Kay Jeffries Bedsole; a life and heart filled with such good and happiness that all the children of God said, "Amen."

POEM READ AT KAY'S MEMORIAL

A limb has fallen from the family-tree;
I keep hearing a voice saying, "Grieve not for me."

"Remember the best times – the laughter – the songs;
The good life I lived while I was strong.

Continue my heritage – I'm counting on you;
Keep smiling and surely the sun will shine through.

My mind is at ease – my soul is at rest;
Remember how I was truly blessed.

Continue traditions - no matter how small;
Go on with your life – don't just stare at the wall.

I miss you all dearly – so keep up your chin;
Until the day comes we are together again!"

THANK YOU!

The Congregation of FPCA is truly a concerned family. Your warmth and caring has been demonstrated over the years with the death of my son Tommy and my friend Mike. The many expressions of sympathy made it easier to cope with the pain.

During my recent illness which included two surgical procedures you were again there for me. Your visits, cards, calls and prayers have again helped me through a very difficult time.

Thank you, FPCA, for being such a caring family!

Love,

Carroll Thompson



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Vivienne Norton ~ 10/01
Debra Sheffield ~ 10/02
Marta Strada ~ 10/07
Jabeen Ghulam ~ 10/8
Anne Manning ~ 10/09
Will Parker ~ 10/11
Alice Mohan Lal ~ 10/15
Margot Young ~ 10/16

Florence Jimenez ~ 10/17
Nancy DeVera ~ 10/18
Garrett Youmans ~ 10/26
Joshua R. Musih (Josh) ~ 10/27
Lee Fuller ~ 10/29
Betty McCown ~ 10/29
Bob Logwood ~ 10/31

THE NEXT CHAPTER

by Susi Ennis

When I arrived at the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale in August 2007 as the Seminary Intern, this congregation welcomed me as a part of the staff and as a friend. It is amazing to me that over 4 years have passed. It seems like only yesterday that I was meeting with Chris to ask if he and this congregation would be willing to take me on and teach me about being a pastor. I have learned so much from all of you as the years passed. I have enjoyed being a part of the joys and the sorrows. I have thanked God more times than I can count for your kindness, your care and your openness with me. I thank you all for providing me with constructive criticism as it was needed as well as affirmation when I was able to bring God's will to us. I also thank God for the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Virginia. God is doing amazing work in both congregations individually as well as together in partnership with FPCA.

And now, God is bringing this chapter to a close. I look forward to what comes next just as we look forward to the new chapter in a book. As many of you know, I have been called to the First Presbyterian Church of Poplar, Montana. The Committee on Ministry and the Executives of Yellowstone Presbytery have approved this call and are looking forward to my entry into their Presbytery as a Minister member as soon as National Capital Presbytery schedules my ordination service. I anticipate that the Service of Ordination will take place here at FPCA in early November so that I can be moved to Montana before Thanksgiving.

The First Presbyterian Church of Poplar is a small church in the northeast corner of Montana. On the maps below, you can find Poplar 20 miles east of the community of Wolf Point in Roosevelt County. According to the latest Census figures, Poplar is a small town with just over 800 members. But this is misleading because the town itself is small geographically. There are more than 2000 members of the entire Poplar community. Poplar is located on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation which is home to the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes. I look forward to learning about the community and the tribes. I look forward to learning how God is working in Poplar, MT.

The church is small but mighty. There are under 100 members with 50-60 in worship on any given Sunday. At this time families with children are few, but one of the things I pray that God will allow me to do is reach out and find families who desire to build a relationship

with God. About 40% of the church membership is Native American. The church is concerned that their community faces challenges for the young people of Poplar. There is a struggle with self-esteem and alcoholism which has led to a high incidence of teen suicides. I feel that my work at Knox Presbyterian Church with their youth as well as my work with Fairfax County Public Schools at the Davis center has given me insight into the lives of teens so that I can help the young people of Poplar.

While I was there in August to preach and see northeastern Montana the congregation was open and welcoming to me. I was reminded of when I first came here. They even held two potluck meals so that I could fellowship with them and get to know them.

The church is providing me with a manse. It is right next door, as far away as the Activities Building is here at FPCA. I am not certain if I can handle the commute ☺. Since the manse was built for a family there are 4 bedrooms, plenty of room for any of you who wish to come visit.

As I leave Northern Virginia for the wilds of Montana, I go with great excitement for what God is bringing. I must also admit that this move also brings me some sadness as I will be leaving FPCA. God has done and continues to do some great things here. I will miss being a part of the future that is held for this community of believers.

Please know that you will all hold a special place in my heart as the first congregation which I pastored. I will continue to pray for you just as I know you will continue to pray for me. Don't worry, as soon as I know the address you all will receive it.

With God's Love on you all,

Susi

FAREWELL PARTY FOR SUSI ENNIS PLANNED FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2011

On Sunday, November 6, 2011, our beloved Susi Ennis will be preaching her last sermon here at FPCA. Following that worship service, we plan on having a FAREWELL PARTY for Susi so that we may honor her for her 4 ½ years of faithful service to our blessed church.

Please note this on your calendars.

Thank you.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT SUSI ENNIS' ORDINATION!

It is with a mix of sadness and great joy that I wish to announce to you that our beloved Susi Ennis has been called to become the new pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Poplar, Montana. I know that you join me in being sad for us, but extremely joyful for Susi! And, what a fortunate congregation they will be to have her as their new pastor! Our loss is definitely their gain!

At Susi's request, FPCA will be the host church for her Service of Ordination on Sunday, November 13, 2011 at 4:00 pm. This will officially be a service of worship led by the National

Capital Presbytery and the Ordination Commission that will be set up to carry out the formal duty of Presbyteries in the PCUSA: Ordination of Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

All members of FPCA, FKPCV, and the FPCA Urdu-Hindi Christian Fellowship are invited to attend and will be participating in this glorious event. In addition, all members from National Capital Presbytery churches and their pastors will be invited to attend and participate as well.

In preparation for this very special event, we are asking all FPCA, FKPCV, and FPCA Urdu-Hindi Christian Fellowship members to contribute to a special fund from which we will be purchasing special ordination gifts for Susi, including her official red Ordination Stole. In addition to these Ordination Gifts, we hope that we will be able to raise enough money to give her a monetary gift that will show our thankfulness for the incredible work that she has done here at FPCA **and** to help her with the many expenses that will be associated with her move to Montana.

On behalf of the Session, I would humbly ask that you pray about this matter and give generously to the **“THANK YOU SUSI FUND”** that is being set up to provide for this very worthy cause.

Please make your checks out to **“FPCA”** and mark in the **“MEMO”** section of the check, **“THANK YOU SUSI FUND”** if you feel called by God’s Holy Spirit to contribute to this special fund.

Thank you!

Dr. Chris Looker, Pastor

THANKS TO MARGARET WHITFIELD

I cannot sit a long time due to back trouble, but I always stayed seated to hear Margaret do her last offering on the piano or organ.

Margaret brought such joy to the church with her incredible talent. I felt like I was getting a free concert every time she sat down to play.

I left church uplifted by her personal spirit which carried over into her music. We shall have other musicians come along, but none will beat Margaret.

Thanks, Margaret – your music shall live in my heart.

Jane Rottier

MEET FELIPE ANDRES DOMINGUEZ!

Felipe is our new Organist/Accompanist

We are sure you will enjoy hearing him play the organ and piano while worshipping God!

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

August 17, 2011

Elder Susi Ennis led the devotion based on Spiritual Leadership for Church Officers, by Joan S. Gray, Chapter 7: The Church: Christ's Body in Our World. This chapter stresses that the Church is both divine and human. Leaders of the church have to depend on spiritual resources when they have to face tension between being God ordained and being a weak, sinful human being. God will give them the strength to deal with conflict. God works through grace to make church leaders more Godly.

Elder Marta Strada reported that FPCA had received a letter from ACCA that this year the Crop Walk around Lake Accotink will be held on October 15, 2011. There will be a CROP Walk Poster Contest for youth through grade 12; she will inform the Christian Education Commission, suggesting that our youth participate.

Youth Elder Mariam Javed reported that the Mission Trip held in July was a success, and most of the young people participating enjoyed it.

Dr. Chris Looker reported that there will be a special Sound System Training Session on Saturday, September 10, 2011, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. The session is being led by Fits and Starts, a company specializing in helping churches use their systems in the most efficient manner.

Elder Susan Ennis reported that she had been invited to preach in a church in Montana on Sunday, August 21, 2011. This church is very interested in hiring her as their pastor.

Next, the Session discussed the problem that the copier/printer in the main office does not work properly in terms of its computer hardware. The lease does not cover repairs that would require an IT specialist to repair components of the copier, which would be very expensive. An alternative proposal is to secure a new copier/printer that claims to cost the same or nearly the same as the total of the monthly and quarterly cost of the current copier/printer. Session moved to commission Elder Tom Martin and the Church Staff to research and solicit bids for a new copier/printer. Session approved the motion.

As the second floor of the Christian Education Wing will be available when Sleepy Hollow Preschool moves out on June 30, 2012, Session is setting up an AdHoc Committee together with the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Virginia to make plans how the space made available will be used best by both churches.

Session continued the discussion of Dr. Looker's Post Sabbatical recommendation of an umbrella name for the churches working together at FPCA facilities: International Presbyterian Center (IPC). After suggesting other variations of this umbrella name, Session determined that more time was needed to think (and pray) about this before making any decisions.

The suggestion to use the Activities Building as Youth Center led the Session to the decision that a closer relationship with Annandale High School has to be pursued, and FPCA members should talk with High School teachers.

It was also suggested that FPCA and FKPCV should have a contact directory, or at least the FPCA directory should include contact with FKPCV, and that an Online Calendar showing the activities of both churches would be helpful.

Reporting for the **Mission Commission**, Elder Susi Ennis had two motions:

Motion 1: The Mission Commission moves that ACCA (Annandale Christian Community for Action) be allowed to hold one of their 2012 monthly meetings at FPCA.

They meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. This would be scheduled for a mutually agreeable Tuesday evening. Motion was amended by adding, that if they want to hold one of their meetings in the Sanctuary, then Session permits them to do so. Session approved the amended motion.

Motion 2: The Mission Commission moves that Girl Scouts of America Cadette Troop 675 be allowed to use a room (usually 105) for their weekly meetings beginning September 6, 2011 and ending June 12, 2012. They will meet from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on Tuesday evenings with the agreement that they will make other arrangements should FPCA have need of the facilities. Session approved the motion unanimously.

Elder Susan Ennis also brought up the fact that Parenting Partnership has nobody in FPCA who would be willing to coordinate the meetings. It was suggested that it would be better if the Parenting Partnership be allowed to continue the meetings at FPCA, but they should be responsible for providing and preparing the food. FPCA members will not be involved, at least for the coming year.

Dr. Chris Looker presented the following special **Stewardship** report: he had a new idea concerning FPCA's Stewardship Campaign, and showed Session an example of a paper called The Good News. It will give each member a chance to express why he/she love the First Presbyterian Church of Annandale and share it with the congregation!

Reporting for the **Christian Education Commission**, Elder Marta Strada informed the Session that the Adult Church School classes will start September 11, not on the 18th, like the classes for the youth. The Commission had decided that the young people in grades 6 through 12 should discuss newspaper articles to see where God stands in our daily events. This class should be called "Where is the Good News?"

Marta Strada, Clerk of Session

ReStart DC **Automated External Defibrillator at FPCA**

We are happy to announce that First Presbyterian Church of Annandale is now equipped with an automated external defibrillator (AED) to protect our members and guests from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). SCA is the nation's leading cause of death and is the result of an electrical disruption in the heart, causing a very rapid and very faint beat, preventing the circulation of blood and oxygen to the rest of the body. When someone collapses from SCA, they need immediate CPR and the shock of an AED to restore the heart's natural rhythm. People with heart disease or a previous heart attack are at risk, but many times, the first sign of any heart problem might be the collapse from SCA.

The AED is a gift from the Cheney Cardiovascular Institute at The George Washington University through the ReStart DC program, which also provided training on how to use and maintain the device. AEDs are easy to use and speed the response to SCA victims while awaiting emergency service. Dr. Chris Looker, Tariq Javed and Marta Strada know how to access the AED. The presence of an AED here at FPCA is a reminder that a healthy heart is critical to our overall health, and we urge our entire congregation to make wise eating, exercise and lifestyle choices. Furthermore, we all play a role in responding to sudden cardiac arrest. If we see someone collapse, please get help, call 9-1-1, start CPR and get the AED.

FPCA LIBRARY CORNER

Look at all the new books the our library has received, and it is not even Christmas! Some were purchased using our library budget, some have been received as gifts from Betty Beal and Rev. Bob Harris! Thank you, generous donors!

The Library also thanks Lois Little for donating money for future purchases! Yes, we have a happy library!

Here are the new books waiting for you:

Broken Promises, Broken Dreams: Stories of Jewish and Palestinian Trauma and Resilience, by Alice Rothchild. London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007. **(956.05 Ro)** *This book follows the journey of a Jewish American physician traveling and working within Israel and the Occupied Territories. It paints a picture of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the complexity of Jewish Israeli attitudes and the hardships of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.*

The Church, by Wallace M. Alston, Jr. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984. **(262 Al)** *Being part of the series Guides to Reformed Tradition, this book summarizes the Reformed doctrine of the church so that the significance of the church may be clarified, read, and understood. The author demonstrates the importance of the roles of the church and its ministry to the formation of the Reformed Tradition.*

Guerrillas of Grace, by Ted Loder. San Diego, CA : LuraMedia, c1984. **(242 Lo)** *The author sees in the Old Testament prophets guerrillas doing battle with the established powers of their day; he sees Jesus as the pre-eminent guerrilla of grace who confronted repressive institutions and liberated captive minds and hearts with his words and his mind. All of us are guerrillas, here to defend God's kingdom against the powers exerting pressure to conform. These prayers will give us strength to do so.*

Invitations From God : Accepting God's Offer to Rest, Weep, Forgive, Wait, Remember, and More, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. Downers Grove, IL : Formatio/IVP Books, c2011. **(248.4 Ca)** *To follow God's invitations do not always fit our lifestyle, but the author shows us how they can heal and restore us, shape where we go, what we do, who we become. She includes reflection questions, exercises and disciplines to help you attend to the quiet voice of God.*

Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love, by Mark A. Scandrette. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, c2011. **(248.4 Sca)** *According to the professor of theology, James Bryan Smith, this book "is an honest account of someone, and several someones, who actually tried to do the things Jesus taught us to do. This book is inspiring because it shows a willingness to take risks, and is honest at the same time... In an age when we talk more about spirituality than we practice it, this book will provide us a healthy balance. It is a much-needed approach to Christian formation for the current generation and beyond."*

The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission, by Rick Warren. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, c1995. **(253 Wa)** *This book may give us some ideas how to reach out to the community, how to grow. The author, the Pastor of the fastest growing Baptist church in American history. He shares a five-part*

strategy that should help a church grow: becoming warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry, and larger through evangelism. The church should concentrate on people-building: the author says "If you will concentrate on building people, God will build the church."

The Peacemaker: a Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, by Ken Sande. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, c2004. **(253.5 Sa)** *Ric Cannada wrote a fitting review of this book, saying "The Bible calls Christians to defend the truth, but the Bible also calls Christians to work hard at unity. Ken Sande gives us valuable, practical help in our 'fight for peace' among Christians in addition to our fight for truth."*

Your Librarian, Marta Strada

ATTENTION!!!!

Due to unforeseen difficulties, the Church Library will NOT move to Room 107 in October. The move had to be postponed until a later date.

YOUTH NEWS!

By Genny Looker

Youth and Church Members Attend Nationals Game

On September 4th, eleven members of the congregation and friends went to see the Nationals. The weather was beautiful and warm, and we hear that certain members even appeared on TV!



Youth Church School Begins

Fall Church School for youth in Grades 6-12 meets at 11:30 a.m. Classes will be led by Genny Looker and Cara Lauler, and will revolve around current events as we ask: “Where is the Good News?” Please join us in the Library. Church School for Elementary Age children is led by Sarah Javed and meets in the Frog Room on the second floor.

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

10/9/2011	Isabella Jackson	11/13/2011	Josh Musih
10/16/2011	Ben Looker	11/20/2011	Garrett Youmans
10/23/2011	Mitchell Youmans	11/27/2011	Elisha Musih
10/30/2011	Sam Looker		

WHAT DO WE COME TO CHURCH FOR?

I have read that many people come to church for entertainment. Church is regarded as somewhat like a theater, with the congregation as the audience watching the actors on stage, hearing a lecture, listening to music, and applauding the performance occasionally. Could we not consider it differently--that the congregation, as well as the minister, and

the choir are all performing in joyful worship of God who is the audience. Let our hymns, anthems and offerings be heart-felt gifts for God's glory, and our prayers and applause show our thanks and love for our wonderful Creator! Let our question not be, "What did I get out of this service?", but "Did I really worship, and is God pleased?"

Contributed by Isabelle Fennig

THE PASTOR AS MINOR POET

HOW DOES THE MINOR POET INTERPRET THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE FOR A CONGREGATION?

The best preacher is always the local pastor. He or she is the one who is skilled not only in exegesis of the Bible, but also in exegesis of the congregation. This is what permits the preacher to proclaim the Word of God to these particular people. Only the pastor who buries the dead, consoles the bereaved, counsels the despairing, rushes to the emergency room in the middle of the night, slugs through boring committee meetings, and who has also spent all week excavating the biblical text has the authority to climb into a pulpit and say, "Hear the Word of the Lord."

The pastor's soul is a crucible in which the holy words from the Bible get ground into the ordinary words that are collected in the course of another week in the parish. It is out of this sacred mix that the pastor then finds some spectacular minor poetry for Sunday morning.

(Selected from an article by M. Craig Barnes in Hungry Hearts, v. 19, no. 2, Summer 2010 and contributed by Sandy Mori)



Deadline for the November issue of FIRST and ForMOST is October 19, 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.