



THE C R O S S R O A D S

Philadelphia Presbyterian Church

351 Morrow Road, Forest Park, Georgia 30297

Our vision is to be a light in the community that brings all people to God through Christ-centered worship and ministry and nurtures their faith in order to extend His kingdom.

FISH TALES AND GRACE

January 28th 4 p.m., the New Square Fish Market in New York City. Mr. Nivelov and the shop's owner, Mr. Rosen are cleaning fish. Suddenly, just as Mr. Nivelov is about to club a carp, it begins to speak in Hebrew (like Billy Bass but without the batteries!) It says that everyone must account for themselves because the end is near." The fish then commands Mr. Rosen to pray and to study the Torah. Mr. Rosen panics and tries to kill the fish but it bucks so wildly that Mr. Rosen cuts his own thumb and ends up at the hospital. The fish flops off the counter and back into the carp box where, it is later butchered by Mr. Nivelov and sold. So concludes an article in the Dallas Morning News. This is when we might say "Holy Mackerel!!

If you think a prophetic fish is far fetched, imagine what the Ninevites must have thought as poor Jonah, trudged begrudgingly into their community... all gooey, covered with sores, clothes half digested, seaweed hanging out of his mouth mumbling, "Ya'll going to hell!" There's no reason anyone should have taken the guy for anything more than just another one of those dirty, half crazed, street preachers.

The irony of what happens next to Jonah is perfectly in keeping with the ongoing absurdity of his story! Not only do the Ninevites take Jonah seriously, but the whole community dons sack cloth and ash, a sign of grief and repentance before Jonah's God.

And if the third chapter were the end of Jonah's story, you'd think his story ends with a happy ending. Jonah obeys God, goes to Ninevah, preaches the Good News, the people repent, God graciously forgives them, and everyone lives happily ever after. Except, Jonah is not a happy camper. In modern terms; What do you do when despite your best efforts otherwise, diplomacy works?

Let me make this point very clear. It's never too late for God. Jonah goes into Ninevah half heartedly announcing his message of doom, "In so many days...God is going to take you out. So go ahead, party, live it up, rip each other off, break the golden rule, steal your neighbor's newspaper, kick their cat, I don't care!"

Makes Jesus' message of "Repent for the kingdom of God is near..." sound like weak tea.

There are no outs in Jonah's message, no grace, no assurance of forgiveness...Judgment is coming! The time for diplomacy is over. Jonah refused to proclaim the truth he himself had experienced in the belly of that big fish... it's never too late for God. There is always grace!

What this story tells us it's never too late for God. God expects us to learn to love one another and live together despite our differences. Jonah's story may sound like nothing more than another talking fish story, best just to club it to death and sell it for fish; though I suspect if we did, we'd all be much poorer for it! In spite of Jonah, grace abounded. Isn't that why we are Christians? It sure is and it is the way we are to be with others. If it were not for grace who knows where some of us might be?

Dr. Spencer R. Frye Sr.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CONGRATULATIONS & 2
THANK YOU

CRAFT GROUP 2

SECRET PALS 2

PLOT LUNCHEON 2

CLERK'S REPORT 3

BIRTHDAYS & ANNI- 4
VERSARIES

NEW MEMBERS 5



OUR MISSION: To exhibit the kingdom of God to our community by being a witness to everyone who is within our reach that Jesus Christ is LORD. To proclaim the gospel by telling the good news of Jesus Christ while equipping all who will to be evangelist so the church will grow. To provide for the worship of God through traditional Sunday morning worship and offer alternative times and styles of worship to the community. To promote the ministry of compassion by providing opportunities for ministry and encouraging others to seek God's call for compassionate service. To preserve the truth of God's word by defending the faith against any deviation from the bible as objective truth. To educate the members of the body of Christ so they are equipped to live as becomes the followers of Jesus. To maintain the spirit of unity through the fellowship of the children of God. To expand the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Rachel Rohrbach** and the Jonesboro Mock Trial Team. The team won the regional competition in February and are headed to the State competition in March. The competition will be held on March 19th and 20th. The Jonesboro team hopes to capture the state title this year.

Congratulations to Rachel for also taking **1st place in the Clayton County Science Fair**. Rachel will now move on to the state level competition which will be held in Athens, GA. The competition will be held on March 31st.

Thank You

Ladies of the church, We would like to express our gratitude for the outstanding lunch aft Mama's funeral. Everyone enjoyed it tremendously.

Jackie, you did an outstanding job getting it organized.

For the rest of the congregation, I did send out Thank You cards for those of you that made charitable donations when I was notified. If we missed any, please accept our sincere appreciation. Your cards meant so much. It shows us how much love, sympathy and prayers that were there for us. For this we thank you. With a church congregation like our, how can anyone go wrong.

Wallace and I expect to be rejoining you in the congregation very soon.

With all our Love and sincere thanks,

Gwen Steele and Wallace Dunn, Nella Ree Dunn's children

Thank You

Thank you for your participation in the **2011 Souper Bowl of Caring**. We were able to donate the 249 lbs. of food to a local food pantry and the \$209 will go to the Samaritans Together of Clayton County.

Thank You

Dear Church family, I want to thank everyone for the Get Well cards and all the Christmas cards I received. I enjoy the visits and the conversations with Spencer when he comes to visit. Love, **Tye Bryant**

PLOT Luncheon

Everyone is invited to the PLOT luncheon which will be held on March 20, 2011. Your support will help send our youth to camp. Please come out and support this worthy cause.

Jennifer Rohrbach & Diane Kitchen



The Craft Group

The Craft Group met January 25th and planned our calendar for the year. We invite all the ladies of the church to join us. The schedule will be printed in the bulletin and the Cross Roads of the coming events. We have great things planned for 2011.

For some of the ladies who are new to Philadelphia and who are not familiar with this group, the Craft Group was started so many of us could learn Cross Stitch and other Crafts, but once we veered away from that and started going out to lunch and taking short trips, we soon abandoned the Crafts, but kept our name. It is a great outlet for us and wonderful fellowship. Please join us.

Jackie Hill & Barbara Barlow

SECRET PAL CHANGES

Over 30 years ago we had four very active Women of the Church circles. Our congregation was much larger, we were all much younger and our lives were much busier. For the most part, we were close to those women in our own circle, our Sunday School class, or those who sat around us on Sunday mornings.

Two circles, in an effort to bring their women closer, decided to start a Secret Pal program, members of one circle drawing names of members of the other. They would pray for their Pals, send cards of encouragement and provide gifts for very special occasions. And once a year, the Sunday nearest Valentine's Day, they would meet and reveal their identity to their Secret Pals.

It didn't take long for women of the other circles to want to join in and the program grew.

Time has passed. We are no longer Women of the Church, but Presbyterian Women. We have three circles now rather than four. And the Secret Pal program has changed also. At one point it had become almost a "gift of the month" club and membership decreased.

After taking a year off to regroup, the remnants of the Secret Pal program met February 13 to discuss how to proceed. We have decided to go back to the very basics. Secret Pals will once again be a program of anonymous prayer and encouragement between women. One gift, and only one, will be given; and that at the disclosure party in February. Otherwise, support will be through cards and prayer.

We will meet briefly on March 20 at the youth luncheon to draw names for 2011. If you would like to be a part of this program of prayer and encouragement for your church sisters, join with us and draw a name.



From the Clerk...

Some months the Session business meetings are routine and there's really nothing interesting to report. Others, well they're just packed full of information. February's monthly business meeting was one of those – a lot of things having to do with property and several denominational issues.

In January, Spencer and two elder commissioners, Rick Pierce and Philippe Karka, attended a presbytery meeting which focused on providing information relating to proposed bills and overtures to be voted on in February. The proposed changes included three hot issues: 1) a new Form of Government (FOG) to replace the Book of Order's (BOO) Section G (government); 2) the addition of the Confession of Belhar; and 3) elimination of the fidelity and chastity provision in ordination standards.

Those in support of replacing the BOO form of government feel that the new FOG will simplify and grant more flexibility to the church. Those opposed feel that the replacement will not improve functionality of the denomination or its churches. The implication of its passing is that each presbytery will need to reassess the way it governs.

The Confession of Belhar was adopted by a church in South Africa in 1986. Gender inclusive, the Confession addresses people-to-people relationships with a main thrust of reconciliation, unity and justice. Supporters argue that "this confession faithfully addresses questions of unity in Christ, including those currently confronting the Presbyterian Church." The opposition states that "no additional confession of faith is needed by the PCUSA at this time...it (Belhar) is already instructional but does not need the status of inclusion in the Book of Confessions." The implication of passing is that "this would add another faith statement to the Book of Confessions which underlines inclusion and justice in our common life" and it will "assume an authoritative roll in our church life equal to the other 11 confessions."

For many years we have watched our denomination struggle over the issue of changing ordination standards in the Book of Order to remove the fidelity and chastity requirement which basically states that you must live in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness. Supporters of removing the fidelity and chastity requirement argue that it "blocks otherwise qualified candidates from ordained office." Those opposed argue that "this change weakens ordination standards which would open the door of ordination to persons engaged in unrepentant sinful lifestyles." The implication of passing is that "this would allow governing bodies to make decisions on candidates' abilities without regard to issues of sexual practice or lifestyle."

Each of these three amendments passed in the Atlanta Presbytery vote February 19. The FOG (new form of government) 245 for and 143 against. The Confession of Belhar 252 for, 127 against. And removal of "fidelity and chastity" 262 for, 157 against, 5 abstains. They will be voted on in each of the 173 presbyteries in the General Assembly during this year. A simple majority will mean passage.

Now to lighter news. In an effort to make our worship services more accessible to those of us with hearing impairments, Rick Pierce (Property Committee) has had several of our members testing individual sound amplification units to see if they might be an option; but many who ordinarily use hearing aids have found them somewhat lacking. Rick and Choir Director Alisa Kirk are planning to have our existing sound system checked and sound balanced as the speakers in the sanctuary and narthex do not seem to be working properly. Once the current sound system is checked/repared we will see if it improves sound quality for those members with hearing aids. In an additional effort, Dr. Frye is having copies of sermons printed and made available in the narthex the following week. (One member has already remarked that she understood more from the written sermon because she missed so much due to her hearing.) There will be more on this later, I'm sure.

Light bulbs! Do you hate those spiral compact fluorescents as much as I do? They are currently produced only in China but efforts are underway for their manufacture in the U.S. CFLs have generated concern because they contain mercury and can prove to be an environmental hazard if indisposed of improperly. One broken CFL in a landfill could contaminate thousands of gallons of water. There is also concern voiced regarding quality control of the bulbs originating in China. (Think lead in imported toys.) Unless a Republican bill not to ban incandescent bulbs passes we will all be using compact fluorescents exclusively by 2012.

How does that affect us at Philadelphia? Each light in the sanctuary uses 600 watts of power. That's a lot when added all together. Next time you're at church, look at the cross on the wall above the entrance from the sanctuary to the narthex. Directly below the cross is a little electrical box which houses the dimmer unit for the sanctuary lights. It caught fire recently and now has to be replaced. (Praise God only the box burned!) We have an estimate of \$2973 to repair and replace the existing unit. Another option might be to use compact fluorescents and greatly reduce the wattage in the sanctuary if a specialized CFL dimmer is available or do without dimmers completely.

How's your phone bill? We are considered a business, have three lines, a fax machine and internet service. Three months ago the bill jumped to \$390. Rick and Cindy have straightened this out with Bell South and the bill is now down to \$265 with a discount. Thanks, Rick and Cindy. In the process, Bell South mixed up all of the passwords on the internet service. Any email you sent to the church office during that period may not have been received. If important, best give Cindy a call.

Also from Property, the bushes on the east side of the sanctuary are dying and need extensive pruning. Several years ago they were cut back drastically and we were blessed with abundant new growth. To save the bushes we will do that once again, so don't be shocked when you drive up one Sunday morning and they are cut almost down to the ground.

God's love to each of you,

Lynn Vandiver, Clerk of Session



MARCH VOLUNTEERS

Nursery Workers

Ushers

06/Beckie Huie

Ray Morgan

12/Serena Staats

Darr Johnson

20/Lynn Vandiver

Buddy Ashmore

27/Pat Randolph

Jim Phillips

Happy Birthday to ...

- 02 / Chris Banke
- 03 / Jennifer Rohrbach
- 06 / Valerie Gill
- 07 / Chyanne Patterson
- 15 / Angie Tharpe
- 18 / Diane Kitchen
- 19 / Don Nelson
- 19 / Andrew Durden
- 20 / Pat Randolph
- 24 / Pegge Murphy
- 26 / Henry Brock
- 27 / Charlie NeSmith
- 28 / Erwin Gettys

Happy Anniversary to ...

- 26 / Annelle & Theodore Maxwell
- 28 / Celestine & Philippe Karka

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.PPC-USA.ORG

Core Values of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church

- Radical Hospitality** (Romans 12:9-21)
- Passionate Worship** (John 4:21-24)
- Intentional Faith Development** (I Corinthians 9:19-24)
- Risk-Taking Mission and Service** (Matthew 25:14-30)
- Extravagant Generosity** (II Corinthians 9:6-15)



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TO BE REMEMBERED IN PRAYER AND WITH CARDS (new info in bold)

Please notify us concerning updates. Inquiring minds – and prayerful hearts – want to know!

2/09 Betty Dunn Caudle (Dot Dunn's sister-in-law) inoperable back cancer

1/31 Susan Enow – (Rose's sister) – cancer of left eye

1/25 Barbara Gibson – fractured right leg, surgery on February 22

2/08 Janice Harris (Demester Dunaway's friend) many medical issues

1/31 Korin Johnson (Brittany's son) – in neonatal care – premature birth

1/27 Dot Lenderman – thyroid problems & macular degeneration, cataract surgery February 17

2/2 Anand Nevrekar – recovering from surgery

2/09 Kera Parr (Pat Randolph's friend) – pet scan for cancer to determine need of surgery

1/12 Jim Phillips – recovering from pneumonia and bronchitis

2/14 Landy Ponder (Spencer's friend) – blindness not due to cancer but from unknown cause

2/09 Michael Turner (Joyce Smith's nephew) taking daily chemo & radiation for tumor in lung

OUR HOMEBOUND:

Mary Binkney

Tye Bryant

Joan Cushing

Doris Ellis

Marie Foster

Myrtice Ormond

Bert Tatzel

JoAnn Tatzel

*Addresses of
our homebound are
on the bulletin board.*

To make a prayer request, you may call the church office at 404-366-1851, send an email to secyppc@bellsouth.net or click on the prayer request button on our website at www.ppc-usa.org.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Blondell Brown, Anne Dunnivin, Carole Masdon,
Martha Smith, Bud & Mona Steele and Kwadwo Totimeh**

Join us in welcoming these to the Philadelphia Presbyterian family. You may find their addresses on the bulletin board.