



Presbyterian Times February, 2015

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Out of My Mind ~ for February 2015 ponderings from Pastor John

C.H.A.N.G.E.

The Rev. Mary Wright, one of the Interim Pastors in the monthly group I try to attend regularly, recently told us the acronym: C.H.A.N.G.E

Christ has a new gift every day!

I hate change ... I suspect you do, too. And, change is on our horizon. Sometime in the foreseeable future I'll leave, and your long-term pastor will arrive. That has a measure of satisfaction to it, in view of all the hard work you have done to prepare for her or his arrival, and the hope all of you have for the future of FPCR. However, you all will experience the displacement and shift with some measure of anxiety. If you have attended the "Achieving our Desired Future" event you will have some ways to engage that change effectively and in healthy ways.

I want to broaden the focus of the change that Christ is bringing us. You have probably figured out by now that one of my favorite verses is Isaiah 43: 18: "I am even now doing a new thing! Don't you get it?!"

Do you "get" the 'new thing' that our Master Jesus is doing with and through His Church?

This week I found myself pondering the historical context of Isaiah bringing this challenging Good News to the Israelites. Their situation seemed terminal. The Babylonians had breached Jerusalem's walls, desecrated the Temple, ended [forever, but One] the Davidic Dynasty, all persons and goods of value were dispersed to far-off lands ... a way of life that had lasted 1,000 years had ended. Apparently God had abandoned the People of Israel.

Change ... where's the 'gift' in all of that?

Yet, Isaiah brings God's heart into sharp focus for the remaining faithful: "I know you; I have called you by name; I love you and will ransom you!"

Isaiah continues making clear God's heart: "Don't stay focused on the former things! Even now, I am doing a new thing! Don't you perceive it?!"

My reflections led me to think on the changes we are in the midst of in these early years of the 21st Century. In no way is the magnitude of our change like the catastrophic ‘ending’ Israel experienced.

Yet, it does seem as though God has abandoned the main-line denominations ... America is no longer a ‘christian nation’ ... racial justice and equality has not come so far as we hoped and worked for ... we’re free to mention ‘god’ and ‘spirituality’ in general terms, but may come in for varying forms of “persecution” for directly advocating “Jesus, God’s Messiah.”

I wrote last month about the “Field of Dreams Church” no longer existing; it is not enough just to build a facility and hold excellent worship ... God seems to have abandoned that tactic ...

So, what is the “new gift” Christ brings? Do you ‘get’ some of where God’s love, energy and focus is happening?

Inherent in the acronym: C.H.A.N.G.E. is the notion that change, itself, is a time [think: *kairos*] when God is particularly present and active. God’s Holy Spirit is able to snuggle into the anxious creakings and crackings of our souls, when we are pried open a bit by the change that is forced upon us ... or, in better times, the change we bring by choice.

So, I’m encouraging you to stay attentive and curious about C.H.A.N.G.E. See if you can find the gifts Christ is bringing as we engage the changes that are before us.

your temporary shepherd, John

Work for our common good; love openly; and, get to know God better this month!

Membership News

Mary Kwantes

We had a great game night on January 18 and are looking forward to the Chili cook-off on February 8th at 5pm. Dress western, bring a side to share, and come enjoy family fun and great chili. The sign-up sheet will go up outside the office. Membership is seeking a few new members to help us reach out to visitors, new members, and coordinate our monthly fellowship activities. This committee also oversees Sunday morning fellowship so you can also help by signing up to MAKE coffee and cold drinks. We are also seeking feedback on our lack of Easter Breakfast last year. We did not do the early service but could reinstate if we find folks are interested and are available to help. Otherwise we will just do the Fellowship brunch as we did last year. Please continue to greet visitors, introduce them to others, and invite them to fellowship and Fired Up!

Personnel News

Britt Whitaker

We would like to welcome Travis Ross and Katie Sands as our new part time custodians. Both come to us with significant experience and motivation. Coverage will be Monday - Friday mornings and several evenings and weekends.

Presbyterian Women

Pat Look

If you order from Amazon, you can benefit the Presbyterian Women by going to AMAZONSMILE.COM and choose Presbyterian Women in Presbyterian Church USA as your Charity. .05% will be given to them. It is really easy and can really add up.

Preschool News

Rachel Allison

Hello from the Preschool! First off I want to say thank you so much for the warm welcome and support the Church has shown me! It has been a whirlwind first month getting settled in but I have had a wonderful experience with the church members and staff that I have interacted with so thank you!

We have started off the new year with lots of fun and learning! Author Martha Dinsdale came and read her new book to us! (Hopefully you saw the picture in the newspaper!) Missouri S & T's Aerospace Engineering Department came to teach us about space. We will soon be celebrating our 100th day of school and Princess Snow White is even coming for a visit! There is NEVER a dull moment!

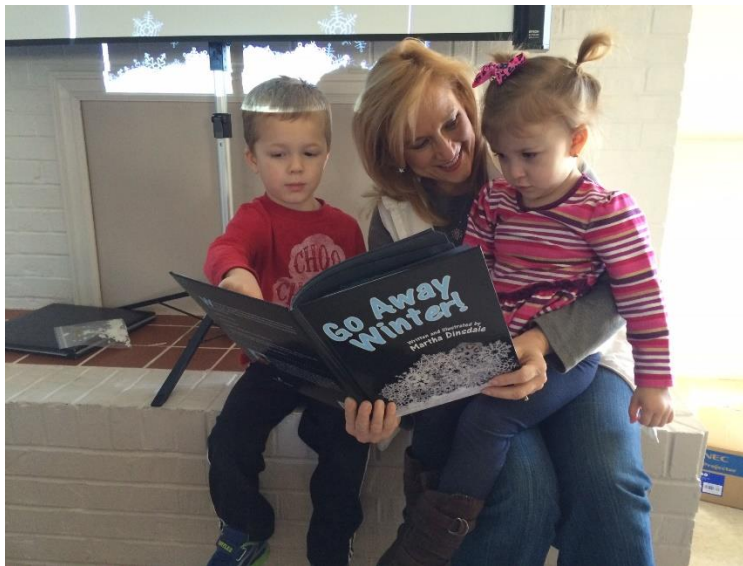
We will be starting pre-enrollment February 1st. We extend the opportunity for families to pre-enroll their children for the fall 2015/2016 school year. This allows Church Members and currently enrolled families to have first choice for schedules and placement. If you are interested in enrolling a child in our program please come by the office and fill out the paperwork. Pre-enrollment is on a first come-first serve basis and we will fill up fast!

Finally, the Preschool now has a web site! Check us out at:

www.firstpresbyterianpreschoolrolla.com

Thank you for your continued prayers for the Preschool students, teachers and staff and for your support of this wonderful program that I am honored to have a role in!

God Bless!
Rachel Allison



Author Martha Dinsdale reading her book “Go Away Winter” at Preschool

Worship and Music Happenings

Jonathan Kimball

We are now in the season of Epiphany and soon to enter the next major season of the Christian calendar, Lent. Lent is a time when we reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for all of us, taking on all of our sins to renew us to a right relationship with God. It is a time of preparation that culminates with the Good News of Easter!

Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday**, this year on **February 18**. As in past years, we will serve a light meal of soup and bread at **5:00 p.m.** Then we will have a service of communion and imposition of ashes starting at **5:30 p.m.** This is a wonderful service of quiet contemplation.

FIRE UP! is continuing on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. I have begun to refer to it as our “informal” worship, rather than “contemporary,” because I think that more accurately captures its essence. It is a come-as-you-are, relaxed time when we worship God and re-center on the Word midweek.

In various committee meetings, we have discussed the possibility of preceding FIRED UP! with a meal of some sort. There are many possibilities: every week, monthly, or quarterly; elaborate or simple; carry-in or paid. Our general thought is to have a small fee, on the order of \$5, so that people do not feel obligated to cook something. However, the people currently involved in organizing the service are maxed out. **If you feel called to arranging a meal**, on whatever schedule seems appropriate, please contact me.

As always, if you are interested in participating in worship in any way, please contact me so that I can put you in touch with the right person. There are always opportunities to serve as worship leader, serve communion, work the sound system, usher, or help in other small ways in the preparation.

~ Jonathan Kimball, Chair

Poem

The Come, come church

Mary Kwantes

Here in this lovely Christian valley
we once built a small brown,
unpretentious church,
and worshipped there,
filling the wooden pews
with people like ourselves,
our kind, our kin.
After a family's family or so
some trees grew up
around our Christian valley church
and solaced us into silent retreat.

And we,
we liked the trees,
the peacefulness
of their green grandeur,
as if we lived
beneath the shadow of our God
secure, and more than that,
we felt ourselves surrounded
by a heritage we should preserve,

and so we let them stand.
And the green of growing tree
soon filled our valley in the shadow.

Then through that woods
we'd ring our steeple's happy
'Come, come, come" bells
to people
living on the hills above our church.
We'd sing our hymns,
but our choir
could not sing beyond the walls;
nor could the ringing
seep through the wildwood
to sound upon those hills,
bare hills,
where no saintly spires rose up,
and no one put on Sunday best.

Then one day
some took axes in hand
to cut down trees for some new church
they wanted on the hill.
We commissioned them,
and later more,
sending them on their way.
But still
most of us would merely sing
in Christian self-complacency,
"Come, come to our lovely church
whose clean white doors
we've left open for you.
Come from your world of sin and poverty.
Gather at our living streams;
we'll even pour cups of cold water.
Come down yourself
and meet us at our church."

Above our lovely Christian wood
are hills.
Christless,
they stretch to reach heaven,
but can't.
They can't hear bells.
They will never come unless-
unless we Christians
cut down all these trees
that muffle our bells
and cover up the sky,
and then climb the hills
with fresh-cut crosses on our backs;
Unless we carry
"Come, come" with us;
then only will LOVE, LOVE
be heard aloud.

From the Office

Betti Jo Pyatt, Office Manager

The office and preschool will be closed on Monday, February 16th for President's Day. **Session will meet at 7 p.m. in the Sadler Lounge.**

Happy Birthday to Joan Williams, Fredi Zobrist, Kaylee Denbo, George Zobrist, Teresa Fox, Andrew Isaac and Mary Wallen.

Happy Anniversary to David and Mary Wallen.

First Friday Night out will be February 6, 2015 at Gordo's at 5:30 p.m.

Able Commission Valentine Dinner will be Friday, February 13, 2015 in the Fellowship Hall.

Happy Valentine's Day!