



The Maplewood Presbyterian Church *Messenger*

March, 2010

Vol. 15, Issue 3



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Fan into flames the gift God gave to you!

2 Timothy 1:6

There is nothing like the enthusiasm of a beginner. New converts are notoriously enthusiastic. Whether converted to a new exercise regime, vegetarianism, fly fishing or a living faith with Jesus Christ, there is a rampant exuberance that can exhaust the rest of us. Sometimes we look upon these dedicated enthusiasts and roll our eyes and moan about how "on fire" they are, even while we secretly admire



their dedication, envy their energy and pray for our own rekindling of first love.

The problem with being "on fire", is that it takes a lot of time and effort to maintain that degree of enthusiasm for any length of time. That is the reason not many New Year's resolutions make it past March. The joy of exercising gradually becomes just another chore on your long list of things to do. Old habits and tastes cry out to be satisfied with a greasy hamburger and fries. Then it happens! Getting away to that perfect fishing hole never seems possible on your schedule. Sunday morning services and Wednesday night choir practice, Friday morning bible study...etc., seem to be consuming your week, and you feel the need for some "time off." Problem? Time off easily becomes a smoldering act.

Paul recognized the need for Timothy, and all Christians, periodically to "rekindle the gift of God" (v.6) that we have received in our lives. What does it take to fan the flame of the spirit back to a roaring fire of faithfulness within us? It takes three things: Power, Love, and a Self-Discipline.

1. Power: On our own, we are totally incapable of remaining faithful to anyone or anything – not even ourselves. The greatest gift each of us

receives as new children in Christ is that special presence Christ sent to be among us - the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, two images seem to accompany the Holy Spirit - fire and wind/breath.

Just as all fire needs oxygen, so the flames of faithfulness that are kindled within us cannot be kept going without the breath of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's continued presence with us acts like a bellows to the flames we tend in our hearts. If we ignore the presence of this "spirit of power," cut ourselves off from the possibility of a living spirit within us, we shut down our own air supply.

Continued

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The Maplewood MISSION STATEMENT:
TO KNOW CHRIST and TO MAKE HIM KNOWN
*By Leading People to a Saving Faith in Jesus Christ,
Nurturing and Equipping People in the Faith,
Love and Knowledge of Jesus Christ,
Deploying People in Servant Ministries to the Rest of the World.*



From the Pastor continued . . .

2. Love: It is not enough simply to fan the flames of faithfulness within ourselves. Until we open ourselves up to others, our friends, our church, our community, it is bound to gradually die out.

The gospels are filled with Jesus' counsel on how to live in this world as a disciple of this love. Contrary to what we may sometimes feel, it is our contact with others that fuels our faith. It is as though each person who touches us brings a log to throw on the fire. The more we reach out to others in love, the higher the flames of faith can climb. Faith does not grow in seclusion. It must be given away through love, or it smolders and dies.

3. Self-Discipline: Even those who acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit and who encounter others with a loving attitude may gradually lose their spark. G. Campbell Morgan said that it was possible to be "homiletically brilliant, verbally fluent, theologically profound, biblically orthodox and spiritually useless."

To avoid becoming "spiritually useless," we must all practice a self-disciplined lifestyle. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, testified to the comfort daily prayer brought him. This was a discipline he practiced whether among friends or shut up in a lonely prison. Prayer is not always easy - and sometimes our own tongues cannot express the needs and longings of our spirit.

For this reason, we also need the discipline of reading the Scriptures. To be unfamiliar with this resource is to refuse to tend your fire. No flames, no matter how well fueled, will continue to burn without the input of a careful prod here, a push there. We must be willing to work our fires if we would keep them burning brightly.

It is easy to let things slip away. How easy it is to let good intentions slip away. How easy it is to let our spiritual lives slip away.

Fan the flames!!!

Steve



*May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the road rise gently to your pace.*

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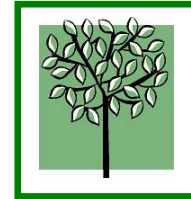
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NEWS from SESSION



**Session did not meet in February
due to – you guessed it – SNOW!**

ONE GREAT HOUR of SHARING 2010



WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS FOR MARCH

Communion Servers

March 7 – Todd Bevington, Karen Bouknight,
Jon Casteel, Mike Cerilli, Donna Costelnock,
Michele Doppelheuer

Communion Preparers

March 6 – Jean Gleditsch, Mary Leamer

Greeters

March 7 Lindsey & Nick Cerilli
14 Coleman & Sheila Brumley
21 John & Carol Clark
28 Darylene & Raymond Rupp

Ushers

March 7 Lindsey Cerilli, Nick Cerilli, Tony
Cerilli, Trevor Casteel
14 Coleman & Sheila Brumley, Allen &
Joyce Neville
21 John & Carol Clark, Carmella
McCormick, Jenna Doppelheuer
28 Darylene & Raymond Rupp, Ben &
Emily Bevington

Acolytes

March 7 Hope Belmont
14 Christian Belmont
21 Rachel Rossi
28 Jonathan Bouknight

More than sixty years ago, American Christians joined together to respond to the worldwide devastation caused by World War II. Recognizing what a difference we can make when we work together in Christ's name, Presbyterians have continued to support One Great Hour of Sharing ever since. In response to Jesus call, "Feed my sheep," our gifts to the offering support the ministries of Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

One Great Hour of Sharing continues to offer hope for those most hopeless: we walk toward recovery and wholeness with those whose lives have been shattered by disaster, and we stand with communities facing the slower crises of hunger, disease, unemployment, and environmental degradation that make them vulnerable even before disasters strike. In sharing resources with people in need around the world, we not only witness God's love in action in their lives: we feel it moving in our own.

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be received at Maplewood on Palm Sunday (March 28) and Easter (April 4). Collection boxes have been made available for our children, who are asked to bring their own offering to the worship service on Palm Sunday. For others, an offering envelope has been included with this month's Messenger. Additional envelopes will be available in the pew racks on Palm Sunday and Easter.



MARCH HAPPENINGS



NEWS from PEWS:

Congratulations and Best Wishes

to **Aimee & Rob Hogg** on the arrival of their daughter and **Henry's** new sister, **Hadley!**

Thank You!

I wish to Thank all for the prayers, support, offers and beautiful cards, Bob and I received after his surgery, and while he is recuperating at home. Means so much when you aren't sure how devastating surgeries can be, to know there are many prayers for healing being offered to God and know he is listening.

God Bless each of you

Evalinda Rose

Greensburg-Salem High School Musical

Greensburg Salem is putting on the musical "Grease" on Friday & Saturday, March 5th & 6th at 7:30 PM and Sunday, March 7th at 2:00 PM. Tickets are available at the high school for \$7 (general admission) and \$8 (reserved seats) and will be on sale before the show times. (*Pssst . . . Our own Patrick McAteer is performing!*)



MARTHA CIRCLE:

Martha Circle will hold their monthly meeting on **March 17, 2010** at **9:15AM** in the church lounge. **Gene Vogt** will be our hostess and **Mary Leamer** will have devotions. We will be continuing our study of "*Becoming a Contagious Christian*" by Mark Middleburg. All ladies of the church are invited to join in our fellowship.

PALM SUNDAY BRUNCH

Following Worship, March 28th

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR CHURCH LIFE ACTIVITIES

Progressive Dinner May 1, 2010

Hosts will be needed for appetizers and main course for 6-8 people. Dessert will be at the church with hosts to prepare. Sign up sheet for hosts will be available soon. Sign up sheet will be available closer to the event for attendees.

Dinner/Theater Night

for our production of *Godspell* at the Geyer Theater in Scottsdale for **Saturday June 5th**. A car pool will be set up and a place to have dinner before the show.

Contact **Jean Gleditsch** or **Todd Bevington** for further information.

"God has a purpose for my life. No other person can take my place, it isn't a big place, to be sure, but for years I have been molded in a peculiar way to fill a particular niche in the world's work."

MORE Happenings



CHILDREN'S CHURCH:

MISSION PROJECT FOR OUR SMALL YOUTH

We are continuing to learn about the *Fruits of the Spirit* and the children are showing the *Fruit of Love* by doing their own mission project - selling "Soup in a Jar" for \$7.00 each.

The jars of Barley Soup Mix contain all the ingredient's (except the beef) and recipe to prepare a nice pot of soup for a family. The children took orders for soup jars and stayed after church to assemble them. If you weren't able to get your order in, there will be extra's to sell. The jars will be delivered within the next few week's.

The proceeds from the project are being used to purchase diapers for the Food Bank, a stocked item for which there is always a need.

Thank you to all who purchased "Soup in a Jar" for the children's mission project. Please let our children know how proud you are of them, that they are not too small to help make a difference in our community!

Val & Marie

YOUTH GROUP:

The Youth Retreat is quickly approaching - **March 12th** thru **March 13th** at **Pine Springs Camp** in Jennerstown.! We will leave the church at **5:00 PM** on Friday, March 12th and return by noon on Sunday.

Cost for the weekend is **\$17.00** per person. This includes food and lodging. Each camper is asked to bring a 2 liter bottle of soda and a bag of snacks to share.

We will be snow tubing on Saturday, so please bring appropriate clothing. It's going to be a great weekend that you don't want to miss!

Please be sure to let **Pastor Steve** or **Val McAteer** know if you plan to attend.



MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

It is neverending at times, isn't it? All the stuff you have to do! School, work, chores, sports, band, PTA, and on and on. It can be hard to manage your own personal schedule, plus your family coordinating with each other.

The **Worship Committee** understands your pain! In an effort to make life easier, we would like to introduce the **Acolyte Sign-Up Chart**. It will be placed under the flower chart in the narthex. We currently have a pool of about 25 eligible youth and children. There are normally about 54 services a year where an acolyte is needed (every Sunday plus Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve). If every eligible youth/child signed up for 2 services, nearly every service would be covered. By using this chart, we hope to eliminate the practice of having to call on the same people month after month.

All sign-ups for April through December will be eligible for Bible Bucks. The older youth do not generally participate in Bible Bucks, so we would like to encourage parents of all our youth to find a small reward for them participating.

We thank YOU – all the parents – for allowing and encouraging your children to participate in worship. You truly do make our worship service even better, while at the same time teaching your children to reach out and serve others.

MAPLEWOOD WATCHMAN



But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. (Ezekiel 33:6)

By Karen Bouknight
Volume 3, Issue 3

Authority and Prayer (part 2)

Last month we began examining Christian authority and prayer, starting with the authority aspect. This month we are going to look at prayer. We are going to look at the Lord's Prayer as a model. But first let's look at scripture:

But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not you therefore like to them: for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him. After this manner therefore pray you: *Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* For if you forgive not men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when you fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; That you appear not to men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. (Matt 6:6-18)

The first thing we should notice is that Jesus said that prayer should not just be recited as a form of useless repetition. Prayer is supposed to be an active process with objectives. Now, I know very well that we say this prayer every Sunday. But where are our hearts when we say it? When you pray outside of church, do you say the Lord's Prayer or is it more personal? What the Lord's Prayer shows us is the basic components for effective prayer. Let's go line by line:

“Our Father, Who is in heaven” – This is Who you are addressing your prayer to. We are stating it plainly. There are times we come to Jesus, but Jesus Himself came before God the Father.

“Hallowed be Your Name.” – We should enter God's gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise. Think about ancient kingdoms of old. A person did not just barge into the throne room and start blathering in front of the king. This is where we give our thanks and praises for past answers.

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” – Now we get to the main objectives of your prayer. Who are you standing in the gap for? What situation do you want God to intervene in? This is where we should be going about the kingdom's business as a servant of Christ.

“Give us this day our daily bread” – Only after the kingdom’s business has been completed do you make your own requests known. What are your needs in the field? The more we are doing for the kingdom, the more we can expect answers in this area. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you.”

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” – Unforgiveness towards others will block your own prayers. Confess and sort out your own burdens here.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” – If you are an effective worker for the kingdom of God, you are going to attract the attention of Satan. He wants to lay traps for you. This is where we ask God to intervene on our behalf and put a stop to it.

“For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever, amen.” – You entered God’s presence with thanks and praise, and you leave the same way. We could call it proper etiquette.

So we can see that all authority is derived from the throne room of heaven. The Father bestowed it on Jesus, and Jesus conferred an amount of authority on His apostles and other disciples. This is not to say that there are not sudden heartfelt prayers such as when one’s life is in danger. But the Lord’s Prayer is a model for a successful *prayer life*.

We must remember that God is interested in the redemption of souls. He is interested in repentance. When is the last time you thought about your sins from God’s point of view? Have you felt the anguish and utter sorrow over your sins? God does not respond to half-hearted, rote, repentance. He responds to the broken man or woman who cries out for deliverance, who realizes the depths of their own depravity, who knows they cannot stand in the presence of a Holy God. Our own mission statement, “TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN BY LEADING PEOPLE TO A SAVING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST...” cannot happen without a call for repentance. How can we lead other people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ if we ourselves have not repented, or have done so half-heartedly? The blind cannot lead the blind. If your heart is pricked by the truth - as mine is - I pray you will join me in repentance.

Next month we are going to begin looking at end-time evangelism and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The age of the superstar "one-man-show" evangelist is fading and the age of the nameless and faceless believer is at hand.¹

Source: <http://www.watchmancry.com/forum/showthread.php?t=5832> by Tony U. Hawkins

Note 1: <http://www.theelijahchallenge.org/New%20Model%20of%20Evangelism%20-%20Title%20Page.htm>