



News

from the

First Baptist Church

of Pittsburgh

April 2006

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ONCE IN A LIFETIME

PASTOR GARY DENNING

Membership in a church means different things to different people. While baptism and membership are closely associated in Baptist churches, we do not fear that if our name is not on the roll somewhere, we are lost from God. We take our cue from St. Paul who spoke of God's grace and our faith in Christ, not adherence to ritual law or membership in the religious community as the keys to salvation. (See Rom. 3:21-25; Gal. 2:15-16; Eph. 2:8-9, and often.)

Why is membership important, and why is it important for members to be as active as possible?

First, the Bible does not promote Christian faith in isolation as the key to anything. Does Jesus ask us to pray in our closets, in secret? Yes, but Matthew 6:6 is talking about not making a show of our piety in order to be seen and praised by others. It is not talking about isolating ourselves from community. We may need an occasional retreat to a "lonely place" as Jesus did (Mark 1:35; 6:31-35 and parallels in Matthew & Luke). But that is not isolation.

Instead, the Bible encourages each of us to bring our particular God-given gifts to work together and build up the entire "Body of Christ" (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12). We have a community goal, not just a personal interest.

Second, Hebrews 10:22-25 gives us a good guide to the benefits of mutual accountability, mutual encouragement, and mutual accomplishment for Christ: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

While the "Day of the Lord" is a reference to the ultimate manifestation of the Kingdom of God, in a sense, every generation faces



Sunday April 2 2006

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certain "once-in-a-lifetime" choices that require as much participation by as many of the church's members as possible.

We face important decisions every year at our Annual Meeting, as we set the course for the coming year. But this year, at some point, we will be facing a decision that can impact generations of FBC people for the next 100 years or longer. Nobody would want to make final decisions about developing our church parking lot in isolation.

According to our church by-laws, we have a quorum of 50 members, and while we seldom call the question of a quorum at meetings, really important decisions ought not be made without every effort to have a quorum. And should an objection be raised, the decision cannot be decided by vote. That is why it is urgent that every capable member come to our Annual Meeting on May 21. We will be presenting by-law changes, very likely to reduce the number required for a quorum, but should anyone object, we cannot make any changes unless we have 50 members present. Our by-laws do not allow for vote by proxy, write-in votes, or anything other than members present to cast their own votes. All 50 do not have to cast votes, but 50 have to stay for the vote. And, at whatever date we consider development plans for the church parking lot, it will be even more urgent to have every capable member there. On that day, we need the combined wisdom of everyone.

I know some people do not like it when we struggle and have tension over decisions. But I encourage you to leave your fears behind on these issues, at least this time.

Membership is not a free ticket to heaven. Membership is where members work together for the common good. Do not deprive us of your membership presence at the annual meeting on May 21. And do not pass up this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help make the decisions that, in your view, best suit our congregation as we take another step in Building Bridges to Our Third Century.



NEWS FOR
MAY &
JUNE
DUE APRIL 19,
2006

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
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...that you can get a preview of the Sunday Bible discussion and sermon? Go to the FBC website, first-baptist-pittsburgh.org, >Sunday>What's On This Sunday>"Questions We're Asking".

LET US KNOW.....

_____ Please correct my address

_____ Please remove my name from your mailing list

Please send the information to First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, 159 N. Bellefield Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Wednesday, April 12, 12:00 Noon & 7:00 p.m. the final Bible study in our series, "Obedient unto Death".

Maundy Thursday, April 13, 7:00 p.m. joint communion services with the Japanese and Spanish congregations.

Good Friday, April 14, 12:00 noon, joint "wrapping the cross" service with the Japanese and Spanish congregations.

Easter Sunday, April 16, 9:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast, 11:00 a.m. services with the Japanese and Spanish congregations. The Japanese have also extended an invitation to any who would like, to join them after worship for lunch and an early afternoon program of violin music, a devotional, games and activities.

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING

"Share Christ with America" is the theme for our America for Christ Offering in April. Micah 6:8 says, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" America for Christ gifts support mission in this country - one of the most challenging mission fields in the world - and extend the witness of American Baptist congregations for Jesus Christ in the US and Puerto Rico. Visit www.abc-afc.org



CLARA POWELL

ARLINE HEATH

Clara was a staunch member of FBC for a long time. Her whole family supported anything with which FBC was involved. They all helped anywhere they could; her sisters Margaret, Eunice Steer, and her brother (his name escapes me, but Joe comes to mind. I did not really see him very often) . Clara attended EVERYTHING we did: Women's Union; Circle meetings; PBA meetings; AUBA/PBA luncheons; Baptist Homes auxiliary; she helped every event we held at FBC. Went out her way to make visitors welcome. Clara was a WONDERFUL person; great conservative values; never gossiped , thought well of others until she learned otherwise; contribute her time, money, talents and energies to our church. She was caring and very patient with everybody. Sent cards and visited the sick; helped the Deacons of FBC with their responsibilities AND she KNEW her bible. She was a good cook and homemaker. A loyal wife, and friend, a good neighbor, a staunch republican, member of a quilting bee where she was learning to quilt., a regular member of AARP and enjoyed their many trips, was an active member of Beulah Presbyterian Church women's group where her 2nd husband was a long time member. If you knew her , your life was enriched in many ways. She was a kind and gentle lady. EVERYBODY WHO KNEW HER WILL MISS HER.

Reverend Denning adds that Clara was baptized by Dr. Petty on Easter in 1927.

PARKING LOT DEVELOPMENT

DR. VAN BECK HALL, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We began discussions about developing our parking lot approximately two and on half years ago. Last spring we distributed requests for proposal from local developers and we received Elmhurst Group and from Manor associates. We decided to continue negotiations with the

Elmhurst Group and we are now entering the final phase of our negotiations with them.

When a final proposal is prepared we will print and distribute copies to the congregation after Sunday service and the next week we will gather after the service for an informational meeting at which our attorney will be present to respond to questions and address concerns, we will then call a congregational meeting which will consider only the single item, the approval or rejection of the proposed agreement. Copies of the proposed agreement will be mailed with the formal letter announcing the meeting to all members who have not picked their's up at church.

In our considerations we should pay careful attention to:

- The projected income from the developer.
- Provisions that will enable us to respond to inflation over a lengthy period of time.
- Our ability to define the architectural details of the building.
- Our parking privileges under the agreement.

There are, of course, many other concerns about the agreement that will be articulated as we study and discuss the document. It is important

to understand that we will be executing a long term lease and not selling our property. But the lease will be for 29 and a fraction years that can be extended to 99 years. The developer will also have to negotiate with the city and our neighbors so we should recognize that even with our approval there is the possibility of long delays or an eventual rejection or modification of the proposal. Thank you for being part of this on-going process. We may be able to discuss a proposed agreement within the next few weeks.

If you have any comments please feel free to speak with me after the services on Sunday or call me at home in the evenings at 412-421-3484. You may also reach me via e-mail at vanbeck@pitt.edu.

Let us pray for a result that will be acceptable to God and to our congregation.



Nathan Locklin 311 Cedar Drive, Pittsburgh PA 15237 412-606-3148

Edith Marie Taylor 320 Greenfield Drive 15207 412-251-5584

Donald Jay Cooper same as Marie Taylor

Irene Misner 129 Avery Heights, Hartford Connecticut 06106
daughter Mary Prosek 860-257-4793

ADDITIONAL ANNUAL REPORT CHANGES

Petroula Delivorias Cell Phone number is 412-352-6188 not 412-353-6188

VBS 2006: Calling All Volunteers!

PETROULA DELIVORIAS

Hello everyone!

I know Vacation Bible School is a long ways away but I am sending this message now in hopes I can secure volunteers in advance. I know how busy schedules can get!!!

We are anticipating that VBS will take place during the first week of August, which would be from July 31st to August 4th. Allow me to fill you in what kind of volunteers we are looking for. Fortunately, there are many different "jobs" so there should be something everyone can do!

~

We are in need of volunteers to do the following DURING VBS:

- supervise the children and help out with activities
 - teach lessons to the children (Two age groups: 4-8 years old, and 9-12 years old)
 - teach crafts to the younger and/or older kids
 - teach and/or assist with games
 - teach songs children can learn (clapping, dancing, movements are a HIT)
 - play the piano or another instrument to accompany the songs
 - head the food program (making sure the food was bought and prepared)
 - assist with serving food to the kids
 - taking pictures throughout the week
 - setting up and/or cleaning up
- We'd appreciate your help!

~We also need volunteers to meet on Wednesday evenings in July to help plan VBS 2006. Usually, we brainstorm the first few weeks. By the first meeting, the stories we use will already be in place. It is my hope that before July, we can come up with five stories before we begin planning the lessons, activities, songs and games! It was great fun so I hope you can join us!

So what about this year's theme? Last year, our VBS kids learned about the people Jesus hung out with: people others shunned! This included Zacchaeus the tax collector, Bartimaeus the blind beggar, the woman who anointed Jesus, and the children who the apostles told to go away. We also looked at an application of Jesus' teachings when Peter baptized Cornelius, a Gentile.

This year, the proposed theme is: "Forgiveness Takes Heart Work." Many ideas already emerge in the form of construction work. It truly is hard work breaking away at a stubborn heart and yielding to forgiveness.

Living in a culture where "eye for an eye" prevails, and seeing how this message prevails in the hearts of the children I teach, I find forgiveness to be an important lesson to teach children when they are dealing with those who have hurt them. Sure it might be easy to hang out with people others don't like, but what do you do when you don't like the person? It is this question and others that I'd like our children to explore during VBS 2006. I'd like you to be a part of that.

Please contact me by phone: 412-352-6188 (cell) or email: dreamgal39@hotmail.com.



April

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
						1
2 10 a.m. Bible Study/ Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Deacons 7:30 p. Pitt Men's Glee Club	3	4 6:30 p.m. Prayer Group 7:30 p.m. Planning Committee	5 12 n & 7 p.m. Lent Bible Study	6	7	8 8 p.m. Pitt Women's Choral
9 10 a.m. Bible Study/ Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Trustees	10	11 6:30 p.m. Prayer Group 7:30 p.m. Church Council	12 12 n & 7 p.m. Lent Bible Study	13 7 p.m Maundy Thursday Service	14 12 n. Wrapping the Cross	15 Prayer & Praise
16 9 a.m. Easter Breakfast 10 a.m. Bible Study/ Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	17	18 6:30 p.m. Prayer Group	19	20	21	22
23/30 10 a.m. Bible Study/ Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Cong. Mtg. (Apr. 23)	24 3 p.m. Strings & Voices Concert	25 6:30 p.m. Prayer Group	26	27	28	29

The First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh
159 North Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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