



# News

from the

# First Baptist Church

of Pittsburgh

July 2007

## PENTECOST SERIES

PASTOR GARY DENNING

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Pentecost, 50 days after Easter, marks the sending of the Holy Spirit which empowered the disciples of Jesus to begin witnessing to him throughout the world. We call that the beginning of the Christian Church.

Since 2001 we have been using the month of June to look at topics related to the history of the Church: the Book of Acts, creedal formulations in the Bible that gave rise to later developed Creeds, church leadership roles in the Bible that later became Offices in the Church, early trends of thought that led to the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, the great ecumenical Church Councils. Then we moved to practices in the Church like Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We invited guest pastors to help us understand these practices from the perspectives of their faith traditions. Finally, this year we are looking at the topic of Marriage, and decided to include non-Christian speakers.

Father Michael Darcy from the Roman Catholic Newman Center talked about marriage as a reflection of Christ's relationship to the Church (Ephesians 5) and how a good marriage manifests the glory of God (John 2:11). From this high standard of marriage, he was able to lay a foundation for clarifying Roman Catholic positions on various topics like having children, contraception, in vitro fertilization, divorce, annulment, etc.

Pastor Janet Grill from St. Andrew Lutheran Church added the idea that intimacy in marriage also serves the social and comfort needs of the couple, and stated that under certain circumstances self-protection may demand such extremes as divorce. She emphasized the marriage ceremony as worship, and showed how the ideal design of a wedding in the Lutheran tradition follows the same structure as Sunday worship, the wedding coming at the same point where on another occasion there might be a baptism or even a funeral.




cont. from pg. 1

Our third week brought a family from the Islamic Center, Sister Eman, and her husband Alaa and daughter Nadia. Alaa introduced the family and spoke of marriage as being from God and dedicated to God, and therefore requires the couple to show the highest honor and respect toward each other and to the children. Sr. Eman, as the one in charge of the home, talked most about the marriage, family life, education of children, etc. And yes, she clarified the head covering for women, calling it an act of modesty that prevents her body from being viewed sexually in public and forcing strangers to deal with her mind and her ideas rather than mis-focusing their thoughts on her as a woman.

At the end of the evening, we were delighted to discover that Gussie and Lester Boss were celebrating their 54th wedding anniversary that same day. They shared the evening with their friends at the church!

Our final week will bring our good friend Father Gregory Jensen from the Greek Orthodox tradition. As we look forward to welcoming him, I make one observation about our hosting of guests. We want to learn from them, not change them or let our focus drift to unrelated things we have heard about their culture including political tensions that dominate the media images of their culture. This is not just to show respect for our guests, but to use our time and energy wisely to understand better who they are, and thereby to appreciate better who we are. It's been a good series, and I recommend we offer a similar program sometime during the school year, as I expect university students would find the topic of marriage highly attractive.



...that you can get a preview of the Sunday Bible discussion and sermon? Go to the FBC website, [first-baptist-pittsburgh.org](http://first-baptist-pittsburgh.org), >Sunday>What's On This Sunday>"Questions We're Asking".

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH  
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**DEADLINE FOR  
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**July 25, 2007**

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

August 13-17, 2007

8:30 am to 1 pm

PETROULA DELIVORIAS

It is hard to believe a year has passed by since our last Vacation Bible School. Last year, both volunteers and participants were blessed while learning life lessons about forgiveness from the stories of Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, and Stephen and his persecutors. Best of all, they learned how God showed His love and forgiveness towards us by sacrificing His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins, so that we may be saved and have eternal life.

This year, it is not a surprise that God's love is still on our minds. "God Loves Me" is our theme for VBS 2007, and we will explore the many ways God loves us, by looking at the following Old Testament stories: The Creation Story, The Story of Noah, The Story of Jonah, The Story of the Exodus, and the Story of the Ten Commandments. Each day brings a new theme we will explore:

## VBS 2007 Daily Themes

Day 1 - God Loves Me: He Made Me

Day 2 - God Loves Me: He Keeps His Promises

Day 3 - God Loves Me: He Speaks To Me

Day 4 - God Loves Me: He Rescues Me

Day 5 - God Loves Me: He Gives Me Rules To Live By

We are currently working on the curriculum for VBS, and would love for you to join us. During July we will meet Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm in the church library to plan lessons, activities, arts and crafts, songs, games, and food in the upcoming weeks.

Please sign up for VBS and make a real difference in a child's life.

We are currently collecting items such as rolls from paper towels and toilet paper, buttons and colored paper. Your junk is our treasure! Please drop off items in the VBS Box in the church library. The complete list is on the next page.

Thank you in advance for your help! We sure do appreciate it!



## STORY AND MEMORY VERSES (yes there are three for each day!)

Ed. Note: For space reasons only the Bible references are given.

Day 1 – The Creation: Genesis 1:1, Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1:31

Day 2 – Noah and the Ark: Genesis 6:8, Genesis 6:22, Genesis 9:13

Day 3 –Jonah and The Whale: Jonah 1:3, Jonah 2:1, Jonah 3:3

Day 4 –The Exodus: Exodus 3:7a, Exodus 5:1, Exodus 14:25b

Day 5 –The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:2, Exodus 24:3, Deuteronomy 4:7

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL CRAFT NEEDS

To keep creativity high and costs low, we need help collecting crafting supplies listed below Please place donations in the box located in the library foyer.

Metal tops from frozen juice concentrate

2-liter pop bottles

Toilet paper and paper towel cardboard rolls

Buttons of all shapes and sizes

Coffee cans (with lids preferred)

Colored paper, paint, brushes and markers

Matching nature stickers (in sets of 2)

Flour and salt for crafting dough

Egg cartons and clean aluminum cans

Pipe cleaners, string and ribbon

Large TV or refrigerator box

Magnets, velcro, glue, beads and glitter

Contact for Questions and Donations

Petroula Delivorias = dreamgal39@hotmail.com or 412.352.6188

Sonya Stewart = sonya\_stewart@yahoo.com or 412.605.0107



Welcome to Rohit Patniak who was baptized on May 27, 2007 and was welcomed as a member by receiving the Right Hand of Fellowship.



*Bernice Scates-Herd, wife of James Herd  
March 3, 1922-December 6, 2006*

*May Griskey  
October 3, 1917-May 4, 2007  
Many of us will miss her Christmas cards.*

*Laynee Jones  
February 3, 1917-May 27, 2007  
We will always remember Laynee's Christmas  
coffee hours.*

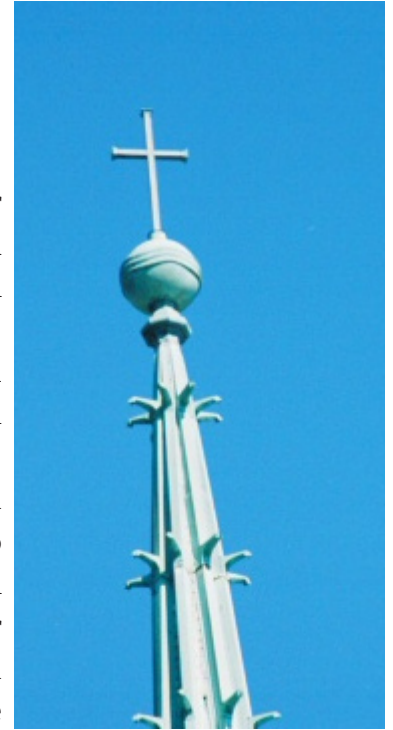


## FLECHE RESTORATION UPDATE

CASEY GNAGE

Fleche: A slender spire typically over the intersection of the nave and transept of a Gothic church; originated in the mid 19th century and is the French word for 'arrow'.

You may recall the sticker shock of a million dollar plus price tag nixed our initial plan to restore the entire fleche or steeple. With a tremendous ministry asset entrusted to our care and both a legacy and future to consider, we pressed forward working with architect Ellis Schmidlapp and contractor Richard Gromo, of Unique Services and Applications, Inc., to develop an alternative plan dividing the project into three phases.



After receiving approval from the PA Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) and with funding secure we proceeded to begin phase one: Restoration of the top third of the fleche.

To mitigate the cost of expensive scaffolding, our contractor worked out a method to separate the top portion of the fleche and then lower it to the church lawn via a large crane. This approach will not only help keep the cost of the project within budget, but over the summer months will also provide each of us, and interested on-lookers, with an up close opportunity to witness the complex work of restoration.

Why is this work important? The work of preserving a sacred place of worship supports ministry and mission! The fleche or steeple, lifting the cross high up into the sky manifests a clearly visible sign of the active presence of Christ. It and the physical beauty of the structure below serve as a public witness or testimony attracting numerous individuals inside year after year. Consider also the value of those ministries that take place within, the countless hundreds served. Indeed, our own analysis shows that 95% are not church members! The building is a tremendous asset for outreach. The next time you hear someone say that the building is a liability or "taking care of the building is not our mission" -- consider the vital role it fulfills in enhancing ministry and mission.

Funding for the \$300,000 first phase of the fleche restoration project comes by way of a \$90,000 Keystone matching grant from the PA Historical & Museum Commission, a \$125,000 payment from our insurance carrier, and by contributors to "Building Bridges to our 3rd Century" the Capital Campaign for the historic preservation of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh. Contact Casey Gnage, campaign treasurer, if you are interested in supporting this ministry.



Thanks for a  
Great Year!

## **CONCERT COMMITTEE THANKS FBC**

The Concert Committee met on June 12 to review the just finished concert season and to begin planning for the coming year. The first order of business was to thank all those FBC members who have faithfully supported the concerts through their attendance and by the helping hands extended by Casey, Chad and C.T. The committee greatly appreciates your support for this activity which benefits the church and the Oakland community.

By all measures this past season was a great success with seven concerts presented that were attended by 1,500 people. The programs varied from two small recitals to large works for chorus, from brass to a beautiful Stradivarius violin, and of course our own Chrystal Williams, indeed something for everyone. By another measure, money, the series was also successful because income of \$7,939 exceeded expenses of \$5,912, or just over two thousand dollars. The series is also reaching out to nearby neighbors for we have many 15213 addresses on our mailing list and we know of many people that live nearby and walk to the church on Sunday afternoons for the concerts, the most recent new friend being Mildred Miller Posvar who now lives across the street. In view of the financial success this year the committee voted to donate \$527 to the organ fund and reserve the remaining surplus of \$1,500 to start off next concert season.

The committee and the church also suffered a great loss this year with the passing of Joan Lucas. Joan loved music and the church and made a great contribution to the series. She has been missed.

Planning is well underway for the coming season with the exciting added dimension that the series has now received its' first grant from a local foundation. The grant is in the amount of \$5,000 and it comes from the Laurel Foundation here in Pittsburgh. The grant came in response to our proposal for a special concert which would utilize a large chorus and orchestra. The feature work will be by the Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Dona Nobis Pacem", a beautiful work written in 1936 dedicated to peace which we think is very appropriate for the times. We are very happy to receive this grant and hope that the series and the church will receive continuing support from this foundation. This concert will take place in March and is one of seven concerts planned for the 2007-2008 season.

The concert committee once again thanks everyone for their support and we invite anyone interested to join our committee and help with the effort. More importantly, tell your friends and neighbors about the concerts and invite them to join you on Sunday afternoons.

The Concert Committee; Gussie Boss, Lucille Brown, Kathleen Cook, Fran Czak, Amy Hannequinna, Curt Kovach, Keith McDuffie, Susan Ryan, Leslie Ann Smedley, Sonya Stewart, Richard Teaster, Henry Tucker.



# July

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 10 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Deacons	2	3 7:30 Planning Mtg	4	5	6	7
8 10 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Trustees	9	10 7:30 Church Council	11	12	13	14
15 10 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 10 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 12:30 p.m. Cong. Mtg.	23	24	25 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	26	27	28
29 10 a.m. Bible Study & Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	30	31	PRINT NEWSLETTER			

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