



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ December 2011

Upcoming Dates

Corporate Prayer

1st Sat mornings
3rd Wed evenings

Monthly Newcomer Fellowship Time

4th Sunday mornings

Youth Choir / Hand Chimes Rehearsal

December 10

Mount Vernon Tour

December 10

CCS Dress Rehearsal

December 17

Christmas Candlelight Service

December 18

2012 Call to Prayer

January 1, 4, 7

Sonship Begins

January 8

Communicants Class Begins

January 12

Vision Banquet

January 28

Inquirer's Class

February 3-4



The Challenge of our Mission Statement

by Pastor Tom Holliday

APC will kick off a new Sonship class January 8, 2012. Once again the class will be held on Sunday evenings, from 5-7pm, with nursery provided. The course runs for 16 weeks, and consist of two parts—the first hour each evening is devoted to teaching on the doctrines of adoption and our union in Christ; the second hour centers around small groups, giving us the opportunity to talk through and process with others what we are learning.

The Sonship course is the primary discipleship ministry at APC. We have found it useful in equipping and training APC members in sanctification. Each week, each teaching focuses on the truth that we are sanctified by faith in the finished work of Christ. In other words, we grow as Christians by believing the gospel. The challenge before us is to realize that not only are we justified by grace through faith, but that we are sanctified by grace through faith. Somehow, we have the notion that we are sanctified by what we do. It's quite humbling, but also liberating to learn

that we need Jesus Christ every day for our sanctification just as much as we did for our justification.

During the course we will answer questions such as these: "What is the relationship between the law and gospel?" "What role do my obedience and good works play in my sanctification?" "How do I live with a cleansed conscience?" "How do I learn how to focus more on my heart than just my outward behavior?" "How do I learn how to live as a son or daughter of God, and not like a spiritual orphan?" "What would my life be like if I really believed that God was for me, and that he not only loved me, but truly enjoyed me?"

So whether this is your 1st time to enroll in Sonship, or you feel the need to take it again, we invite you to join us on this spiritual journey. Oh, by the way, many APCers have made new and lasting friendships in their small groups. This is an opportunity to connect in a deeper way with God and others. All you need to do is sign up downstairs at the information table. We will save you a spot.



Christmas Candlelight Service

by Trevor Manor

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

The festive praise in the sanctuary momentarily subsides as the musicians leave the stage and join the congregation. All the lights are dimmed. The hundreds of us holding our unlit candles wait with anticipation for one of the special traditions in APC's annual Christmas Candlelight Service.

A single flame starts near the front of the sanctuary and then gets passed from wick to wick, ending in a celestial glow that illumines the room. Beautiful decorations delight our eyes again and remind us of the joy and festivity with which we are invited to join the shepherds and angels' procession to the cradle of our Lord. We praise the newborn King with carols like Silent Night: "Radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace..." From this Child emanated the light that saves humans from the darkness of our sin. The candles are a wonderful reminder of this, for by one small flame the room becomes bathed in

warm, glorious light.

LIGHT and LIFE to ALL HE BRINGS is the title of this year's service on December 18th at 6pm. Choir members, Scripture readers, stage crew, and many others have been preparing for weeks to make this a meaningful worship experience for the city of Alexandria. The traditional Lessons and Carols format will enrich the story of our redemption as we hear beautiful music that accompanies powerful Bible readings. And, of course, there are also opportunities for the congregation to join the choir and professional musicians in singing familiar carols.

The CCS is APC's biggest outreach opportunity of the year, so be sure to tell your loved ones soon. We hope you can bring a friend, and perhaps meet them for the prelude, which starts at 5:45, so you can get a good seat in an event that quickly fills up. At the end there will be a wonderful reception in the Fellowship Hall. Nursery is provided for ages 0-6. We hope you can join us to celebrate the birth of the One who is, as the carol says says, "Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings!"

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Alexandria Presbyterian Church is a welcoming community of believers, rejoicing in the gospel, transformed by its power, and responding with grateful hearts in service to our God and world. We long to taste the glory of God in such an astonishing way that the city of Alexandria will be drawn to the majesty and mercy of our great God. It is our desire that our worship will serve as an authentic model to our city of the possibilities for transformation of individuals, families, and a city encountering the glory and grace of God.



Officer Spotlight: Edward Ruiz, Deacon

I was born in Arizona, but grew-up for my first 11 years as a military brat traveling around and living in places like Kentucky, California, Alabama, Hawaii, Alaska—to name a few. We eventually returned to Arizona, where I lived until I was 21. Though I had been exposed to Christianity as early as 10 years old, I didn't really come to a saving faith until I was 18. After feeling called into ministry about a year or so later, I joined the Army as a Chaplain Assistant which God used at several points to confirm this calling. I started an MDiv. program with Reformed Theological Seminary as of Fall of 2011.

I loved my time in the military. I was assigned in Fort Bragg, NC, served a couple tours to Iraq, and finished my service in the Army in D.C. The Lord taught me a great deal about His gospel while serving in the Army. Right now, after all these years of moving, I am settling into this gospel community of APC where I want my roots to go deeper and wider. I work at Starbucks, so stop in for a cup of coffee. :)



That Generations To Come Might Know by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

Psalm 78: 1-7: "My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands."

John Calvin's commentaries on Psalm 78 describe this process as "the continued transmission of divine truth." Calvin goes on saying that "fathers should transmit it to their children, as if it were their rightful inheritance, in order that it might never be lost, but be preserved to the end of the world."

We are "gospel-proclaimers" and our audience is the most important in the world, the next generation of God's covenantal sons and daughters. My soul loves a good formula because I see the process laid out before me and I "feel" less likely to mess it up. We are instructed to teach the children and they will place their trust in God, done deal, end of story, right?

So what causes fear to well up in me as a parent? I know my failures as a father and they can cause me to lose hope in my ability to teach/disciple my children. Seeing my children's failures and processing them as a reflection of myself does not help too much either. I too often forget that God is NOT in the business of throwing broken things away (for example—me), rather I know Him as the one who redeems! This brings me hope as I display Jesus to my children in ways that display His glory and power. I can nurture my kids exactly where they are as I receive Christ's love in the same way.

Knowing that God's plan involves me sharing my life in Christ with my children is an awesome responsibility. The command to make disciple-makers from generation to generation is truly a "transmission of divine truth" as Calvin states. Let us teach our children to take hold of their rightful inheritance and look to the Lord in all things, so that they might place their trust in God and not forget His good deeds.

If you want to learn more about youth ministries here at APC, please pick up a copy of the brochure outside my office in the fellowship hall, email me at adam.leroy@alexandriapres.org or visit our webpage at www.rockalexandria.com.



Children's Chatter by Leslie Bridge, Director of Children's Ministries

You may have noticed that we have a plethora of children in our church these days. This is both exciting and challenging. Exciting, because it shows that our church is continually growing and challenging because we are quickly filling up the space we have available to us. But, even more so, it is challenging to engage each child with the Word of God and trust each is taking it to heart in some manner.

I am teaching the third grade Sunday school class this year. We are studying the book of Matthew. I love the way the curriculum helps to draw the students in with key words for each lesson, background to the passages we are looking at and questions that bring forth some good discussions. Even though the curriculum is great, I find myself very concerned that the heart of each student connects with what they are hearing, reading and talking about.

After conversations with some of the other children's Sunday school teachers, I have found this to be a common question. Are the children engaging and connecting at a heart level with the things they are being taught? What I discovered is that apart from the moving of the Holy Spirit in these kids lives, they won't connect. Teachers, this truth drives us to pray for the children in our classes. It also reminds us of our dependency on God. He is the One who will ultimately teach His Word to His children.

I have a new appreciation for all the adults who teach the children of APC. The time these men and women spend preparing lessons and praying for the children is an investment in the future. Please join us in praying that the Holy Spirit would engage each child's heart when he or she is learning the Word of God. God promises us His Word never goes out void.

APC Vision Banquet — January 28, 2012

Every few years Alexandria Presbyterian Church hosts a vision banquet. We will do that again on January 28th, starting at 6pm.

Our venue will be the Fellowship Hall, where we will start with a delicious meal, sing, and then discuss some of the growth challenges we face as a community. Physical space is one aspect of our growth challenge, but it's not the only one. There is the challenge of maintaining the culture of a welcoming community; of continuing to grow as a community that engages each of us at the individual, at the community of two, of a few and as the community of many. Those are some of the horizontal challenges of growth, and we also face the vertical challenge of our own growth as sons and daughters of the King.

Please plan on joining us on January 28th. We will begin sign-ups with the new year. Child care will be provided.



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| Giving at a Glance | YTD Giving (11/31) | \$1,222,611 |
| | YTD Budget | \$1,205,654 |
| | Difference | \$ 16,957 (+1%) |

SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Holy Worship ~ 8:50am | Time of Fellowship & Coffee ~ 10:30am | Sunday School for All Ages ~ 11:00am
Communion Celebrated the Second Sunday of Each Month