



CROWN HIM THE RISEN LORD EASTER 2012

Palm 4/1/12 ~ Maundy Thursday 4/5/12 ~ Easter 4/8/12



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ March 2012

Upcoming Dates

Corporate Prayer

1st Sat mornings
3rd Wed evenings

Monthly Newcomer Fellowship Time

4th Sunday mornings

Koinonia Monthly Gathering

March 20

Progressive Dinner

March 24

Maundy Thursday Service

April 5

Easter Sunrise and Worship Services

April 8

Senior High Modgnik Retreat

April 13-15

Koinonia Monthly Gathering

April 17

All-Church Retreat

May 18-20

Gettysburg Tour

June 9

Vacation Bible School

June 25-29



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to 550

by Chris Joyce, Executive Director of Ministries

Those of you who attended the Vision Banquet know that APC has approximately 550 "actives" as I write this, including adults and children. That puts us in the large church category, which represents a little more than 5% of the almost 300,000 churches in the United States.

In his article, **Leadership and Church Size Dynamics;** *How Strategy Changes with Growth*, Tim Keller, senior pastor of Redeemer Church in New York, poses a number of challenges for the large church. Given the size that God has grown us to, it's incumbent on us to reflect on these challenges, and assess how well APC is meeting them.

Keller highlights five areas: (1) the importance of small-group fellowship; (2) church leadership's commitment to vision and mission; (3) the role of the elders; (4) the role of the senior pastor; and (5) decision-making processes.

While Covenant Fellowship Groups (CFG) has been a critical part of APC's ministry model for years, we feel the challenges of growth in two ways. First, simply because of the scale of numbers, APC needs to add at least three new CFG's every year, simply to keep up with demand. Otherwise, there will not be enough capacity available for the size body we are. Given this need for rapid group formation, it also says that we need to be excellent at recruiting and equipping new CFG leaders.

God has blessed APC's leadership with a shared vision throughout its history. We should pray for the leaders of our church to continue their alignment around and mutual support of our vision, and that they are protected from divisiveness.

The role of the Session (board of elders) becomes more and more "hands off" in terms of the direct management of ministry, and becomes more "hands-on" in terms of vision casting and medium/longer term goal setting, and the assessment of ministry performance and emerging needs.

Our senior pastor's role, and that of many of the staff, changes too. For Tom, even more of his energy is devoted to vision casting and the development of leadership. For a number of the staff, expect to see more and more specialization, given the size of the ministries under care.

Finally, decision-making is more diffused in a large church. Some decisions are made by staff, some by lay ministry leaders, and others by church officers. One key is not to let any individual become a bottleneck to timely decision-making, so that ministry needs are addressed as they emerge.

There is no doubt that God is at work at APC. Let's pray that we stay attuned to the Spirit's guidance in how we go about ministering to our city and our world in the name of Christ.



Maundy Thursday 2012: Sharing in the Lamb of God's Sufferings

by Trevor Manor

"My children, I will be with you a little longer..." Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow, but you will follow later." (John 13:33, 36)

A few years ago during choir rehearsal, a member shared his powerful testimony. He began by recounting the day in 2001 when he received a letter in the mail that pronounced him dead. He had been in the Pentagon the morning of September 11, on the very side that was hit. Miraculously, a large safe protected him from the crash, and he pulled himself from the wreckage. However, the Pentagon had mistakenly assumed the worst, sending out the death pronouncement. The distressing letter actually filled the APC member with thankfulness: He should have been dead...and God had granted him life!

If a friend of the APC member had known nothing about the tragic events on September 11, they would have had very little reason to rejoice in a phone call from him telling them he was alright, he who had once been pronounced dead. Only a correct understanding of the tragedy and a subsequent spirit of mourning would give them a new

perspective and appreciation for their friend's life.

The same is true in our understanding of our Lord. Each year in the church calendar we celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Sadly, this can often become a mindless activity. We take His life for granted and too often avoid thinking about His death. Yes, it is difficult to mourn, but without mourning we are short-changing our participation in the gospel story and forfeit a deeper appreciation of Christ's sacrifice. APC is offering an opportunity to relive this experience in a fresh way in 2012 through our annual Maundy Thursday service.

This Maundy Thursday (April 5, 7:30pm) we commemorate Christ's last meal with his disciples and His subsequent crucifixion. Please join us as the Sanctuary is darkened, the choir sings behind in the balcony, and a team of APC readers powerfully read the Scriptural accounts of Christ's Passion. Come and participate in the Lord's Supper and walk with us on the dark road that ultimately led to hope. It is only when we acknowledge the darkness that we truly see Jesus' resurrection light a few days later on Easter Sunday (April 8, 9am). We hope you can join us for Maundy Thursday: "Lamb of God, Most Holy."

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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.



Loving Our Weirdness: Reflections on the All-Church Retreat

by Rick and Katie Holifield

Often we are asked if we like living in this area, to which we respond enthusiastically, "Yes!" Inevitably the next question is, "What do you like about it?" We quickly respond that our church, APC, is what we love most: the solid, Christ-centered preaching, the spiritual leadership, the music, the diversity, the fellowship, etc. After further thought we realize, "You know, one thing we really love is that these people just love us in all our weirdness!" That may sound really odd, but essentially, isn't that what community is? Loving and accepting one another despite our differences, despite our shortcomings?

As we focus on community this year, how do we grow in our love for each other while growing in our love for Christ? One way is investing in others and being open to letting others know us. One special opportunity to do just that is the All-Church Retreat on May 18-20 at North Bay Retreat Center. The purpose of the weekend is to create fellowship opportunities, get to know your APC family in a deeper way, or connect with someone you did not know before. So, mark your calendars and get ready for a weekend to remember. And, you never know, you may not be as weird as you think you are after all! :)

APC's Great Leap Forward!

No, this isn't an announcement of a new five-year plan for your church. APC's great leap forward has to do with community, togetherness and worship, not multi-year plans.

How do you make the great leap forward? As you enter the sanctuary on Sunday morning, challenge yourself to move at least three pews forward.

Here's a fact: the denser the population, the deeper the sense of community. This applies in baseball stadiums, at amusement parks...and in worship. There's nothing like being near our brothers and sisters in the faith as we lift our voices in praise to our God. There's a Spirit-driven synergy that accrues to the community of faith when we come closer together in worship.

Granted, it does take a bit of getting used to—at least, for some of us. There's always the temptation to find that empty pew that has plenty of available capacity, park ourselves on the aisle and stake out our homestead for the next hour. But that's a temptation that each of us should be wary of.

When we are closer together, we hear each other in worship, and that is a good thing. Too often we think of noise as distraction. Hearing one another's voices is also reinforcing, encouraging, and energizing. When we sit closer together, we also feel each other's presence.

Finally, when we move deeper into the sanctuary and are closer to the front, it reinforces our sense of community for more than ourselves. It also helps our worship leaders to lead us better. Our musicians hear our voices; our teachers hear our prayers. Our preacher feels more connected too, because we're closer to the pulpit.

And there's a fringe benefit. As we each leap forward in the sanctuary, it frees up space towards the back—space that will be put to good use by those who may be delayed that morning, and families with infants who want to be closer towards the back, just in case.

So, let's all make that great leap forward!

Giving at a Glance	YTD Giving (2/29)	\$192,139
	YTD Budget	\$231,188
	Difference	\$ 39,049 (-18%)



A Common Bond

by Josh Diack, Pastoral Intern

I wonder if you have ever had a friend that you have really connected with, someone that you have shared a special common bond? Have you ever wondered what that connection is based upon?

The New Testament speaks of the fellowship of believers having, "all things in common" (Acts 2:42) and says, "the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). What we see here is that intimacy involves commonality; having things in common with others.

I have to admit that for a long time I struggled with community at church, I just didn't have anything in *common* with people. This is not a rare sentiment; people spend their whole lives looking for such depth in relationship.

The truth is that I was wrong in saying that I had nothing in *common* with others—the secret to intimacy was always there. In fact, I had *everything in common* with other people, I just hadn't been illumined to it.

As the Spirit began to work in my heart to make Christ increase, the things I formerly looked to for connection (sports, job, personality) began to decrease. It's not that these things were (and still are) no longer significant; they were just being replaced with a greater affection for something else.

The things I want to cherish most are the things that I have in common with Christ. When that happens all the other things become secondary.

In a spiritual sense we have *all things in common* with each other through our union with Christ, and yet deeper community requires that we kill (put off) our sin by the work of the Holy Spirit, so that our love for Christ, and the gospel deepens (Romans 8:13). When this is done, what is true of us in this spiritual sense becomes true of us now, as we become sanctified.

In this life we are never promised community without struggle, as if it were an easy thing to obtain. In fact, it will never be perfectly attainable.

As a fellowship of believers, and at 'koinonia', our desire is to connect with each other in a deeper way that shows itself in love and good works. Relationship requires Spirit-wrought work, but we are not without hope, for *deeper* community is possible, and not outside the grip of any one of us.

Priority Service Opportunities at APC

Even though APC's staff has grown over the years, your church remains very dependent upon volunteers to accomplish its mission. Ministries like nursery, hospitality, manna meals, teaching and mercy rely on a robust team of willing laborers to serve in these ministry areas. Given the churn in APC's community, these volunteer lists need to be continuously refreshed.

To facilitate both communication of ministry needs and ease of recruitment, you'll see a new insert in the bulletin later this month. Entitled **Immediate Opportunities to Serve**, the insert will present a short list of ministries that need additional support now. A short description of the need, the ministry leader to contact with any questions, and a space to declare your willingness to serve, will be included on the form.

In addition, we will also have a new brochure (available on the Information Bulletin Board in the Fellowship Hall) titled **Ways to Serve**. This new addition will detail all of the ministries of APC that are volunteer dependent, including a description of the need and the ministry leader to contact.

We thank you for your willing service to your church, and hope that you will prayerfully consider the needs that arise.

Vacation Bible School



June 25-29

9:30am-12:10pm

Ages 4 through 4th grade

Interactive curriculum with daily Bible lessons, art, drama and other activities.

5th graders and up are encouraged to be small group leaders.

More info to come about planning meetings and decorating!

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