



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ June 2012

Upcoming Dates

Corporate Prayer

1st Sat mornings
3rd Wed evenings

Monthly Newcomer Fellowship Time

4th Sunday mornings

Pancake Brunch

June 3

Connect Cancer Ministry Begins

June 3

Explorers Water Party

June 10

Koinonia Monthly Gathering

June 19

Vacation Bible School

June 25-29

Annual Nationals Game Outing

July 7

Koinonia Monthly Gathering

July 24

Camping/Canoeing Trip

July 27-29



Seedy Beginnings: Reflections on Growing Together 2012

by Rick Holifield, Retreat Chairman

When Chris Sicks first approached me with the prospect of leading the church retreat, I was mildly amused at the request. My inner voice said, "Has Sicks fallen off his rocker? Does he know how busy I am at work and home?" My wife confirmed my inner voice as I expressed this request to her. In the end, I felt a longing to serve in a community of believers that my family has grown to love. This was the seed that God used to motivate me to action.

As the retreat planning began and the retreat committee formed, I thought I knew what I was doing...not necessarily a dependent heart attitude here. The committee determined that the purpose of Growing Together 2012 was to provide space and opportunities for fellowship with the body of Christ. Why wouldn't God honor that? So, in the thick of theme debates, advertising ideas, financial calculations, and activity decisions, I was distracted with my efforts.

"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of

God." - 1 Peter 1:23

I sought to grow by my own effort, but God doesn't need my "special" effort. The Seed was implanted in my life and I needed nothing more. God used the retreat planning as a reminder of my dependence on Christ and my completeness in Him, the conditions favorable for spiritual growth.

What do you call 5 months of planning, numerous committee meetings, countless late-night emails, last-minute changes, and gathering 271 of your church friends for a weekend together? I call it exhaustion and herding cats, but God calls it growth...one seed at a time. You see, in the midst of exhaustion and at the end of your game, God's grace fills the gaps and grows your faith. God reminds us that it takes grace to run a retreat and it takes grace to build Gospel community.

Note: I'd like to give a special thanks to the retreat committee members and many volunteers for making Growing Together 2012 a success. Their hard work is a testimony of service in the body of Christ.



Summer is Here! Here's Your Summer Reading List

by Elder Lee Beckham

Well, Memorial Day weekend has just passed! As you move into summer mode and think about vacation, here are a few books to consider putting on your summer reading list:

The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom Of God by Tim Keller. In the early 90's, Keller preached a series of sermons on marriage from Eph 5:18-33. In the intervening years, that series has remained the most popular one in the Redeemer catalog. Keller has now turned that series of sermons into a book laying out a "vision of what marriage should be according to the Bible." Against the modern assumptions about soul mates, the place of romance, and each spouse's fulfilled potential, Keller shows that "God created marriage to bring us closer to him and to bring us more joy in our lives. It is a glorious relationship that is also the most misunderstood and mysterious."

The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness, also by Tim Keller, was just released in March. This book expounds the gospel vision that forms the foundation for Keller's preaching. "A truly gospel humble person is not a self-hating person or a self-loving person, but a self-forgetful person."

From Resurgence Literature (www.relit.org) comes **Redemption** by Mike Wilkerson, a pastor at Mars Hill Church in Seattle. This book carries the subtitle "Freed by Jesus from the idols we worship and the wounds we carry." Wilkerson uses the story of the Israelite's exodus from Egypt as a framework to study redemption in the lives of

Christians. Into this framework he weaves a variety of case studies that illustrate the different forms that redemption can take as we make our way through life.

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi is a new title by Iain Duguid from Evangelical Press. These last three books of the Old Testament are often neglected today; however, we should rethink that. Zechariah is one of the OT books most quoted by the gospel writers. Together these three books tell of the comfort and challenge that come from the presence of God in our midst, even when his glory is not on public display, and also of the fulfillment of the long-promised salvation of his people.

The elders of APC have been reading **Becoming A True Spiritual Community: A Profound Vision of What the Church Can Be** by Larry Crabb. If you need a stronger recommendation, just ask an elder!

For fiction fans, C.S. Lewis' **Space Trilogy** weaves spiritual allegories as the series tells the adventures of the hero Ransom on a space journey, then follows him to a "younger" planet where he tries to forestall a spiritual catastrophe. In the final volume (which is sometimes seen as a forerunner of modern international conspiracy thrillers) Ransom encounters a mysterious stranger as he works to prevent an inscrutable conspiracy from achieving its ominous goals.

And finally, here are a few suggestions that were featured on the latest edition of the Mars Hill Audio Journal (www.marshillaudio.org—you should subscribe):

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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.



Staff Spotlight: Josh Diack, Dir. of Congregational Life

Last month, we announced Josh Diack as APC's latest staff addition. Josh will officially take up his post as our Director of Congregational Life July 1st and, once he is ordained, his title will change to Assistant Pastor for Congregational Life.

APC is now approaching close to 600 active adults and children, and the need for a full-time staff member, focusing on areas like Women's and Men's ministries, Covenant Fellowship Groups, Social activities and new ministry initiatives has been apparent for the last year. Josh, after more than a year on staff as a pastoral intern, has already developed a good appreciation for both the DNA of APC and some of the challenges that growth presents, as we try to preserve and enhance the fabric of community.

Please welcome Josh to this new role, and pray for God's use of him in this important ministry.



Costa Rica—Adventure #4 by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

PROTAS teen ministries is taking our fourth trip to Costa Rica July 18-30th. You might be wondering "What will make this trip different?" so here are a few highlights:

- A few unique team members: an amazing APC deacon/construction professional, an awesome middle school teacher, and a bilingual elder's wife who spent time as a missionary kid in South America;
- 15 courageous students raising their hands in service to the King for two weeks;
- Plans to minister to an indigenous Indian village in the mountains of Costa Rica;
- The unknown details God has planned for our good, in the gospel story He's writing.

We are partnering once again with our brothers and sisters in Ciudad Neily, a small farming community on the southern border towards Panama. The church is called Casa de Oracion y Alabanza. Families in the church have come forward again wanting to host us in their homes; this cultural immersion is one of the most beautiful parts of the experience.

We will partner in the gospel alongside the local church on projects within their community such as visiting local public schools, doing mercy projects for members within their own congregation, helping put on a women's conference, and participating in neighborhood evangelism/outreach.

Would you consider joining our team in prayer? Specific prayer needs will be printed and available for you to take off of my office door in the fellowship hall.

Would you also consider financially supporting our team? We'd love to serve you a great Costa Rican meal and share the story that God is weaving at our fundraising dinner on Saturday, June 16th in the Fellowship Hall at APC from 6:30-8:30pm. Many of you will receive a support letter from a teen or many teens that value your presence in their life. Feel free to respond once and list all of their names on one blue response slip.

Be praying for God to move in our hearts and work effectively through our actions as we seek to bring Him glory in all we do leading up to and beyond this mission trip. My desire for our teens is that God would create a new definition of being available to Jesus' leading as a fruit of this trip. We are going on a great adventure to Costa Rica, and it is a great honor to partner with these teens as they serve the King and gain a greater perspective of the church and life outside of DC.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Jim Elliot

Summer Reading—continued from p.1)

Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction by John Fea. This book will prepare you for all the upcoming debates and conversations you'll find yourself in during election season. Fea explores "the history of the idea of America as a Christian nation and how the Founders—as statesmen—were less interested in the truth of religion than in its political unity."

In **Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics**, Ross Douthat takes a look at the erosion of commitment to historical Christian orthodoxy among both conservative and liberal American religious institutions since the 1960s.

And Siva Vaidhyanathan examines "why trusting Google to organize the world's knowledge is both odd and dangerous" in **The Googlization of Everything (And Why We Should Worry)**.



Children's Chatter by Leslie Bridge, Dir. of Children's Ministries

Plans for VBS are well underway and volunteers have already signed up. The dates are June 25-29 from 9:30am-12:10pm. VBS this year will bring us back in history to the Bible Times of Daniel and his friends. I am excited to see how this new adventure will influence the children of our church and the surrounding area. If you want more information about the program or how to sign up your child or how to volunteer, please contact me at leslie.bridge@alexandriapres.org.

Babylon: Daniel's Courage in Captivity is our theme for this summer. Each day the children will learn one important Bible Point. Babylon focuses on one key Biblical concept and is reinforced daily through Bible Stories, Bible Verses, songs and hands-on activities that help kids know more about God and His Word—the Bible. Kids will learn that God's Word is true, comforting, surprising, life-changing and for everyone.

Not every child learns the same way, which is why this VBS is so successful and fun. Kids learn the way they learn best. Babylon offers a variety of learning stations to meet the needs of all kinds of learners. Crew Leaders engage with the children as they rotate through the various stations. Every child will come away from VBS remembering the Bible point because of the way they interact with God's Word throughout the day.



The New "Connect" Ministry by Sara Sicks

I felt like I'd been catapulted into the desert when I was diagnosed with Stage III breast cancer in 2008. My life was turned upside down and I was desperate for help. The Lord gave me a special friendship with a woman named Rindy, a follower of Jesus, who had been diagnosed with breast cancer a year earlier. Rindy, who also had young children, understood what I was going through. She encouraged me and lightened my burden. Rindy's friendship reminds me of an awesome Thomas Merton quote: "No one wants to be led out of a desert by someone who hasn't been there."

It is in this spirit that I am thrilled about the launch of a cancer support group called *Connect: The intersection of Christ, Community and Cancer*. If you are a cancer survivor or are currently in treatment, you have a story. Our group would be greatly blessed if you were a part of it. We would benefit from knowing you better and learning from you. It would be an honor to walk beside you if you are currently battling this disease or if your journey continues in the shadow of cancer. Please join us for our first meeting on Sunday, June 3rd at 12:30 after Pancake Breakfast. As we launch, participants will have input in many aspects of the group's dynamics as we go forward.

I am excited by the potential of this group to encourage one another, pray for one another, and to dig deep into our identity as followers of Christ—hoping that this will dwarf all other identities. To the rest of the congregation, I humbly ask for your prayer for this new ministry!

Giving at a Glance	YTD Giving (5/31)	\$521,616
	YTD Budget	\$585,229
	Difference	\$ 63,613 (-11%)

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