



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ March 2010

Upcoming Dates

Corporate Prayer
1st Sat mornings
3rd Wed evenings

Newcomer Fellowship
4th Sunday mornings

Congregational Meeting
March 7

Softball Registration Deadline
March 14

Women's TableTalk Dinners
March 20

Baptism Service
March 21

Maundy Thursday Worship Service
April 1

Easter Sunday: Sunrise Service/Breakfast/Worship
April 4

Church Retreat
June 4-6

Vacation Bible School
June 28 - July 2



Encouragement by Pastor Tom Holliday

The following excerpts have been taken from a book entitled *The Safest Place on Earth* by Dr. Larry Crabb:

"It was a sight I can't forget. I've tried. In the 25 years that have passed since I saw it, only a few details have blurred. The broad features of that scene, and most of the specifics, remain as clear in my memory as if I had witnessed it yesterday.

Rachel and I were touring Miami Beach. We had recently moved to South Florida from the grey Midwest and were enjoying our first chance to visit the famed sunshine vacation paradise. One block west of the luxury beach hotels—the ones pictured on all the postcards—was a very ordinary big-city street, noisy, dirty, heavily trafficked with cabs and buses and plumbing repair trucks. A patch of blue sky was visible only if you looked straight up.

No one was snapping pictures to send home or put in scrapbooks. At one point, we walked in front of the wood-slatted porch, maybe 10 feet deep, with perhaps 60 feet of sidewalk frontage. At least a hundred chairs were arranged in neat rows and columns, none touching, each in exactly the same position to the others.

The occupied chairs (and most of them were) each held one motionless retired man or woman staring straight ahead at the street. I can't recall seeing any one rocking, although I'm sure someone was. I do remember that no heads turned to follow a passing taxi or pedestrian, or to chat with another porch sitter. There were no conversations, no evidence that any of these people had been created by a relational God to enjoy intimate relating.

These people's souls were asleep, numbed I suppose, by years of lifeless relationships and pointless conversations. No doubt those conversations had all seemed important at the time—business deals, romantic encounters, child raising, religious meetings—but maybe such encounters with other people had never touched anything deep enough to stir life.

I remember thinking, all their lives everyone on this porch worked hard with the dream of retiring in Florida. And now they have made it. But look at them! Everything they've lived for has come to this. Lord, deliver me from living in a manner that will leave me one day sitting in a chair next to other people who are also sitting in chairs looking straight ahead, never into another person's eyes, never knowing anyone, and known by no one.

The sight of that porch was unspeakably sad. I can't forget it."

Quite a visual! Alexandria Presbyterian Church does **not** want to be a church even remotely like the scene Larry described. But churches can easily become like this when they lose focus, forgetting that our God is a triune being, who created us as relational beings, for relationship.

2010 will not be much of a year of encouragement if we sit back in our chairs, looking straight ahead, absorbed in our own worlds. Would you join me in praying that God would give each of us the desire to connect with him and others, to turn our chairs toward one another? I'm confident that with our hearts and minds open toward our Creator and Redeemer, facing our brothers and sisters, we will encourage one another.



Prayer and Shepherding at APC by Eleanor Nagy, Shepherding Ministry Leader

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light." Colossians 1:9-12

One of the core functions of the church that we see vividly portrayed in this passage from Colossians is the ministry of church leaders and members praying for one

another. From Jesus' instruction to his disciples how to pray, to example after example of believers bringing their own and others' needs before the Lord, the Bible illustrates the importance of prayer in the life of the church body.

Here at APC, prayer is a critical component of church life and ministry. On the first Saturday of each month before the Session meets, elders, deacons, and other members gather to pray for the church as a whole, for our leadership, and for individual needs. Elders and deacons, along with several of our women gifted in the ministry of prayer and encouragement, also regularly pray for each member and regular attender of the congregation.

This Shepherding ministry is designed to envelop church members in prayer, and to strengthen and encourage one another in the faith. If you have ever

(continued on p.2)

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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.



Amplify Christ
by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

Snowmageddon 2010 did all it could to cancel our annual Winter Retreat, but it failed! When we left on February 12th, students had been out of school all week and we had been struggling to dig ourselves out of the snowiest winter on record here in D.C. It seemed like all we could do and maybe what we should do was throw in the towel and give in to the conditions, but the Lord literally paved the roads in front of us and we couldn't have been more blessed.

The Retreat theme was 'Amplify Christ' and I'm sure I don't need to elaborate on the value of music to any generation of youth culture? Music touches us deeply and we sometimes feel a level of connectivity to the singer/songwriter in ways that other people and experiences fail. So how do we reach a generation where many try to define themselves by what is on their ipod? How do we point them to God who is eager to speak into each of their earbuds, giving them content to place their faith in that brings Himself glory and much joy to His children. How do we amplify Christ through our lives?

It is tough stuff to put our ego to the side and live as the band Leeland sings in one of their songs, "May I be low low low, so you're made higher." Our calling as believers is to live beyond ourselves and in Christ, and it brings God much joy when we draw people into our passion for making much of Christ. Listen to this quote from Owl City's Adam Young (Owl City is a top 10 music artist), "the Lord has chosen to use music in my life and what I do as Owl City is to plant seeds, spread light like fire in an age where darkness feels more oppressive than ever, and ultimately, to glorify Him." Adam Young has decided to use the gifts that the Lord has given him to proclaim Christ and to share his source of hope in this fallen world.

I know what you are thinking, and it's true, only a few musicians ever make it to the top, but everyone has been given a platform to share about the one who has drawn them out of darkness and into new life. God has given our teens extraordinary gifts and skills that they are uniquely equipped for. The question then becomes how am I going to live this life out, who am I going to make much of when the world gives me a chance to share my story.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ... For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Ephesians 5:8,14

(Shepherding—continued from p.1)

received a card in the mail noting that a shepherding group has prayed for you that week, or have received an email asking how the church can pray for you, you have been a beneficiary of this ministry. Similarly, if you desire specific prayer or encouragement in any area of your life, there are church and lay leaders willing to walk alongside you and support you in this way. You can fill out the prayer request form which is inserted in the bulletin each Sunday, or send an email to Leonor Lee (Leonor.lee@alexandriapres.org) at the church office.

"Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:13-16



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

Explorers continues to be a vital program in our children's ministry and in the lives of the children who are involved. Jessica White, a long-time volunteer leader explained to a new family what Explorers is like. She described it as a "Covenant Group" for children. Well said, as much of what we do are elements you would find in a Covenant Group; relationship building, eating, studying the Bible and prayer.

Our opening activity, which might be indoor soccer, trash ball, dodge ball or our own version of kick ball, provides a time for the children and adult leaders to interact and have some fun together. This time lays a foundation for us to get to know the children on a much more informal basis and often opens doors for wonderful teaching opportunities. One of our mottos as leaders is to be intentional with the kids. We look for opportunities to help bring spiritual truth to their hearts, even while playing games.

Then we take a little time to settle down before we chow down dinner. Eating is a family event that takes place at the tables on the stage in the Fellowship Hall. We encourage good conversation around the table as well as good manners. Leaders learn a lot about each child during dinner time. It is a thing to behold!

After all the high energy has been depleted, we split into small groups by gender and have a lesson. One week we will do a food devotional that helps children learn important Bible lessons while they do one their favorite activities...eating. Another week we will do a science devotional that helps kids figure out how things work through experiments with God's wonderful world, while they learn more about the powerful God Who created all of nature. We also do a lesson on the Children's Catechism. Recently, they memorized the questions and answers that had to do with salvation. It was a really meaningful lesson for us all.

If you would like to know more about involving your child or children, please contact me at leslie.bridge@alexandriapres.org.

IT'S TIME TO PLAY BALL!

APC plans to again have three co-ed softball teams in the Alexandria Church Softball League this season. The league will have approximately ten teams representing 6-7 churches in Alexandria. Each team will play nine games (one against each of the other teams) and there will be a single elimination tournament at the end of the season. Each team will play one game per week; games are scheduled for Monday or Thursday evenings at 6:45, 8:00 and 9:15pm. Games last four innings or 70 minutes, whichever comes first. There are some special rules that make the games go faster, such as each team batting ten players each inning rather than changing sides after three outs. An updated set of the special rules will be posted on the APC website.

The teams are open to anyone 12 years of age or older. Each team must field at least three players that are either women, under age 16 or over age 64. Our team rosters generally include 16-18 players. All games are played at Four Mile Run Field (located at the end of Mt. Vernon Ave. next to Four Mile Run Creek, about a mile from the Church).

The season begins April 12th and ends toward the end of June depending on how many rain out reschedules are required. There will be 1-2 practices before the season begins and then a championship tournament at the end of the season.

Register downstairs by March 14th! There is a \$15 player fee. See Gary McGee if you have any questions.

This will be a terrific time of fellowship and fun and a chance to meet others from APC as well as other churches in the city.

APC Giving at a Glance	YTD Giving (through Feb 2010)	\$188,734
	YTD Budget	\$193,779
	Difference	\$ - 5,045 (-3%)

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