



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ♦ September 2009

Upcoming Dates

Explorers/Protas Resume
September 13

Choir Retreat
September 18-19

Baptism Service
September 20

Choir Rehearsals Resume
September 23

Women's Retreat
September 25-26

Inquirer's Class
October 2-3

Youth Choir Rehearsals Begin
October 11

Church Picnic
October 18

Christmas Candlelight Service
December 13



Why You Shouldn't Attend the Inquirer's Class by Pastor Tom Holliday

Our next APC Inquirer's Class is Friday evening, October 2nd, through Saturday afternoon, October 3rd. We offer these classes three times per year, and, as your pastor, it's one of my favorite things to do. Having confessed that, I realize that time is the most precious commodity we have. So, if I'm going to ask you to invest that most precious resource in this class, I have to make a compelling case.

I want to come at this from a different angle. Instead of telling you why you should come to the Inquirer's Class, let me give you some reasons why not to come. After you've reviewed these objections, if you still want to come, just make sure you sign up at the Information Booth in the Fellowship Hall.

One compelling reason not to come to the Inquirer's Class is if you're already a member of APC. After all, going through the class is a prerequisite to membership and, if you're already a member, the class is...unnecessary. Having stated the obvious, however, I hasten to add the following: If it's been awhile since you've been to the Inquirer's Class, it might be a good idea to consider going through the class again. If you think it would be helpful to bone up on your understanding of the Presbyterian form of government, or Reformed theology, this class will do just that. You will hear our church's vision and philosophy of ministry articulated

more fully than at any other time or place.

Another reason not to come is if you see no good reason to become a member of APC. After all, what are the tangible benefits of membership? We don't give any rewards miles. No special discounts or secret, member only sales. There's no secret handshake to learn. Why join? Membership affords you the privilege and responsibility of helping to shape the direction of ministry at APC. Your voice and your vote at congregational meetings is important. Our church is a family. Family members make commitments to one another, to help one another in time of need and to encourage one another for our mutual growth.

It may be that you're already very familiar with the fundamentals of our faith, the history of our denomination, and the philosophy of ministry at APC. If you are, the only benefits that you will derive will be great fellowship with brothers and sisters, an opportunity to meet and get to know some of our newer friends at the church, enjoy great food, and have the opportunity to formally become a member.

Finally, I think a strong case can be made for household chores in lieu of the Inquirer's Class. Many of these can trump the class. The grass does need to be cut. The garage does need to be swept out. Maybe it's better to wait until the winter class. But then, what will you do about the snow and the still-hanging Christmas lights?



Christ for Clunkers by Chris Joyce, Executive Director of Ministries

What a deal! Trade in my 1996 Jeep Cherokee—with 100k plus miles, emerging body rot, deep blue fading to rust aqua paint color, torn leather with acrylic cover-over driver seat, and duck-taped fog light on the passenger side bumper—and get a \$4,500 credit toward a brand new, fuel efficient, showroom-new smelling vehicle. Is America a great country, or what? And just imagine how good that new baby's gonna handle with all those roads being repaved with those TARP dollars, too!

But I delayed. Sat on my hands. Convinced that, with all those billions, I'd get mine. Like the line in Godfather II, I'll get to "...dip my beak." \$2 billion more flowed into that clunker trough, expected to last until September. It reinforced my lethargy. There was plenty of time. Wait for the best deal, till those dealers are really ready to deal.

Then suddenly, all that money evaporates. Overnight. Record demand. Clunkers are done. I miss out.

Now let's switch categories, from steel to flesh, from automotive to human clunkers. I already have one of the former, and I am one of the latter. Part of that 6 billion person clunker fleet that inhabits the earth today...the clunkers of humankind. What a lot!

We were beautiful when we first came off the divine assembly line. Precision engineered. Powerful, fit for use design. Wonderful smell. And great options--intelligence, beauty, spirit, humor, an appetite for good things. And with a built in knowledge of our Creator.

But we've managed to bang ourselves up. We haven't taken as good care of ourselves as we should. The beauty is tarnished. Some of the features are abused, some misused, others broken. Our appreciation of truth marred; our loyalty to our Author broken. We've failed to maintain ourselves, and left the owner's manual—God's Word—in the glove compartment.

There have been accidents, too. Potholes we hit. Turns we took too fast, and skidded off the narrow, well marked road. We've been distracted behind the wheel, texting and talking our way to oblivion, all the while missing the beauty of creation--the fingerprints of our divine designer--as we went speeding by.

Witness the photos of those auto clunkers being dumpsterized, heading for the scrap heap. That's not the picture that need apply in our case. There's a better deal for us—the human clunkers—than that. And it's not a partial credit. For human clunkers, the gospel is not \$4,500 towards the purchase of an \$18,000 vehicle. *(continued on p.2)*

2405 Russell Road, Alexandria VA 22301 ♦ 703-683-3348 (office) ♦ 703-683-2392 (fax) ♦ alexandriapres.org

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.



Regenerated Instincts By Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

Parents, have you ever said to yourselves, "I wish I could invoke the 'do over' clause with my son or daughter?" Teens, have you ever said to yourselves, "I need a break from these teen years, can't I just grow up already?"

I spent many of my 61,000 hours as a teenager floating through life, resenting some of my parents' decisions, and seeking things in this world to satisfy. I had a respect for God and a respect for my earthly father, but I had not surrendered to either of their leadings. Does that resonate with you? It is o.k. if it doesn't. Maybe a few morsels from the Millers' book "Come Back Barbara" will make my point. In this book, a prodigal daughter and good-intentioned father chronicle their struggles with each other and reconciliation with the King who is on the move in both their hearts. As

Barbara's life starts turning towards Christ and Jack Miller pours out his stories of failure, Christ's pursuing presence becomes more clear than ever. Jack reflects on this by saying, "Jesus, the son of God, was the only one who could have revolutionized Barbara's life. The glory is His... The most important part that Rose Marie and I had was to learn to stay out of the way and to put our lives at His disposal to be used in ways often contrary to our own instincts."

As a father (3rd on the way) and youth director I am pondering all we have planned out for this coming year of ministry. I want to be a person that gets out of the way of God's sovereign redeeming power, so that I am looking for ways to make much of Jesus and less of myself... I want to hear God saying, "Come back Adam" day by day...

AN INVITATION TO THE BANQUET

When we become followers of Jesus, we are changed: we start living out our calling where God has placed us, using the gifts he gave us. There is a little bit of God that is revealed when we do something that reflects his character and that can even be done like Edith Schaeffer describes in her book, *The Hidden Art of Homemaking*: by serving a special meal and dressing up an event that shows creativity and beauty.

Just as we are invited to a feast in heaven where we will celebrate the Lord's reign, we want to invite others to come and feast literally at APC so that they, too, will one day "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." Psalm 34:8

Somewhere amidst the members of APC is an individual or a creative duo that has in their genetic make-up a flare for putting an event together and making people who attend feel very special. You know what encompasses the word graciousness and you love giving things that little touch that transforms them from ordinary into simple elegance.

Please know that we long to work with you. With your leadership and direction, we will help you transform the major events that APC likes to host, such as Christmas and Easter, into amazing memories. Working together we will live out the mandate to serve one another in love.

If God is leading you to minister as the Hospitality Committee Chairman or as one of the Committee members, please contact the church office. This ministry needs you.

(Joyce, continued from p.1)

It's not 25% God, 75% us. Christ's math is much more generous.

We bring in our clunker...us. Christ gives us a full rebate...a brand new life. 100% of the purchase price. Paid by him. Nothing down, except out faith in Him. In his love, his promises, his all-sufficiency.

That's not it. There's more to this gospel deal. It also comes with a lifetime plus warranty. Lifetime, here on earth. Plus infinity.

And that's still not it. We also get a GPS, a Gospel Positioning System, that has capabilities well beyond your typical system. Imagine always knowing exactly where you are at, never being lost. Irrespective of road conditions, or driving performance. Plus, there's 24/7, continuous customer service. Call anytime of the day or night, and get help. Instantaneously. We never see a bill. It's already paid in full. Never a "We've had it with you, friend; take your sorry clunker to some other dealer going forward. You're a loser."

Who would offer such a deal? Is Christ crazy? Who wants a fleet of human clunkers, anyway, when you can have the best...the perfect...the flawless? He does. The God of the universe. The Savior of clunkers. He came for us clunkers. To paraphrase scripture, "...a clunker knows he needs a rebate."

All for His own reasons. It's called love, but in this case, it's that love that surpasses human understanding. It's the parental love that is relieved when the errant son manages to wreck the new car, but somehow survives the crash. That Fatherly love that is relieved, not angry, even though the wreck that we caused took His Son's life, and yet we are spared. As if we were driving drunk, destroyed the car and killed His Son, yet He forgives us.

And welcomes us back, with open arms. Then has a feast to celebrate our return. Now that's a clunker program!



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

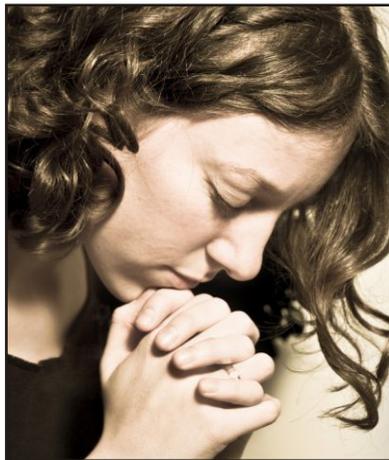
Over the past couple of years you may have noticed a lot more children moving about in the church. Not only has APC had a baby boom, but we've had a number of new families with young children join us. As a result, VBS exploded this summer with an attendance of 129 children. Our Children's Ministry continues to change as we continue to grow.

Sunday School is something we continually examine and evaluate each year, particularly as we get ready for the Fall quarter. One thing I have learned is that each year we have to look at how we configure our classes based on numbers and ages—this Fall is no different and now requires some reconfiguration of classes, as follows:

- 2 year olds—Room 129 (Liz Crowley, Deborah Lockett)
- 3 year olds—Room 127 (Kathy McGee, Mwila Yikona)
- 4, 5 & Kindergarten—Room 113 (Dave Testardi, Mike McMullen)
- 1st & 2nd Grades—Room 114 (Lionor Lee, Geary Fowler)
- 3rd, 4th & 5th Grades—Room 115 (Scott Lockett, Daymen Tiffany, Lora Todaro)

Another highlight of the Fall is the beginning of our Sunday evening Explorers ministry. The best description I have heard for Explorers is "this is a Covenant Fellowship Group for kids," ages five through 5th Grade. We start with game time, have a light dinner-family style and then a lesson connecting the Bible to our everyday lives. The relationships built and connection we experience during this time as an APC family is encouraging for all.

We'll kick off the year with a welcome back party on September 13th from 5-7pm. And if you have any questions about Sunday School or Explorers, please contact me at leslie.bridge@alexandriapres.org.



APC WOMEN'S RETREAT
Imagine
Deep is the Love of Christ

APC Fellowship Hall
Featuring guest speaker
Ellie Lofaro

9/25: 6:30-9:30pm (w/dinner)
9/26: 8:30am-12:30pm (w/breakfast)

\$20, payable to APC in advance
Registration deadline—9/20
Scholarships available
Limited infant nursery available

YTD Giving at a Glance	YTD Giving (through August)	\$705,226
	YTD Budget	\$716,882
	Difference	\$- 11,656 (-2%)

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