



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ December 2012

Upcoming Dates

Corporate Prayer

1st Sat mornings
3rd Wed evenings

Newcomer Fellowship Time

4th Sunday mornings

Christmas Candlelight Service

December 16

New Year Week of Prayer

January 2,5,6

Sonship Begins

January 13

All Church Dinner

January 26

Inquirers' Class

February 1-2

PROTAS Winter Retreat

February 15-18

Mens' Breakfast

February 23

Game Night

March 2

Womens' Retreat

March 8-10

Easter

March 31



The Challenge of our Mission Statement by Pastor Tom Holliday

APC will kick off a new Sonship class January 13, 2013. Once again the class will be held on Sunday evenings, 5-7pm, with nursery provided. The course runs for 16 weeks, and consists 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.

Sonship is the primary discipleship ministry at APC. We have found it useful in equipping and training APC members in sanctification. Each week, 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 first 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 booth. We will save you a spot.



Advent and the Christmas Candlelight Service by Trevor Manor

"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19)

Has the Morning Star begun rising in your heart this Advent? When we think of stars at Christmas, we remember the star that rose over Bethlehem to guide the wise men. But that star should ultimately lead us to our Savior, "the bright Morning Star" (Revelation. 22:16). Let's consider how Christ's love can shine in our hearts this Christmas.

Stars astound me. A few nights ago I went for a walk, despite the late hour and cold. I was amazed how clear the sky was. Despite our brightly lit metropolitan area, I had a surprisingly clear view of the Big and Little Dipper, and a glimpse of Orion the hunter streaming across the vast, autumn heavens. The sublime view filled me with wonder, love, and praise for our Creator.

This feeling of wonder is not something that the Christian can manufacture. Rather, having a wonder-filled spirit of worship often involves deliberately placing our attention away from the mundane things in our lives and onto the celestial sphere of God. For me, it took getting away from my regular routine in order to appreciate His creation. The same applies to our worship. Each year, meditating on the key events of Christ's life through the church calendar gives our worship a clearer focus. Far from being a bland re-telling of a "same-old" story, we witness new facets glowing before us that we had never seen before, and at Christmastime we are once again in awe that God loved us so much that He was born as a man. But how can we better cultivate a sense of wonder in our worship this Advent season?

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Sunday Morning Seniors' Fellowship by Elder Chuck Capone

Members and visitors alike who are of age and find fellowship time difficult to reach or navigate are invited to join the Seniors' Fellowship in Room #213. We meet at 10:30am for fellowship and refreshments, and transition to a devotional time and prayer at 11am. You can stay at 11am or migrate to an adult Sunday School class. If you're interested in knowing more about the Senior's Ministry and how you might be involved, contact Chuck Capone at c.a.capone@gmail.com.

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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.



Discerning God's Will

by Elder Chris Joyce

The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10:3)

Imagine this scene:

Chris the sheep: "Excuse me, God, but I'm really in flux about..." I bleat.

GOD: *Thanks for showing up. It's been awhile.*

"Oops. I'm sorry about that, Lord. Anyway, Like I was saying, I'm facing this big decision..."

What does my Word tell you?

"Hmmm. Well, I haven't done a deep dive lately, but..."

How well do you know me? What makes you think you'll recognize my voice in the din of voices bouncing around in that brain I gave you?

"It's just that—well—this is really important, God. If I get this wrong, I mean..."

So you think that if you make the wrong decision on this one thing, that my will can be thwarted, is that it? That you'll be off the path I already laid out?

"I hadn't thought about it that way, God." I've lowered my head, wishing I had not climbed out on this ledge.

Then I experience this deep sense of protection. "So that's what blessed assurance is," I'm thinking.

First thing to remember, sheep Chris—I'm on your side. I want more of you. The more time we spend together, the better you'll know me, my voice, my will. It's all there in your Bible... keep it open. Spend time with me. Tune out the noise. Learn to distinguish ME from the cacophony that surrounds you.

"Okay, God. But what about that decision...?"

After you've studied my word, sought my guidance, listened for my voice, consulted with those you respect and who know (Me and) you well—if after all of that, you're still not sure—flip a coin.

What? "Flip a coin?"

That's right. I'm with you, remember. Just stay with me. I'm not going to let you fall off that ledge.

Our APC theme for 2013 is "Discerning God's Will." We'll focus on this as individual sheep and as a flock. Your elders are excited about this focus for the New Year, and what God has to tell us as his sons and daughters and as his church.



Has Your Jaw Dropped Lately?

by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

On April 5, 2012 my wife sent a sonogram picture via text that caused my jaw to drop, my voice to disappear for hours, and my mind to spin into overdrive for the next 18 or so years. God saw fit to bless us with "double the fun" and my fears have slowly been turning to joy as Laurie and I lean into the Lord in dependence for His strength and provision as we parent our adorable twin boys Asa and Miles.

In September our Junior High teens attended a retreat called Modgnik. The speaker, Sean Slate (RUF campus minister at UVA) spoke to the 600 or so in attendance over four separate talks on Revelation. He explained how God gave us this revelation to convince us of what soon must take place, that God is working to restore what was lost. In Revelation 21, Sean Slate was teaching about the vision of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride, an incredible wedding scene. What captured my imagination and the beauty of the Lord's love for me was what followed. Sean asked, "Can you see Jesus' jaw dropping as He looks at you?" Everyone knows that moment when the bride steps through the doors at the back of the church and there is a collective gasp for air as the jaws drop in unison, but Sean asked me to consider Jesus dropping His jaw as He adores me, the new me as I was meant to be. Can I see myself living in this Kingdom community completely accepted and cherished by God? I am challenged to let this vision of His promised return and His perfect love that frees me from all that is broken impress me. I want to see more and more each new day how the Lord does expel my fears of this world with His joy over me.

Our growing community of teenagers could use a few more adult leaders. God reveals our place in the family portrait of His Kingdom community as one generation tells the next generation of His great love. If you are interested in coming alongside our teens as a mentor and friend, please contact me at adam.leroy@alexandriapres.org.



Children's Chatter

by Leslie Bridge, Dir. of Children's Ministries

It has been so fun to see how our children have grown over the past four months. It has also been amazing to see how our numbers have grown in Children's Church, Sunday School and Explorers. I can't imagine doing all that we do without the wonderful volunteers that have taught, loved and cared for the children at APC. Watching the adults interact with these precious children easily brings tears to my eyes.

A highlight of this fall has been teaching the children the history of the Old Testament. Some of the Sunday School classes are studying Numbers, Deuteronomy and I Samuel. At Explorers, we are learning hand motions to help understand and remember what happened in the Old Testament. There are 29 motions the kids have learned and will perform for their parents in December. It is great to see them get into it and learn. What a great tool to help the children—and the adults—learn the flow of God's story in the Old Testament.

One of the Children's Ministry's values is to teach the Word of God in its entirety. It is a challenge, especially as you think of the 1st and 2nd graders going through the book of Numbers. They have learned a lot and have even made some applications to their lives today. As they have been memorizing Scripture, they had a homework assignment related to Philippians 2:14. Parents were very excited about this assignment. You'll have to look up the verse to see why.

As we continue to grow and see our children deepen in their faith, we still have a great need for men of all ages to be involved with the boys of APC. The 3rd-5th grade boys' Sunday School class needs a teacher and we need at least one more man to connect with the boys at Explorers. If you would like to know more, please contact me at leslie.bridge@alexandriapres.org.

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| Giving at a Glance | YTD Giving (11/30) | \$1,177,959 |
| | YTD Budget | \$1,292,195 |
| | Difference | \$ 114,236 (-9%) |

Advent, continued from page 1

There is one Advent tradition at APC, more than any other, that helps us direct our gaze towards the Morning Star to prepare us for His birth: the Christmas Candlelight Service. Highlights of the CCS include: Youth Choir and Adult Choir singing with brass, organ, and harp...scripture readings...carol singing...beautiful decorations...These are all magnificent parts of the service that help us celebrate the birth of our King with pomp and splendor. But perhaps the most special part of the service is the most intimate, when at the close of the service the lights are dimmed and the final carols are sung by candle glow. Each individual candle flame is a reminder of Christ's love, which illumines our hearts out of the darkness of our sin and into the salvation of His presence. One of the choir anthems in the service says, "Light in us Your love's bright flame, that we may give You back the same." May we be mindful of the Morning Star rising in our hearts this Advent, so that when Christmas comes, the flame of Christ's love may cause our hearts to be radiant with wonder and praise!

The CCS is APC's biggest outreach of the year. Please invite your loved ones. Come early for the prelude with brass, harp, and organ at 5:45. A festive reception in the Fellowship Hall will follow. Nursery is provided for ages 0-6. We are excited to see you there!

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