



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ June 2014

Upcoming Dates

Vacation Bible School

June 23-27

Baptism

July 6

Child/Youth Safety Class

July 13

Usher/Opener Lunch

July 13

PROTAS Costa Rica Missions Trip

July 15-29

Mercy Committee Meeting

July 27

Choir Retreat

September 5-6

Nationals Baseball APC Game Outing

September 6

All-Church Retreat

May 15-17, 2015



Stop Drawing Circles

by Pastor Chris Sicks

You can't have an "in crowd" without creating an "out crowd." Who do you let into your circle of friends—and who do you exclude?

One day in the Army, I arrived early for a meeting. It was an unusual meeting. Every battalion was required to send one representative, which meant there was a great variety of folks—infantry, signal, transportation, aviation, etc.

As I sat in the auditorium waiting for things to begin, I noticed something. Each new arrival would stop and scan the room, trying to figure out where to sit. It was like the high school cafeteria all over again—when jocks looked for other jocks, band members looked for their friends, popular girls scanned for other popular girls, etc.

There in the auditorium, everyone came from a different Army unit, so few knew one another. A Caucasian infantry sergeant entered, and I could see the struggle on his face. Should he sit with the Caucasian supply private, or the Hispanic infantry captain, or the female transportation sergeant?

How about the African American aviation lieutenant? What would draw him most strongly to others? His rank, ethnicity, gender, or job?

Why do I share this story? While I don't remember where each person chose to sit, I realized something fascinating: *the fact that everyone is so careful and selective about circles of community. We all want to be with people like us.* (continued on back side)



Why Go to Sunday School?

by Elder Steve Porter

A joyful, Sunday worship experience at APC includes the worship service followed by fellowship and then Adult Sunday School. Every quarter, APC's Adult Sunday School classes offer study of God's word, lessons on reformed theology and/or instruction on Christian living. There are several good reasons to attend Adult Sunday School regularly.

Sunday School offers an opportunity for continued fellowship. You get to know other members of APC as most classes include opportunities for discussion. Studying and praying together draws the body of Christ closer. The apostle Paul asked God to give the Ephesians the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they might know God better—I pray often that our Adult Sunday School classes will be a place where we come to know God better. When God's Spirit moves, we better understand His attributes, His character, His gifts and the deep, deep love He has for His people. This understanding leads to God instilling in us a gratitude that leads to a greater desire to love, serve and obey Him.

We are called to think about "whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy." Christians are transformed by a renewal of the mind. Paul tells us in Romans that a renewal of the mind allows us to better discern God's perfect will for us. Sunday School is a good follow-up to our meditation on God's Word during the worship service—in Sunday School we continue to think eternally and contemplate the things of God.

After our time of fellowship on Sunday mornings, do you want to continue to get to know other members of APC? Following our worship service, would you like to join others and continue thinking about God and learning about Him? Do you have questions about reformed theology and what we believe? Would you appreciate knowing more about what the Bible says about living as a Christian in this sinful world? I encourage you to include APC Adult Sunday School in your Sunday worship.

Summer Reading Recommendations

Here are five titles you might want to consider as you fill up your beach bag, suitcase or bedside table.

Tokens of Trust

by Rowan Williams

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, writes a beautiful and moving introduction to the Christian faith.

Playing God

by Andy Crouch

Is power a good or a bad thing? How do Christians steward our power well? Andy Crouch asks these questions and more in *Playing God*.

Echoes of Eden

by Jerram Barrs

Professor at Covenant Theological Seminary, Jerram Barrs reflects on the relationship between art and faith, asking what it means and why certain works of art move us.

George Müller, Delighted in God

by George Steer

In this year of our APC focus on corporate prayer, Müller's story is a testimony to the power of prayer.

God So Loved, He Gave

by Kelly Kopic

Just used in our Adult Sunday School Spring quarter, Kopic's treatment of the enormity of God's grace—and our own response—is thought and action provoking.

—compiled by Chris Joyce

Giving at a Glance

YTD Giving (5/31)	\$539,418
YTD Budget	\$578,654
Difference	-\$36,236 (-7%)

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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: Sue Edwards, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor

Sue began at APC in January, 2014 after a 35 year career in government contracts. As the Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, she supports all the ministries of Pastor Tom, which continue even while he is on Sabbatical this summer! She has also volunteered as a co-teacher of the 3rd-5th grade girls Sunday School class for the past three years. Sue enjoys helping the girls in her class become familiar with the books of the Bible and challenges them each week using sword drills to quickly find scriptures that are relevant to the passage being studied. It is a great class of girls who are eager to learn and grow in their knowledge of and love for the Lord. Sue is a member of the Mercy Committee supporting the Deacons in their ministry to the APC community, and other assorted areas of ministry. She is taking quilting classes and is having a lot of fun with her new hobby, as well as becoming an avid walker! Sue enjoys watching the Washington Nationals and is always ready to see a game at the Park if you are likewise inclined!



Staff Spotlight: Ruth Joyce, Administrative Intern

This summer, Ruth heeded the words of Tolkien that: "It's a job that's never started that takes the longest to finish" and was thrilled to be welcomed into an administrative internship at APC. Many of you have known her since a time when her crying filled the sanctuary, as APC has been her church family for 20 years. She enjoys hot tea, long hikes, old books, and pleasant conversation. During the colder months she resides at Wheaton College. If you would like to play her in ping-pong, she will gladly accept the challenge.



Children's Chatter

by Leslie Bridge, Director of Children's Ministries

Another year of Explorers comes to an end. What an exciting year it has been. Most Sunday nights, the children come in excited for what is about to happen. Those who arrive first always ask, "Is there anything I can help with?" Yes, they really do ask me if they can help. After we spend a few minutes setting things up, they want to know what we are going to do or what is for dinner. I usually just smile while I listen to them try to guess answers to all their questions. We do love being together on Sunday nights.

Once the bulk of the children arrive, we settle down for game time. It can vary from fun activities with hula-hoops or parachutes or going to the playground (for the younger ones) to dodge ball, trash ball or soccer (for the older ones). Whatever they are doing, it is often loud and exciting. By the time the kids are somewhat exhausted, we sit down for a quick bite to eat, which often ends in a short game of tag before we go into the classroom for our lesson.

We have been using the *Keepers of the Faith* curriculum for about a year and a half and it is exciting to see each child's sash fill up with badges they have earned for particular skills. Some of the skills they have learned are somewhat complicated: orienteering, origami, Bible Study methods and exciting science projects, like trying to blow up a watermelon. (That didn't work out quite as planned, but it was sure fun.) Many of the children have earned over 20 badges. I believe some of the sashes weigh more than the child. It has been a great season of connecting with the children and growing for them. I love that these kids love coming each Sunday night. It is my prayer that they will always feel at home and belong among God's people.



PROTAS Update

by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

People who "earn" the right to proclaim the Lord's goodness...

Daniel 4:3

*How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!*

*His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and his dominion endures from generation to generation.*

In adolescence, the pace of life is rough and nothing seems to last. Friendships, popularity, and reputation seem to change like the wind. Life can feel fragile with innumerable decisions and an uncertainty of where to turn for wisdom.

APC has been blessed with many adults through the years who intentionally step into teen culture and "earn" the right to share their lives with the next generation. They live out their joys and pains in relationship with our teens. God's dominion and kingdom truly endure from generation to generation when we look for ways to communicate the sanctifying work of his Spirit within us. Cross-generational ministry is hard work, but what teens often remember most about their yester-years, is the person who "earned" their trust. In that moment we have a bridge to point them to Jesus. What an opportunity!

Consider joining APC's kingdom-building youth ministry by coming alongside one teen at a time as a friend and discipler. **Broken vessels required.** Sharing how the Lord called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, is meant to be shared from generation to generation.

Contact me, Adam LeRoy at adam.leroy@alexandriapres.org to grab a coffee and chat more about this opportunity.

Stop Drawing Circles—continued from page one

So we all instinctively draw circles of community—gathering mostly with people with whom we are comfortable. We seek people like ourselves because it feels right. But in the church that is actually quite wrong.

The Body of Christ is not supposed to be homogeneous, but be a gathering of very different people, called together by the same Savior.

Before we knew Christ, we all ran in different circles. We were separated from one another and from God. We were "strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." But the blood of Christ "has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace." (Eph. 2:12-15)

Christ expects His church to contain very different people, who nonetheless live in unity. We must intentionally break down the circles that used to divide us—because that is what God did for us. The chasm between heaven and earth, divine and human, infinite and finite, has been closed through Christ. And now He calls His church out of division into union.

The Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. It means, "called out of." We are people who are called away from family (Luke 14:26), away from ethnicity and nationality (Acts 10:34-35), away even from ourselves (Gal. 2:20, Mark 8:35) and away from any other category that could divide us (Gal. 3:26-29).

"A compassionate life is a life in which fellowship with Christ reveals itself in a new fellowship among those who follow him...We have become a new people with a new mind, a new way of seeing and hearing, and a new hope because of our common fellowship with Christ. Compassion, then, can never be separated from community." (From *Compassion* p. 50-51)

The Apostle Paul urges me in Galatians, Ephesians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, and elsewhere, to see that my circle of fellowship with Christ must supersede all other circles. More than supersede, actually—fellowship with Christ must destroy such circles (Eph. 2:14).

And so, if you are my brother or sister in Christ, you are family—closer than flesh and blood. We will worship the Lord side by side forever and ever. Should we not, therefore, begin enjoying and celebrating that fellowship today?

Where will you choose to sit? Who will you seek out as friends?

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