



Alexandria Presbyterian Church ~ May 2016

Upcoming Dates

Rwanda Mission Trip

Babysitting Fundraiser

May 14

Koinonia

May 17

Newcomer Dinner

May 21

Inquirers Class

June 3-4

Baptism

June 5

End of Year Explorers Water Party

June 5

PROTAS Graduation Dinner

June 8

Vacation Bible School

June 27-July 1

Youth Costa Rica Mission Trip

July 20-August 1

CFG Meet and Greet

August 28



Steeped in the Gospel

by Tom Holliday, Senior Pastor

Eight months into our focus on simplicity at APC, we stop and ask ourselves: "am I embracing simplicity?" We have examined the subject of simplicity from several different angles: simplicity in time, our possessions, our emotions, our daily bread, and fellowship.

In our current sermon series on Ephesians, the subtitle is, "Meditating on the Promises of God." The premise is that to the extent we understand the promises that God makes to his people in this epistle, and let these truths "steep in our souls," we will more and more remove the meaningless things in our lives to make room for the meaningful. We will think and act more in line with our true identity in Christ.

This is how we grow in discernment, how God's word shapes our thinking about everything, including what we think we must have in order to be truly happy.

"The main thing that God gets out of your life is not your accomplishments, but the person that you become."

— Dallas Willard

I think Dallas Willard is right: the main thing that God gets from us is the person that we are becoming. Of course there is a place for accomplishments. But getting things done can come at a great expense – to us and to others. Truly, to believe that we are children of God, that we are the beloved, and that we have been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, is to become more the person that God created us to be.

As we increasingly believe that our identity is in Christ, our grip on everything else in this world loosens. The RPMs in our life slow down. We have not only more time but more patience with others. We begin to assess things differently, including our possessions and time.

Our greatest hope for embracing simplicity in our lives is to believe that the gospel promises are not only true but that they are for us. But this requires that we slow down, take in, and meditate on these truths. My prayer is that many of us are finding this to be true.



Song of Surrender

by Trevor Manor, *Worship Assistant to the Pastor*

In 2015 APC member Carol Hodge received a music manuscript from respected choral composer David Lantz with an invitation to write words that matched the mood of the music. The result was "Song of Surrender," which is now a published choral anthem that the APC choir sang in the fall. Here is a conversation with Carol about the song:

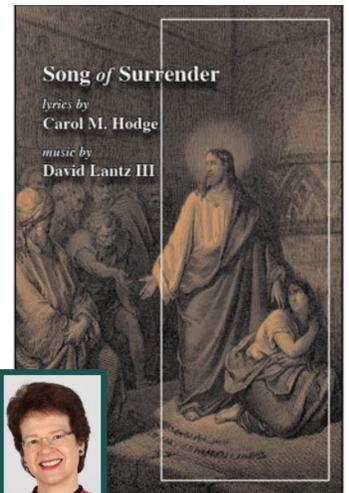
Q: The subject of your poem—a Christian wrestling with suffering—beautifully reflects the somber, expressive music. What inspired you to tackle this difficult subject, when you had a blank canvas and could have written about anything?

A: As I listened to the music, its melody reflected themes of suffering. The composer also colored some musical phrases with tones of hope. A friend encouraged me to write about someone who was experiencing troubled times. After I heard Sara Sicks' testimony last May about her health struggles, I felt that He gave the illustration I needed. I studied Sara's blogs and the ways she expressed her struggles and her trust and reliance on the Lord's goodness. The composer and I dedicated the anthem to Sara since she inspired my words.

Q: The poem begins in despair: "Trouble is near me, sorrow surrounds me..." Then hope emerges in the refrain: "When I cry out and seek Your face, my anxious fears subside. Though I may wrestle with Your will, Your arms are opened wide." What role does emotional honesty have in the Christian life?

A: The Scriptures show that the Lord invites us to be emotionally honest with Him. Think of how honest the psalmist was in relaying his emotions. The disciples frequently told Jesus what was on their minds. Many individuals asked openly for healing and forgiveness, and Nicodemus asked his most perplexing questions. Jesus invites us to come often to verbalize our needs and to ask Him to show Himself strong in the midst of life.

To listen to "Song of Surrender," search the song title on alexandriapres.org or jwpepper.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.



Christianity Explored

by Joel Acevedo, Pastor of Evangelism

The topic of evangelism is challenging both mentally and physically. Often times we find ourselves questioning: How does this apply to me? Culturally, we want nothing to do with it. It's evident that evangelism presents a major challenge in postmodern society, but one we must be ready to accept and meet. The same society that has distanced themselves from their Creator and without the intervention of Jesus Christ, is hopeless.

APC has established the ministry of evangelism in order to raise awareness and encourage the congregation to reach the lost. In March, we held a seminar called Evangelism Explored by Billy King, who educated us on how to establish discussion groups about Christianity. The Christianity Explored course gives you the opportunity to think through who Jesus is and why He matters in the scope of evangelism. Over the course of seven sessions, groups will answer three key questions: Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus come? What does it mean for us?

Currently, I am leading a group on Wednesdays where we are exploring the Gospel of Mark in an attempt to answer these three key questions. If you have an idea, or a passion for evangelism, I would love to talk with you. Evangelism is the calling of every Christian, so I look forward to hearing how the Lord is leading you to share the gospel.



Children's Chatter

by Leslie Bridge, Director of Children's Ministries

Change and growth are two words I would use to describe these past 8 months in ministry. On any given Sunday, I see the pews filled with more people. It seems kids are coming from everywhere when they leave the sanctuary heading to Children's church. In preparing for the morning on Sundays, I often see a line forming to sign in more and more toddlers and babies into the nursery wing. These are signs of a growing and changing church family.

But this is not the only place growth has been happening. Children's hearts are growing and changing as well. There is a growing sense of the children beginning to understand the power and relevance of the gospel in their lives. Something I do at the beginning of every Sunday school class and at Explorers is to ask the children if they have any EGGs this week? Where have they seen Evidence of God's Grace in their week? The answers are so encouraging it almost brings me to tears.

Another example of change has come from several Sunday school teachers. They (and I as well), have noticed a shift from kids reporting Biblical facts, to seeing some aspect of the engagement of the heart. The 3rd through 5th grade boys and girls classes went through the Book of John these past 8 months and the 1st and 2nd graders went through the Book of Mark. We took our time going through these books to see how Jesus is better than anything else this world has to offer. We filled poster board after poster board of how Jesus is better. You may want to take a look at some of those classrooms off the Fellowship Hall to see what they had to say. It is pretty inspiring.

I love seeing the smiling faces of the preschoolers and kindergartners coming out of their Sunday school classes bubbling over about what they are learning about Jesus. At least 3 times a month one of the pre-school teachers tells me how much they love the curriculum we are using in the classes and how much the children are learning. It is exciting to see these little ones learning the gospel message in the Scriptures at such an early age. I so wish this was my experience as a child. Please pray with us that God captures the hearts of His young children.



PROTAS Update

Twenty-Six To Costa Rica: July 20-August 1

by Adam LeRoy, Director of Youth Ministries

You might be saying to yourself, "That is a big mission team Adam." I would totally agree! YES, this is the largest group I have ever taken on a mission trip and our youth group is the largest it has ever been as well. The Lord is at work and I am asking you all to consider joining us on this mission through prayer and financial support.

In July we are partnering in the gospel for the 6th time with our brothers and sisters in Ciudad Neily, a small rural community near the border of Panama. The church is called Casa de Oracion y Alabanza and families in the church will once again host us in their homes. We desire the gospel to transform us as we immerse ourselves into Costa Rican community, work on various construction projects, do acts of mercy, lead High School evangelistic assemblies, and participate in the church's neighborhood outreach. BUT EVEN MORE that our students would hear and respond to Jesus's call to live missionally after this trip.

So what kind of fruit are we hoping for by sending teens to serve in Costa Rica? The host church sent us a letter after we returned from Costa Rica in 2012 and I pulled a few of the highlights for you to read as a testimony...

"We pray for their safe return and that their experience here has marked their lives and their walk with Christ as their investment in time, energy, strength, and prayer has positively impacted our church and community... Their hands, their feet, their strength, their creativity, their wisdom was a blessing. Their positive attitude and God-serving approach to everything was so apparent and contagious... The fruits of the seeds planted in our ministry will be big and abundant... We give all the honor and glory to the Lord for making APC part of us and our walk in His Kingdom."

We covet your prayers and financial support as we prepare for an awesome adventure in Costa Rica this summer!



Vacation Bible School

June 27-July 1

10am-12:15pm

Ages 4 through 4th grade

Interactive curriculum with daily Bible lessons, art, drama and other activities.



Giving at a Glance	YTD Giving (04/30)	\$537,531
	YTD Budget	\$581,740
	Difference	\$ -\$44,209 (92%)

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