



## Alexandria Presbyterian Church • February 2008

### Upcoming Dates

**Inquirer's Class**  
February 8 - 9

**Table Talk**  
February 9

**Protas Winter Retreat**  
February 15 - 18

**Vision Banquet**  
February 23

**Newcomers' Reception**  
February 24

**Extended Fellowship Hour & Pancake Brunch**  
February 24

**Easter Sunrise Service**  
March 23

**Joint Worship Service**  
March 23

**Vacation Bible School**  
June 23 - 27



### A God Sized Vision by Pastor Tom Holliday

*If your vision is for a year, plant wheat.  
If your vision is for 10 years, plant trees.  
If your vision is for a lifetime, plant people.*  
Chinese proverb

APC's vision is to plant people: to plant them in the soil of the gospel. Everything that we do, or attempt to do, is with this in mind.

The apostle Paul states in the first chapter of Colossians, "all over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth." We have every reason to expect gospel truth to have impact wherever it is understood in all its truth.

The fruit of the gospel is evidenced in our personal lives as well as in our church ministries. It has given me great joy to witness the fruit of the gospel in the lives of many APC members over the years. We have a vision to see the gospel bearing fruit and growing wherever we have an opportunity.

That vision led us eight years ago to plant a daughter church—a Spanish-speaking church—that would have a transforming impact on the Hispanic community in the Washington area. Many of us are encouraged to see the fruit that those seeds have produced over the past eight years. Under the capable leadership of pastor Joel Acevedo, Gracia y Paz is a growing congregation, in both knowledge and numbers. They are well on their way to becoming a particular church, at which time they hope to plant another daughter church.

The same gospel vision led us four years ago to focus on building a culture of shepherding at APC. At our 2004 vision banquet, we painted a picture of the kind of community that we believe the gospel creates. We heard testimonies from members who have experienced rich and deep community with their brothers and sisters. All of us were challenged to think and pray about our own involvement in the community: in a community of many, a community of a few, and a community of two.

The same vision led us to two years ago (at our vision banquet) to celebrate 20 years of God's faithfulness to a ministry built on the foundation of the gospel. We reviewed the amazing ways God has faithfully provided for our congregation from the beginning.

Most recently, our vision for gospel impact has led us to a growing ministry to seniors. Since God laid this vision on the hearts of our deacons, many of us have had the privilege of witnessing the tangible results. We praise God for the growing number of seniors who are worshiping with us at APC, who are enriching our community in many ways. This vision resulted in our church purchasing a bus that is enabling us each Sunday to bring more seniors to join us in worship.

These are but a few examples of the impact of the gospel that we have witnessed. This year, as we focus on the Word of God in action, we eagerly anticipate what our mighty God will do with the seeds of the gospel that will be planted.

If your vision is for a lifetime, plant people. APC is a sending church. In such a transient city, much of our congregation turns over every two to three years. On the one hand, this brings pain to many of us who hate to say goodbye to good friends. On the other hand, this brings us joy to see many APCers bearing witness to the transforming presence of God. Sometimes it leaves me feeling like I actually pastor two congregations—not only our current congregation, but the "other congregation", those I hear from on a regular basis by e-mails and phone calls. I am thankful for the fruit of the gospel in their lives.

Planting people in the gospel soil: people who are bearing fruit today in the Washington, DC area and far beyond. I can hardly wait to see what the Lord will do in and through us in 2008. Join us at the vision banquet, February 23, and consider anew how the gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you first heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.



### The Algebra of Effort (V+M+R=?) by Elder Chris Joyce

Every organization uses a formula to direct effort. The typical formula has three elements: Resources (talent, time, money), applied to Objects (e.g., ministries) in the context of Vision. What differentiates institutions is the way they assemble these piece parts in their own particular formula.

An illustration: Walk around a university campus. It may have a clear design signature that knits the buildings, the walkways and the landscaping together in a compelling and attractive flow. You can see that Vision was at the forefront in making choices. Visit another campus, and you may find a hodgepodge of designs, styles, statements...an eclectic mix of bricks, mortar and shrubbery that is confusing, at best. If you could get behind the decision making scenes on that latter

campus, you might discover that the root cause of all that confusion was Resources. Not the lack of them, but their placement in that institution's formula. Resources were in the front seat, driving application. Let me translate: Donor dollars drove part/all of the building program, not Vision. Instead of "if you build it, they will come," their institutional formula said "We'll build what donors are willing to pay for." *What's that have to do with APC?* Quite a bit. The particular formula our session uses is: *Vision* drives *Ministry* drives *Resources*. Vision—to reach this city with the good news of the gospel and to see that city and its citizens transformed by the power of the Word—drives everything. Ministry, be it Covenant Fellowship Groups, Protas, adult education, Sonship, Mercy, Music, Shepherding, etc., are all driven by Vision.

*(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.*

## Officer SPOTLIGHT: Kyle Forsyth, Deacon



Like many folks around here, my wife Julia and I were drawn to the D.C. area by work and educational opportunities. Shortly after our wedding in August 2006, we moved from the Midwest (Wisconsin and Indiana) to Alexandria so I could take a job with the Justice Department and Julia could pursue grad school in education.

We've been at APC almost exactly as long as we've lived in Alexandria. In fact, we first showed up at APC just hours after arriving here. On a late summer Saturday evening, after helping us unload our U-Haul, Julia's cousin Courtney Sensenig suggested that we drop by her family's church with our hungry moving crew (her husband Joel and their five kids) for some free pizza APC was serving at a children's movie night.

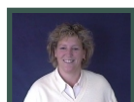
I felt slightly guilty raiding the kids' pepperoni and cheese, but everyone received us graciously and we caught a bit of the Chronicles of Narnia.

We made our way back to APC the next morning for church and have been coming ever since.

During our time at APC we have been blessed to participate in music and children's ministries, to be involved with a covenant fellowship group, and to form close relationships with some of the brothers and sisters God has brought together in this congregation.

One of the things God used to lead us to make APC our church home was APC's emphasis on ministering both in word and deed, prioritizing not only solid biblical teaching, but also active mercy ministry to those within our congregation and broader community.

Because God has given me an interest and a desire to be involved in the church's emphasis on mercy, I am honored to serve as one of APC's newest deacons. I look forward in the years ahead to many opportunities to serve alongside my fellow deacons and with all the men and women who participate in APC's mercy ministries.



## Children's Chatter by Leslie Bridge

A question I regularly am asked is also one I have asked myself for a couple of years now: "Is there a good children's Bible that would really capture a child's interest, heart and that's written at their level?" Many of you may have been on this same search. I have looked at many and have read some. While some were good, I still wondered if there was a better kids' Bible out there.

Thanks to a colleague of mine from Campus Crusade, I think I have found a winner. The Jesus Storybook Bible is an excellent version that whispers the name of Jesus into every story. The author—Sally Lloyd-Jones—has been influenced by the teachings of Tim Keller. Through her story telling she opens children's eyes to the wonder of God's grace. I read this Bible over the Christmas break and absolutely loved it. The illustrations capture one's imagination so well that you can see the story unfolding. The message of grace and salvation is so clear.

After several conversations with Chrissy Booher, who also read it, I thought it would be a great thing to give this Bible to every family in the church who has a child under age 3 as Christmas gift! Several other families with young children were able to get one as well. More have been ordered and, if you have an elementary age child or children and have not received one of these Bibles, please see me.

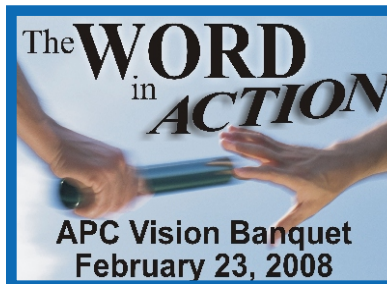
All this activity transpired before the theme of 2008 for APC was determined, focusing of the Word of God. Needless to say, God's Spirit was at work preparing me to help prepare the children for this year's focus on God's Word. I am excited to see how God will transform the hearts of the children as they hear and read the stories of Jesus.



## Irons in the Fire By Adam LeRoy

Fire brings many fond memories to mind, especially as I dislike cold weather. I recall as a teen going on a youth group hayride one night and enjoying a huge bonfire in the desert where we got away from the city, gazed at the stars, sang some fun songs, and most importantly warmed up with s'mores and heat! Fire is such an intriguing and yet dangerous element. So what does teen ministry have to do with fire? God is doing some refining work in the lives of teens in Alexandria and I want to briefly share two ways He is at work.

One "iron" is that our teens (Jonny Wolfe & Alan Forsee) will be co-teaching with me at our Winter Retreat over President's Day Weekend. The teaching will explore why an all-loving, all-knowing God would allow people to experience pain and suffering. A simple theme, pretty basic if you ask me... LOL.



The banquet this will be held in the APC Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 23, from 6-8:30pm. All adults (high school grad and above) are encouraged to attend, but seating is limited to 250, so please register early. Childcare is provided for infants through 5th grade (you must sign up your children when you register). There is no cost for this event.

*(Joyce, continued from p.1)*

Individual ministries may grow or fade, but the common thread that ties these ministries together is our vision. Vision also provides the standard by which we measure ministry effectiveness. Is a particular ministry having the desired gospel impact? Is there another ministry that might have greater impact?

These types of questions drive the third element—Resource allocation. The budget that we present to the congregation each year represents the best, prayerfully considered judgment of your session. It captures how we will invest your kingdom giving in specific ministry applications, those we believe will have the maximum impact in changing lives. The budget is an outcome, at the tail end of our formula. It's not at the front-end, determining what we can do.

It's a challenging process. We've all seen examples of Resource driven institutions, where the dollars drive the decision making. You also see examples where Ministry drives everything elsewhere a particular program takes on a life of its own, independent of Vision and/or Resources. Such mismatches yield disappointing outcomes.

Let's all pray that APC and our session keeps things in the right order. Pray that we would see God's vision for His church. Pray that we would invest in Ministries that translate that vision into gospel action. Finally, pray that we would allocate appropriate resources—time, talent, money—to realize His Vision.

The senior high boy's discipleship group has been spending our Tuesday nights studying and researching this theme. It is so cool to see Proverbs 27:17 being played out on these Tuesday nights, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." This is quite an equipping process for them as they stand before their peers after preparing such a deep topic and own the material as their own.

Another "iron" that is just heating up is our Costa Rica Mission Trip in July. A team of around 12 people is set to return to the same community we visited 1½ years ago.

There will no doubt be many trials that test our faith along the way, but I have hope that our faith will be like that of 1 Peter 1:7 "...though refined by fire may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

## APC Giving at a Glance

Giving (through January)	\$84,901
Budget (YTD 2008)	\$74,154
Shortfall	\$000

## 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