

THE BEACON

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MARCH 2009



B.L.A.S.T. and Kids Connect Youth Groups will meet on Sunday, March 8th and March 22nd from 6:00-7:30 P.M.

B.L.A.S.T. meets in the Cave and Kids Connect in the Fellowship Hall.

The B.L.A.S.T. group is for youth 5th grade through 12th grade and Kids Connect, 1st through the 4th Grade. We have many activities planned for 2009, so please mark your calendars to join us for an evening of fellowship and fun.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

I have been working on my spiritual life for over forty years now. When I first came in the doors of the church I was about a month shy of my eighteenth birthday. I didn't know beans about church stuff. No hymns. No Bible verses. I couldn't hardly say the name "Jesus Christ" in public without experiencing a vague uneasy feeling that someone would think I was swearing, because in my experience, that is the way I had always heard his name used.

So, to tell you the truth, I have always felt like a bit of an outsider when it comes to the church. Let me hasten to say that no one has ever made me feel like an outsider. Just the opposite. The church has only ever greeted me with open arms. Her people have been kind and welcoming. No one has ever taken me to task for something I didn't know, or tried to embarrass me for the "common knowledge" learning of which I was completely ignorant. In fact, no one I have ever encountered in the church has announced themselves to be an expert in any area of church life.

So I am sure it is my own hang-up (not something I was made to feel) when I tell you that I have moved through my adult life – even my life in the pastorate – feeling like a Johnny-come-lately, always in some undefinable way, like an outsider looking in; like a kid scrambling to play catch-up ball; like a foreign exchange student always trying to pretend I understand more than I do, always wondering if I'm saying it right.

Do you remember the character played by Tony Danza in "Taxi", the TV sit-com? He was a palooka, a third-rate, usually defeated boxer, who was now driving a cab to pay the bills. He was a nice guy, but his days in the ring had not been glory days. I have always felt like I was that guy – in seminary and in the church. And when I have gathered with other pastors over the years, I have always felt like a Tony Danza sitting down to have dinner with Sir John Gielgud at a five-star restaurant, spending half the meal wondering which fork I was supposed to have used for the salad.

In fact, when I hang-out with anyone who has "always" been a part of the church, I figure it is just a matter of time until I say something that will expose my true identity – that I am supposed to be three decks below with my people in steerage, the ruse will have been discovered, the jig will be up, and this whole charade of pretending to be a real pastor will be over. You think I'm just kidding, but I think about these things every time I go to presbytery, or step into the pulpit.

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“On the other hand”, (as Tevya would say in “Fiddler On The Roof”) I hope that self-image has protected me from getting too full of myself. Whatever spiritual instincts I have developed have coached me to “stay low”. I’m not sure my extended-family could stand me if I had elected to play the High Priest every time I walked in the door of a family gathering. My guess is that even my parishioners would roll their eyes (in private) if I took to playing the Pope of Springfield Village. (Though I recognize that the opposite is true as well: that when pastors – or any Christian, for that matter – get into playing the “unholier-than-thou” game, it is a perverse and stupid behavior that deserves the scorn it evokes.) There is no virtue or gain in trying to be vulgar or coarse in an effort to relate to “the guys”. It shames the name of Christ, not to mention that it insults the character of “the guys”.

All that said, I am nonetheless prepared to offer you the fruit of my last forty years of spiritual reflection and experimentation as a Tony Danza–like disciple of Jesus. Are you ready? Here is my best advice: 1) Keep reading your Bible, no matter what. Do not let yourself get out of touch with the Word of God. Ever. 2) Keep going to church until you are absolutely physically unable to do so. And then figure out a way to stay in touch with your church. We need the church to keep us honest and humble. It is far too easy to pretend I’m a great Christian, as long as I don’t have to get along with a faith community. 3) Keep trying – please keep trying, to live like Jesus says. We will almost always fail. We will be ashamed of the glacial pace of our spiritual growth. But the whole thing is a joke – worse, a lie – if we don’t keep trying to live it.

You see, there is no magic. No tricks of the trade. No easy way. Just keep reading, attending, and trying. That is the way.

~ Pastor Brent ~ (or “Tony”)

Men’s (& boys) Night Out

All men and boys are invited to a movie night and pizza on Saturday, March 28th at 5:30 p.m. We will view “To Kill a Mocking Bird” Pastor Brent will host the evening, and after the movie, will lead a discussion about the movie. So guys, come on out – no women allowed!!

Deacon’s Notes

In March, the Community Outreach Program will donate \$200 to Kumler Methodist’s food pantry. Kumler Methodist will also receive the congregation’s donations on Communion/Food Pantry Sunday, March 15th.

We would like to extend an invitation to all teens (13 to 19 years of age) to participate in our worship service as an acolyte. If you are interested in this program, please contact any deacon.

May God Bless each of you as we begin Lent.



Cookies— Thank you Christian Friends for providing cookies in February to Presbyterian Home. The ACTS Class is asked to provide cookies on March 15.

Women’s Fellowship

ALL women, please join us on Tuesday, March 3, at 6:30 P.M. in Fellowship Hall for Women’s Fellowship. Carol Miller will lead lesson 21 from Putting On a Gentle & Quiet Spirit by Elizabeth George. Cheryl Brockman will give the opening devotion, Irma Speeks will provide the refreshments, and Jan Suttie will bring the drinks.

Again, ALL women are welcome to join us in wonderful Bible study, prayer time, and refreshments, with plenty of time for great fellowship! Come and get to know a few women from the church.

Jan Suttie

The “1” Group

This group of men and women enjoy getting together for a meal and fellowship. Anyone who is on their own and would like company is welcome to join in. This month we will meet on Tuesday, March 10th at 5:30 p.m. We’ll gather at King Pin Lanes on North Dirksen and Sangamon Ave. The special on Tuesday night is fried chicken. Please RSVP if you will be attending, so we can reserve a table. If you need a ride, please let Pat or Sandi know by calling 528-0457. Ask a friend and join us.



**Sympathies to
the families of:**

Margaret Childers,
Della Allen

Special Prayer For:

Barb Bailey
Shirley Blackburn
Becky Blankenship

Michelle Davidson
Courtney Dodson
Jacob Fickas
John Green
Faye Grigsby
Diane Hamblin
Lucia Handshy
Al & Marj Hood
Carol Hood

Sharon Howe
Delores Hughes
Lila Keiser
Judy Kohlrus
Arley Koschuck
Mae Marie Koster
Elizabeth Lowe
Pauline Maton
Bessie McConnaughay

Carol Mitchell
Susan Mudd
Kelly Rae
Lena Smith
Jim Sutherland
Don & Lillian West
Those in the Military

Presbyterian Women

Ladies, come join us on Tuesday morning, March 3rd at 9:30 A.M. Penny Harris from the SARA 5th St. Renaissance will present the program and Marie Heineman will present devotions. The Hostess is Marj Hood. Bring household items.

Women of Faith Bible Study

This study meets on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Hanahan Room. On Thursday, February 26th, we began a Lenten study "Gospeled Lives: Encounters with Jesus" by John Indermark. Gospeled lives are lives that have encountered Jesus Christ. Christ's call leads to a continually unfolding story for each of us. An encounter with the living Christ demands a response. In this study we will meet New Testament individuals who heard Jesus speak a word about their life. Some responded with joy and gratitude; some ignored or rejected his word to them. You can still join us for this study.

Prayer Shawl Group

If you walk in the door of the church on any given Tuesday, you can't miss the "yarn" ladies because of the talking and laughing as we knit and crochet. Yes, we do get some knitting done while we have a great time together. Besides the shawls, we are also making chemo caps which helps to use leftover yarn. Speaking of

yarn, if you happen to need any, we have a good supply which we want to share. So on Sunday, March ___ we will have yarn and kits available in Fellowship Hall after worship. Please come take what you need. And, if you know someone who would enjoy a shawl, lap blanket or cap, please let Sandi know. The receiver does not have to be a member of Third.

Music Notes:

All youth choirs practice on

- Sunday mornings from 11:45 to around 1:30 p.m. If you have any questions, see Kathy Garrison.
- Adult bell choir (Silver Ringers) rehearse every Thursday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.
- Chancel choir follows at 6:30.



Passion Play: Are you interested in attending the Passion Play in Bloomington on Saturday, April 4th? It will be a matinee performance, at a cost of \$20 per person. I've extended the need to know date to Sunday, March 8, so if you are interested please let me know by then.

Survey

By now you should have received a survey form asking what you

feel would be good programs for the church to consider. We truly want your input, so please take a few minutes, complete and return to the church by Sunday, March 8.

A self-addressed envelope was enclosed for you to either mail back to the church or bring it on Sunday morning and place in the marked box in the Narthex.

Did you know???

You can assist the church when you shop at Schnucks? Stop by the Schnucks office at either location and check out the scrip. Each time you shop there, show them the card before checking out your groceries, and a percentage will be sent to the church periodically. There is no cost to you for this card.

By getting a "Perks" card at Family Christian Book Store and showing it every time you make a purchase, the church receives credit and is sent quarterly checks which we use for supplies, such as communion cups, etc. Check it out.

Family Movie Night, Saturday, March 7 at 5:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Bring a brown bag supper, and a comfortable chair (if you want). Desert and drinks will be furnished. Adults will watch "Second Chance" and children will watch "The Witch, The Lion and the Wardrobe".

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

1030 North Seventh Street

Phone: 217/528-0457

Fax: 217/528-2649

E-mail: patmiller6378@sbcglobal.net

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Worship Service 9:15 A.M., Fellowship 10:30A.M., Sunday School 10:45 A.M..

PEP Club Capers



The PEP Club met on February 16 at 11:30 A.M. Members of the PEP Club enjoyed a luncheon of Little Red Riding Hood Soup, Chicken Salad sandwiches and Cherry Cheesecake. Francis Sponsky AKA The Dancing Machine entertained us with his tap dancing skills—will he never cease to amaze us?? He also twirled Pat Miller & Kathy Garrison around the dance floor. He is the perfect ambassador for the PEP Club!! Two games were played –missing vowels of words with categories of People; Places; and Things, and “How Well Do You Know Your Spouse” (A spoof of the Newlywed game). Our contestants were Paul & Dorothy Muir, John & Donna Maloney, and Bob & Donna Gardner. The room rocked with lots of laughter with some of the answers to the questions. Just ask our contestants how much fun they had. The winners were Paul & Dorothy Muir. We can honestly say—a great time was had by all.

Jan and Kathy

P.S. Mark March 16th on your calendar for the next meeting. Church Bulletin will have more information.

The Third Presbyterian Church Youth Groups request the presence of all the ladies of the church for the Mother/Daughter Banquet on May 3, 2009 at 5:00 P.m.

Ladies, we are looking for your wedding memorabilia to display at the banquet. Anything you would like to share such as pictures, decorations, dresses or other items from your wedding day that you would like to display.

More details to follow in the upcoming months.