

THE BEACON

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FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Eugene Peterson gives an apt description of the long-term nature of discipleship when he likens it to growing potatoes. He says, "If I suddenly get it in my head that I would like a potato for my dinner tomorrow night, I can't go out to my garden tonight and plant potatoes hoping one will be fully grown and ready for consumption by tomorrow night." In other words to grow a large, healthy, well-formed potato takes a good long while. It must be established in good soil, have access to a regular and plentiful water supply, and be "tended to" by a conscientious gardener.

The long and the short of it is that potatoes don't just appear, full-grown and ready, when it pops into our mind that we want one. And so it is with Christian maturity. We don't just become fully-formed disciples of Jesus because we recently realized something was missing in our life, and now we have decided that being a Christian would round us out. Granted, we have to start somewhere. When we have been awakened to the hospitality of God's always inviting grace, there comes a point when we consciously begin to cooperate with the transformational work God wants to do in our life. We might even be able to identify the day and the hour that journey toward maturity in Christ began. But no one who knows anything about the journey would imagine that it could take place overnight.

It takes a great deal of time to grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And the entire process must be aided and abetted by the mineral-rich terrain of a healthy church family, a regular and plentiful supply of the living water that is the Word of God, and the conscientious care of older brothers and sisters in the faith whose depth and experience can shelter us from less-than-obvious pitfalls, and gently tease-out the "better angels of our nature".

It is funny, in a way, that the long-haul nature of developing spiritual maturity should surprise us. We know by experience that it took us most of our first eighteen years to reach physical maturity; in fact, some people don't get their final growth-spurt until they reach college-age. We know, more often than not by painful experience, that some people get old and die without ever developing emotional maturity. (And, if we are honest, there are more than a few days in which scant would be the evidence that we have reached our emotional "adulthood".) So how could we imagine that the serious work of well-formed and mature discipleship could be knocked-off in a single weekend seminar, or ingested by reading a "heavy" Christian book, or absorbed by osmosis by attending church for six months, once upon a time? We know better. We should, anyway.

(continued on page 2)

School Days, School Days

As the summer gets into full swing the children are preparing to go back to school. Among our many mission projects each year is to collect school supplies for children. As you are out shopping please remember the children that need our help. Donations may be left in the office to be given to missions.

Cookies:

Thank you Chancel Choir for the cookies to Presbyterian Home. MMS Class is asked to bring cookies July 19.

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That said, I take heart in knowing that a lifetime is not too long to grow a Christian. It reminds me that my own journey is not nearly completed. There is so much more I have to learn. And God willing, there are seasons that lie ahead in which new ground can be turned and good work can be done.

You see, truth be known, I've always been a slow study. I think that everything I have ever learned of any importance, I learned by doing it the wrong way first. Or many times. And then I started to get it. I plod my way through even the most wonderful and helpful books, reminding myself from time to time, that it slows me down when I form the words with my lips. It takes me a long while to formulate a clear understanding of the key doctrines that give substance to our faith. I don't just "get" God's way of seeing things the first time out the gate. It takes many repetitions before I begin to think "Christianly".

But as I say, I hope there is good news in knowing that disciples have always been shaped in the long and necessary crucible of experience and training, failure and forgiveness, study and application. I no longer believe that mature Christian spirituality is a perfectible art. Not on this side of heaven. Meanwhile, we just keep at it, steady as we go, always keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. He will get us where we need to be.

~ Pastor Brent ~

Women's Retreat

Ladies, mark your calendar now for the November 6-7 retreat at the Chiara Center. The theme for this year's retreat is "Being Molded by the Potter." Brochures and Registration forms will be available in mid July.

Did you know?



Home Communion is served the third Sunday of every month to anyone that is unable to make it to church due to health reason. If you or someone you know cannot be at church to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

the Elders and Deacons will come to your home to serve you. This could be a temporary situation or permanent. Please contact the church office (528-0457) if you would like to receive Home Communion. There is no charge for this ministerial service

May Income and Expenses

Revenues: May 2009	\$103,461.34
Expenses: May 2009	<u>\$116,478.76</u>
Net Loss	\$(13,017.42)

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will meet Tuesday, July 7, at 6:30 PM in Fellowship Hall. Irma Speeks will lead the summary lesson 25 of Putting On a Gentle & Quiet Spirit by Elizabeth George and discuss the how to study the Bible tips at the end of book. If there is time a video from the Women of Joy conference will be shown. Joni Garfat will give the opening devotion and Sharen Bucari and Midgie Hurst will provide refreshments. As always ALL women are welcome to join us for fellowship, study, prayer time, and refreshments. Jan Suttie

The following groups will not meet in July

Chancel Choir
 Personnel
 Session
 One Group
 PEP Club
 Session Committees
 Deacons

Carol's Corner

When Brent and I made a 2-day driving trek to Texas several years ago, we decided to read the “How People Grow” book (by John Townsend and Henry Cloud, both psychologists who are Christian) to be read out loud as we traveled. We did not get too far in the reading, because it prompted much discussion along the way; but the opening chapters certainly piqued my interest for reading the book in its entirety.

The premise for the book is based on the two authors’ experiences as Christian psychologists. Most of their clients are Christians and believe in the power of prayer and the Holy Scriptures; yet, Townsend and Cloud ascertained very early on in their careers that these people were oftentimes stymied in their ability to move forward in their individual healing. All manner of personal problems were not healed by the use of Christian therapy. They pondered over what could be the missing factor. In time, they found their answer.

The authors state: *“First, when people came to us for counseling, we wanted them to understand that the issues they were working on were not **growth** issues or **counseling** issues, but **spiritual growth** issues. Spiritual growth, in our mind, was the answer to everything. ... Secondly, we wanted to bring the idea of working on relational and emotional issues back into the mainstream of spiritual growth. Spiritual growth should affect relationship problems, emotional problems, and all other problems of life. There is no such thing as our ‘spiritual life’ and then our ‘real life.’ It is all one.”*

In the space I am given for this article, I cannot do justice to the building blocks the authors use to make a case for how to bring us back into right relationship with God and with each other. I can only encourage you to read the book yourself. However, I do want to focus on one of the chapters that speaks to the issue of inviting the Holy Spirit into the process of our spiritual growth.

Townsend writes, *“The Spirit begins the process of growth by wooing us to Jesus, and he is working to finish the task.”* In other words, the Spirit draws us towards wanting growth and then works with us to attain it. The Holy Spirit is working right there along with us as we struggle to understand and make sense of what “ails us.” One of the key components to this process is to realize the Holy Spirit will only reveal to us as much as we can handle at the time. Therefore, the timeline of one person’s growth process in emotional or relational issues may vary greatly from another. It is not a race – it is a progression towards the goal of clarity and ultimate healing. But in order to achieve this goal, one must be deliberate in asking the Holy Spirit to be a part of the growth development.

Cloud writes, *“One of the main ministries of the Holy Spirit is that he leads us to truth ... he is called ‘the Spirit of truth’ (John 14:17; 16:13). ... The Spirit knows the truth of our own lives and souls, and he knows what needs to change and be revealed. I suggest that you ask the Holy Spirit specifically to show you what he wants to reveal to you about your growth, your soul, issues in your life, and so on. Ask the Spirit to show you the truth about you as a person, and also about his answers and God’s ways. Truth is healing, and we need as much of it from him as he will give. And that is usually as much as we are ready, able, or strong enough to receive.”*

At the time I was reading their book, a good friend shared with me that she had what I would describe as an “epiphany moment” – a healing by the Spirit of God. She said she awoke, in the middle of the night, after only a few hours of sleep, and felt the Lord prompting her to get up and spend some time with Him. [As a back-drop to this story, keep in mind that she and her husband had deliberately been spending time in prayer asking for the Lord’s intervention in their lives as they sought His wisdom in making some major decisions and choices.] When she was about to reach for her Bible, she felt led instead to pull Max Lucado’s book, “When God Whispers Your Name,” from off the shelf. My friend said she spent the next few hours reading and digesting the contents – followed by a time of prayer after the reading of each chapter. She alluded to the fact that this time was a “holy moment” for her. She felt the touch of the Holy Spirit upon her life – breaking her free of regrets and disappointments long harbored in her heart. She felt liberated and lighter from burdens and emotional pains which had haunted her for years.

The Holy Spirit is only too willing to do the same for us, if we only invite Him to participate in our personal spiritual growth journey. He will not fail us. All we need do is ask.

Fellowship Hour

Thank you to those who signed up to assist with Fellowship Hour. If you can help us out, and haven't signed up, please sign up in Fellowship Hall. 8 to 10 dozen are needed each week. If there is a special Sunday when you want to have a cake, you need to be prepared to serve around 100. If you or your group is willing to serve as host/hostesses that day, this would be great as well. We have volunteers willing to make the tea and coffee but can always use more. If you don't want to sign up for a specific Sunday, but would like to help, you can always bring store cookies which we can hold in reserve for those days when no-one has signed up. Thank you so much.

Presbyterian Women

Ladies, come join us on Tuesday morning, July 7 at 9:30 A.M. The program will be presented by the Home Extension. Devotions by Dorothy Rutherford, and May Wieties will be the hostess. Bring school supplies for M.E.R.C.Y. and other missions.

PEP Club Capers

Members of the PEP Club enjoyed the luau with a rainbow of colors in Fellowship Hall from decorations to dress. A trivia contest was held and we learned luau means "let's party" and that's what we did. Following a delicious island style lunch we were entertained by "Sekhmet". She danced to the music of "Blue Hawaii" - taught us about different dance moves and invited members to join her. Bashful Bill Lohman (in his colorful island wear), Shy Ginny Schwarberg (with her traditional hair bow) and the Suave Francis Sponsky (in his conservative grey suit) answered the call. We were so entertained by this talented trio—some of us think we laughed off five pounds—Sharon Windell's jaws ached from laughing so much—and some one remarked—what a FUN-raiser it would be. Bet we could erase that deficit. A good time was definitely had by all! Please note: PEP Club will not meet in July. We will meet on August 17th See you there~

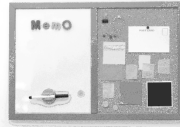


we were entertained by "Sekhmet". She danced to the music of "Blue Hawaii" - taught us about different dance moves and invited members to join her. Bashful Bill Lohman (in his colorful island

Jan & Kathy

Couples Retreat

The couples retreat has been rescheduled for September 18 and 19. Registration forms are available in the office.



Deacon Notes

In July, the Community Outreach program will donate \$200 to First Presbyterian's Food Pantry. First Presbyterian will also receive the congregation's donations on Communion Sunday, July 19th.

On June 4th, the fourth group of deacons was responsible for the Feed the Hungry mission. Mary Bilyeu, Lucy Collebrusco, Mark Fay, Barbara Martin-Smith, Bill Nerone, and Jan Steinhour planned, prepared and served a meal to the residents at Helping Hands. We were able to provide a meal to thirty (30) clients and two staff that evening at 6:00 PM.

Please reserve September 12th on your calendars for the Church Round-Up. Our committee is continuing to plan this event. The Food Subcommittee has finalized the menu for this year's social. The menu will be: pulled pork, baked beans, potato salad, texas cake (vanilla and chocolate), water, iced tea and punch. As other plans are finalized by the committee and Board, we will share the information. Remember to mark your calendar for September 12th, the Church Round-Up - - - Hope to see ya'll there.

Acolyte Schedule

Below is this month's schedule for the acolytes. The acolytes are the youth that participate in our worship services by leading the processional and lighting the candles to initiate the service and by extinguishing the candles during the closing hymn.

July 5	Alyssia German	David Hartman
July 12	Curtis Dyer	Adam Prince
July 19	Megan Clanton	Carrie German
July 26	Alyssia German	Caitlin Hubbard

Thank You

To all my family church members. Thank you for the cards, flowers, and prayers during my recent hospital stay and recuperation. I love all of you.

Marilyn Houston.

**Special Prayer For:**

Barb Bailey
Jim & Norma Benson
Shirley Blackburn

John Green
Diane Hamblin
Lucia Handshy
Gerry Havenar
Al & Marj Hood
Marilyn Houston
Sharon Howe
Doris Hurst
Lila Keiser

Becky Blankenship
Michelle Davidson
Courtney Dodson
Ruth Ellington
Colson Fiore

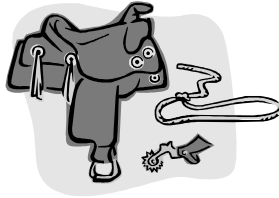
Judy Kohlrus
Mae Marie Koster
Elizabeth Lowe
Pauline Maton
Bessie McConnaughay
Chuck Miller
Carol Mitchell
Linda Overby
Ray Reddick

Corrine Rice
Jake Richards
Dorothy Rutherford
Lena Smith
Jim Sutherland
Pat Walker
Don & Lillian West
Sandi Woodard
Those in the Military

Yee Haw

Get your lassos out and retie the knots. Find your spurs (if you have any) and mark your calendars for September 12th from 4pm to 7pm. The Deacon's are having a **Church Roundup** and you don't want to miss this one. Besides the good food, (BBQ baked texas a tall will three think-

do (sing, play instrument, tap dance). When the sign up sheet comes out in mid August, you want to be sure to get on the list as it will fill up fast. Can't sing? We are also asking church members and/or Sunday School classes to help us make posters to display in August throughout the church. We will provide the poster boards and you provide the art work. Lots more information will follow as we get closer to the big event.



pork sandwiches, beans, potato salad, cake), we are having ent contest! There only be space for 15 minute acts so be ing what you want to

The Team

Elaine Crowell, Ruth Glasscock, Janet Kayma, Lucy Collebrusco, Jan Steinhour, Judy Goin, and Carole Holladay.

E scrip program

At the June meeting of the Session a program called E Scrip was brought to our attention from the Board of Trustees, to let us make a decision on participating in this program. Electronic Scrip Incorporated (ESI) is a California-based corporation dedicated to establishing relationships between commerce and community—to provide resources to organizations and project that support children. ESI introduced the eScrip program in 1999 and has distributed over \$120 million to schools and youth organizations across the country.

Here's How it Works

- You register any one or all of your existing loyalty, debit and credit cards for use in the program.
- Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made by you, just by using the cards you have registered.
- Your purchases are tracked and available to you online, allowing you to see how much you are earning on your church behalf.

The two Schnucks grocery stores in Springfield are involved with this program. We are asking that anyone that buys groceries at the Schnucks grocery store to go to the office of that store and obtain an EScrip card. They will give you all the details about the program, we feel this is an easy way to help with the financial support of our budget. We understand that several members of our congregation are already in the program and using their cards. We receive a percentage based on your purchase. This in no way will effect your grocery bill. All service charges will be absorbed by Schnucks.

On behalf of the Session—Elder Richard Miller

Parents Night Out

July 17th is our first parents night out event. Coordinator for this project is Susan Basso (391-4140). Participation requires a Personal Information Form for each child and a copy of our guidelines both, which will be available July 5th.

CHURCH
What's missing?
UR (you are)

A little over two months ago, I began a journey that several of you have gone before. I discovered that I had a mass in the upper colon and that dreaded word "Cancer" was used. I tried to be brave, because after all, I am the mother, and should be able to handle all things, and didn't want my children to know just how frightened I was.

As I began to share with some of you, there was a web of prayers beginning to go up, and you'll never know how much that strengthened me even more. By the time I went into surgery, I had prayers from my church family, Christian Women, immediate family and many friends. It was overwhelming to feel that support. I was not afraid of the surgery, nor was I afraid of the outcome. Somehow I just knew in my heart, that everything was going to be alright.

Yes it was a long week, after I was released from the hospital, as I waited for the Pathology report, but I knew God was there with me. When my surgeon gave me the report that he had been able to get all the cancer, and there was none in the lymph nodes, etc. I knew that God had been guiding the hands of the surgeon and all those in the operating room. I knew He had heard all those prayers that went up and had answered them.

Since that day there is a praise song that has been going through my mind everyday, and it expresses my thoughts so well, and I want to share it with you. The song is called "My Tribute" and the first verse goes like this:

How can I say thanks
for the things You have done for me,
Things so undeserved,
yet You gave to prove Your love for me.
The voices of a million angels could not
express my gratitude.

All that I am and ever hope to be,
I owe it all to Thee.

To God be the glory,
To God be the glory,
To God be the glory,
For the things He has done.
With his Blood He has saved me,
With His power He has raised me,
To God be the glory,
For the things He has done.

As the verse says, How can I say thanks for the things you have all done for me? The many cards, prayers, flowers, the words of encouragement have meant, and still do, mean so much to me and to my family. There just aren't enough words to express my feelings of love for each one of you.

With God's help, I will be back in the office after the 1st of July, slowly working my way back, continuing to do His will.

Thank you so very much!!

Sandi



THIRD PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

1030 North Seventh Street

Phone: 217/528-0457

Fax: 217/528-2649

E-mail: patmiller6378@sbcglobal.net

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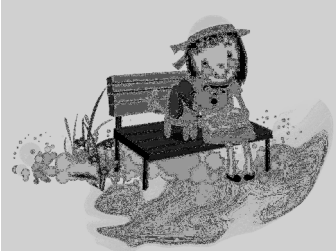
PAID

Springfield, IL

Permit #102

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

WORSHIP AND PICNIC IN THE PARK



When: Sunday, July 12th

Where: Lincoln Park, Shelter 4

Time: 9:15 am - 10:00 am Sunday School
10:15 am - 11:00 am Worship Service

Dress casually and bring your lawn chairs.

There will be assistance available to carry chairs to the shelter area.

Lunch to be served immediately following the worship service.

In the event of rain, the service and lunch will take place at the church.

The times will remain modified as noted above.

Choir Retreat:

The Chancel Choir will hold a retreat on Saturday, July 25 at the Chiara Center from 9a.m. to 4p.m. Lunch will be provided. We will be reviewing the upcoming fall music and, believe it or not, Christmas Music. If you would like to be a member of the Chancel Choir please come out and join us. All you need to bring is yourself and your voice.