

THE BEACON

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**Sym-
pathy
to the
Fami-**

lies of:

**Waneta Far-
ris , Fred
McBride**

**Special
Prayer For:**

Betty Bam-
brough, Lillian
Cates, Dante
Contri, Anna
Cuiffetalli, Wal-
ter Davis, Paul
and Ruth El-
lington, Rich-
ard Garfat, Jay
Gobble, Sharon
Goins, Lois
Goleash, Vesta
Harnett, Virgin-
ia Hill, Robert
Hubbard, , Lila
Keiser, Eliza-
beth Lowe,
Julia Matheis,
Marilyn
Reichart, Ginny
Schwarberg,
Bette Shofner,
Anna Simpson,
Barbara Smith,
Francis Spon-
sky, Roy & Ru-
by Tilson,
Marvin & Doro-
thy VanDyke,
Logan Webb,
Those in the
Military.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

I think in the days of my most fervent youthful idealism, it seemed to me that living a normal life might be the worst thing a Christian could do. It seemed like living a normal life would be an endless immersion in the mundane; a complete capitulation to business as usual, a life misspent by majoring in the minors. I was afraid that if I went down that path I might find myself trapped by the seductive contentment of simply looking out for “me and my own.” I didn’t want to get to the end of my life only to look back in horror with the realization that the whole journey had been an elaborate exercise in self-serving; a life of acquiring and then protecting what had become my own. That still scares me.

Early on in my walk with Jesus I had read Nikos Kazantsakis’ The Last Temptation of Christ. I thought then, and I believe now, that Kazantsakis may have had a brilliant intuition when he imagined that Jesus’ last (and greatest) temptation could have been simply to live a normal life. The cultured elite may continue to make fun of boring normalcy, but most of us are rightly intoxicated by the story and glory of love – the simple aspiration to meet that special person, fall in love, pledge our truth, raise a family, and grow gracefully into old age basking in the love and respect of our children and grandchildren. If Jesus was fully human, why wouldn’t that have been a powerfully appealing alternative to dying on a cross, bereft of all human comfort? What a perceptive insight Kazantsakis had that what might tempt us most is not the allure of gross evil, but the simple seductiveness of “my will be done”. In other words, most of us don’t want to be horrible and bad; we just want to do what we want to do without reference to God – a life in which we don’t bother God and God doesn’t bother us - a benign will to autonomy which is the core of all human sin. And when I was younger, I figured that that was what living a normal life was all about. If it is, then resisting such normalcy may be the supreme battle of our faith journey. We can still be spiritually shipwrecked by our plans for a good and happy life. I still believe that is dangerously true.

But that said, life has taught me some things. In the thirty or so years since I read Kazantsakis I think I have lived – hold on (!) – a basically normal life. (Gasp!) I met that special someone, we fell in love, pledged our truth, and raised a family. We have grown older, gracefully (I hope) and it is not for me to testify to the love or respect of my children and grandchildren. But I will testify to the glory of love. I have been well and truly loved by a magnificent human being; and to the extent I am capable of love, I have tried to give love back to the circle of precious souls that have surrounded my life.

And I have learned a new respect for what it takes to live a normal life. It is much harder than it looked when I was eighteen. I didn’t know the kind of quiet heroism it takes to get up every morning and go back to work.

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I didn't realize the depth of maturity it takes to keep doing what you do – not because it's glamorous, or because it garners lots of gratitude or admiration – but because it's the right thing to do, and it puts bread on the table for the people you love. There is nothing "sexy" about paying your bills on time, and taking out the trash never becomes a photo-op for the People magazine paparazzi, who don't surround your house. But I now believe that living a disciplined "normal" life may be a long-term work of art. If the "normal" life we live becomes the arena in which we express our love and commitment to Christ – with a long obedience in the same direction-then the ordinary path we tread can become an extraordinary and sustained witness of enfleshed (incarnated) Christianity. When that is done, and done well, I take my hat off to the one who does it. It may be the greatest challenge and the greatest temptation to avoid it.

~ Pastor Brent ~

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will meet on Tuesday, October 4, at 6:30 PM for a wiener roast at the home of Joni Garfat, 4466 Primrose Lane, Riverton. If you are planning to attend and haven't signed up, please see Jan Suttie. Jan Suttie will give the opening devotion. New members are always welcome. Please join us for a great time cooking hot dogs, a devotion, prayer time, and great fellowship over an open fire. We hope to see all of you ladies there!



Cookies for Presbyterian Home

The Women's Fellowship are asked to provide cookies to the Presbyterian Home on Sunday, Oct. 16, 2011. When asked to provide cookies please remember we need eleven dozen cookies to accommodate all the residents at the home.

The "1" Group

The "1" Group will once again try to meet at Culver's on No. Dirksen Parkway on Monday, October 3, 5:30 p.m. We're going to try a different night. Any questions please see or talk to Sandi.

NCCL (Northside Children's Community Library)

Guess what???? We are finally going to be able to open the doors!! You are invited to tour the library on Sunday October 9 from noon -3 when we have the "soft opening." Then on Saturday, October 15 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. We will have the Grand Opening, to which you are also invited. We have several activities planned, plus the ribbon cutting, tour, and food. Please put this on your calendar, bring your children and grandchildren, and be a part of this festive occasion.

If you have signed up to volunteer, you will be receiving a message from our librarian, Rachel, about training. There will be two; October 1 at 1 p.m. and October 4th at 5:30 p.m. If you haven't signed up but are still interested, please call 528-9277, or let Sandi know. There's still room for you!

Seaside Escape, November 4-5



Ladies, the date is drawing nearer for your registration to be in for the retreat. Registrations are due in my office by Monday, Oct. 24th. It's going to be a fun time, and you deserve to get away. So please join us for fun, relaxation, good food, nice surroundings, and did I mention fun? The registration forms are in the Narthex, or you can see Sandi. Invite a friend – you'll be glad you did.

Hope to see you there.

CAROL'S CORNER REVISITED

(written in March 2003)

Sadly, this past month we have heard the repeated sounding of the death knell for loved ones and for people whom we have never known. This period of mourning seemed to begin with the tragic destruction of the Columbia and its crew ... two of our church families lost a loved one in their immediate family ... my family suffered the sudden loss of a very dear friend ... it is beginning to sink in that the probable reality is that Laci Peterson and her child will not be found alive ... a 38-year old co-worker of my friend, Wayne, recently was found dead from a heart attack ... the unimaginable horror of the Rhode Island nightclub fire victims ... the heartrending death of the 17-year old girl who underwent two heart and lung bypasses due to error – and I know there are many more incidences that could be mentioned. Just last week, I had lunch with a few previous co-workers who delivered more sad news: the wife of my first supervisor, with whom Brent and I have shared a meal in their home, had a massive heart attack last week and is now in a coma and is not expected to live – she is only 47-years old.

There is also the heaviness we bear about the impending war. It does not sound like “if” any more – it appears more to be “when.” With all military personnel having been placed on deployment alert months ago, the sense of sadness weighs gravely. These days, my heart jumps every time the phone rings. I am well aware that one of the phone calls may be Blake calling to say a hasty good-bye when his unit is called to ship out.

It is hard some days to get beyond the numbness state: the place one retreats to in order to emotionally disengage from the overwhelming stuff-of-life. Or the anger stage, where one wants to lash out in word or deed at all the atrocities of life. And when there are seasons such as this, where life seems rife with pain and sorrow, the mourning process seems never-ending.

I read last week in my Bible reading this verse from I Thessalonians 5:18: “In everything give thanks.” My gut reaction to this instruction was not what I would describe as a positive one. How in the world can I give thanks for the

fact a multitude of people have recently died; that friends and loved ones are suffering; that my son and so many others may be going off to war; that my friend’s wife is close to death? I grieved over this verse, because, in the deepest region of my heart, I knew I was incapable of giving thanks for ‘everything’ in this particular season of my life.

But as I allowed my thoughts and feelings to freely float before the Lord, it was not too long before He gave me a soft nudge and I could almost feel His gentle embrace surround me. He laid it on my heart that it is not the tragedies and sufferings of life for which we are to give thanks. We are to give thanks for the fact that no matter what the circumstances – good or not so good – our God is still the Lord of all. He holds us and those who suffer in the palm of His tender Hand and He does not let go ... ever. We can bank on this truth; and in that certainty, we can give thanks: for His continual presence, for His sovereignty over all things, for the fact we know “He can work all things towards good.” We may not be able to comprehend or understand that which is going on in the larger world and in our own private ones, but the Lord is worthy of our praise and thanksgiving in the midst of the craziness of life.

As I have continued to ruminate about the implications of the “In everything give thanks” verse, I found myself drawing much comfort from the anthem that the choir sang this past Sunday. The first and fourth verses, in particular, hit home with me:

*Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus
Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His Word,
Just to rest upon His promise
Just to know: “Thus saith the Lord.”*

*I'm so glad I learned to trust Thee,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend;
And I know that Thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.*

Trust – unwavering confidence and conviction that the Lord is in control – this is the key in being able to give thanks in any circumstance. Do we place our total confidence in the Lord, no matter what life brings our way? If we do not figure out the answer to that question before the hard times come, we will be hard-pressed to give thanks to Him, and for Him, when they do.

~ Carol Hovland-Mitchell

World Communion Sunday – What and Why?

Every year on the first Sunday of October, we observe what is called “World Communion.” Some people wonder just what it is.

It began in 1933 at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. It was a time of economic crisis and the United States was looking at being involved in a war. Also earlier that year, unemployment in the Great Depression had peaked at 25%, and Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany. The pastor of Shadyside, Dr. Hugh Thomson Kerr, proposed the idea of World Communion Sunday to his congregation.

Three years later, in 1936, the observance of World Communion Sunday was formally established in the Presbyterian Church. In the following decades the idea began to spread to other denominations, and in 1967 it was adopted by the National Council of Churches.

Dr. Kerr’s son Donald Craig Kerr recalls: “The concept spread very slowly at the start. People did not give it a whole lot of thought. It was perhaps during the Second World War that the spirit caught hold, because we were trying to hold the world together. Worldwide Communion symbolized the effort to hold things together in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” *

Here we are in 2011, and we are still involved in wars and uprisings all over the world. We’ve just observed the 10th anniversary of 9-11 and some feelings are still raw. Do you remember in 2001 after 9-11, how people were coming back to churches, wanting to feel as if they belonged to something, wanting to feel “whole” again, wanting to feel closer to God? I do, and I also remember World Communion Sunday that year. Many churches were overflowing. People wanted to be a part of Worldwide Communion because they could feel how it made the world seemingly come together again.

Where did that feeling go? Many have lost their way again. Just maybe the observance of the anniversary will remind those who’ve strayed, that it’s time to come back again, to come together to observe World Communion.

David Gambrell wrote on his blog, “Isn’t every service of Communion an opportunity to gather with people “from north and south, from east and west,” to join our voices “with all the faithful of every time and place” singing praise to God, to pray that the Spirit will make us “one with Christ” and “one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place,” and to be sent out “to be the body of Christ in the world?”

Of course the answer is a resounding YES. So, what can each of us do? On October 2, let’s remember all those around the world who are observing the sacrament of Communion, invite someone to join you at worship – possibly someone who hasn’t been in quite awhile, or maybe someone who you would like to introduce to Christ. Let’s try to “catch the Spirit!”

Information taken from an article by David Gambrell.

P.E.P. Club

We will not meet in October. But mark Monday, November 14th on your calendar NOW for a Thanksgiving Dinner.



Start Seeing Pink—October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. If you haven’t had a recent mammogram don’t wait. A Mammogram can save your life! During the months of October through December Yoplait Yogurt will contribute \$.10 to the Susan G. Kohmen foundation for every pink Yoplait lid collected. If you eat Yoplait Yogurt and the container has a pink lid, please collect the clean lids and turn them in at the church office. A container will be provided to place them in. Lids will be mailed to “Save lids to save lives” on or about December 23. If you would like to collect pink lids the product is available

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is the month when we try to make people more aware of domestic violence. Did you know that:

Every 9 seconds in the U.S. a woman is assaulted or beaten?

D.V. is one of the most chronically underreported crimes?

25-30% of all abused women are beaten as frequently as once a week?

One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime?

85% of domestic violence victims are women?

Historically, females have been most often victimized by someone they knew?

Females who are 20-24 years of age are at the greatest risk of nonfatal intimate partner violence?

Most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police?

Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults?

Nearly 7.8 million women have been raped by an intimate partner at some point in their lives?

The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year. \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services?

In Illinois there were 114, 921 reported cases in 2006(the last poll done)?

There were 39 domestic-related homicides?

41% of crimes against children were committed by a family member?

In Springfield, the 24-hour hotline at Sojourn 1,870 calls were answered by advocates and volunteers?

In FY2010, Sojourn provided a total of 6,370 nights of emergency shelter to 138 adults and 123 children. The average length of stay – 28 nights?

In FY2010, 1331 victims were served by Sojourn's advocates?

Of female murder victims, 33.4% were killed by their husbands or boyfriends. In contrast, 2.4% of male murder victims were killed by their wives or girlfriends?

Nationally, 57% of all homeless women and children are on the streets because of violence in the home?

Sixty-three percent of the young men between the ages of 11 and 20 who are serving time for homicide, have killed their mother's abusers?

Eighty-one percent of men who batter had fathers who abused their mothers?

The facts just go on and on. Having been a legal advocate and worked at Sojourn, I am vividly aware of these facts, and I truly wish more people took the time to learn more. We, the public, need to be aware of what to look for, what to do if we suspect D.V. or abuse of any kind, and know the facts!

I have information in my office which I'll gladly share, or if you have questions/concerns, please see me or Pastor Brent.

During the month of October, please make a point to pray for all the victims and their families. Also, we need to pray for the abuser. There are counseling sessions, support groups, etc. which are available for the abuser as well as the victim.

Learn more!!!