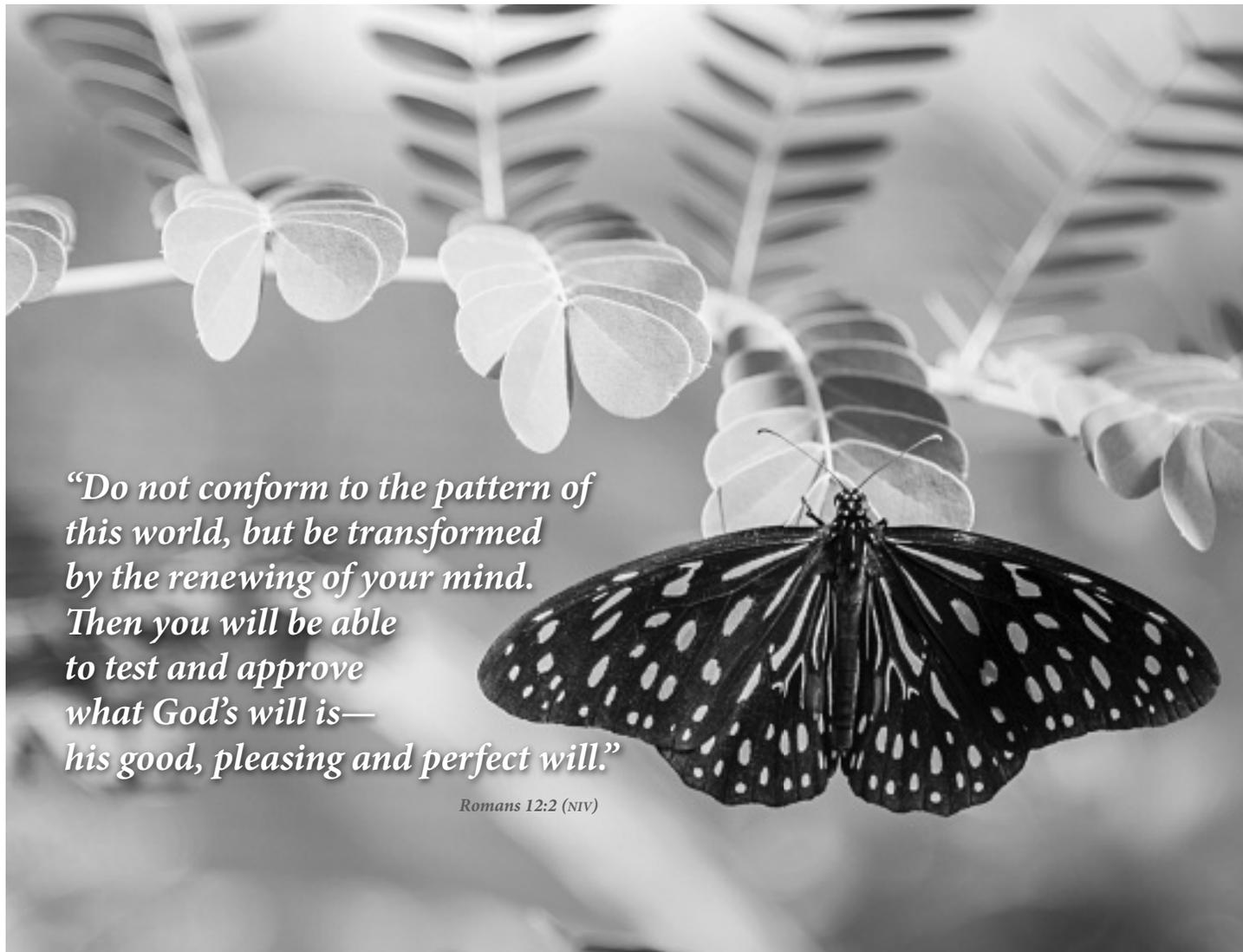


Epistle *to the Bonitians*



THE NEWSLETTER OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BONITA SPRINGS | JULY-AUGUST 2016



“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

OUR MISSION

To welcome and nurture our community, help people grow as disciples of Christ, and present a positive witness in today’s world.

First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs

A BIBLICALLY-CENTERED CHURCH IN THE PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP

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Doug's Desk

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Epistle* you will be introduced to our new Associate Pastor Brad Rogers and his family. We are so pleased that he will be joining our ministry team before the end of this summer. Since Steven Grant and I are the only pastors onsite this summer, it will be a great blessing to us to welcome him to our church. We are also excited about Dr. Allen Walworth becoming a seasonal part of the pastoral staff in December (Allen and Connie will be with us until Easter of 2017). And of course Pastor June and Dr. Al Barrow will be rejoining us from their summer in Indiana the first week in September. It is a rich professional and personal privilege for me to be able to work in concert with such highly skilled and dedicated Christian leaders!

The Search Committee for the new Associate Pastor did a fantastic job. They sifted through well over 100 resumes, did lots of networking and checking online and by phone, and through it all maintained a high professional standard and real unity. My thanks is extended to chairman Dave Nichols, Presbytery liaison Joyce Geary, and committee members Jacque Dousson, Roger McLaughlin, Kathy McMichael, Steve Myers, Paul Spinka, Jerry Weisenauer, Geri Wolfe and Sarah Zimmermann. We were blessed to have two outstanding candidates as finalists and, although the decision between the two was extremely difficult, we believe Pastor Brad has the passion, heart and skills for a fruitful ministry with First Church.

One of the primary goals for the final years of my pastoral ministry is to do the best job I can passing on to the next generation of Christian leaders whatever wisdom and experience God has given me. To that end it will be a joy to work with Brad. I also want to mention that a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit with Dan Oedy at his church in Gastonia, NC. Dan is doing a great job (he and Sarah and their family have been there about 2½ years). The church is growing, he has brought new people onto his staff, they are financially healthy and are starting to think about expanding their facilities. (Before Dan arrived, the church had gone through a difficult period in which three separate interim pastors had served them and they had experienced signifi-



Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt

cant loss in membership.) As we all knew he would, Dan has been a great blessing to that church—and is well-positioned for many more years of effective ministry in Gastonia.

I am also blessed to be involved in our evolving and growing partnership with Gordon-Conwell Seminary. Next January we will again welcome four graduate students to spend a few weeks getting a behind-the-scenes look at all aspects of the life of First Church. I will be with them for a week in early fall, getting them ready for what they will see and experience. As I have shared with the congregation before, I am convinced that investing in raising up and equipping future generations of leaders for the church is one of the most strategic things we can do for our kids and grandkids, and for all those who come after us and have to live in such a challenging and constantly changing world. Thank you for all the support you have provided to make this a reality by your gifts to our seminary scholarship program.

May the Lord bless you and those you love this summer!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Doug Pratt

Welcome Pastor Brad Rogers

You have only to meet Rev. Brad and Lauren Rogers to realize their great devotion to God and their complete trust in the leading of the Spirit. That's what the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) must have also sensed in their communications with Pastor Brad during the search process, the result of which was their recommendation that Brad be extended the call to join the staff of First Church as Associate Pastor.

On June 26, a special congregational meeting was held to seek the congregation's approval for extending the call to Brad, and to approve his Terms of Call. The congregation unanimously approved both recommendations from the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee.

If things go according to plan, we will begin to see Pastor Brad on a regular basis come August. To help us get acquainted with our new Associate Pastor, the *Epistle* posed him some questions to which he graciously responded.

Were there experiences during your college years that drew you toward seminary?

During my senior year at ISU, I became part of a student-built and student-led small group ministry called Fusion, serving as a small group leader and worship leader. The relationships and prayer partners formed through this ministry were pivotal in my faith journey as I learned the necessity of Christian accountability in faith formation. These experiences, in conjunction with an internship at a

Christian counseling organization, were formational in my spiritual growth.

If you could list one thing that God revealed to you through your eight years at Westminster PC, what would that be?

I've learned so many things, but I think the most important thing that God has revealed to me in ministry is the necessity of leading through church members. In the Presbyterian Church, we believe in the priesthood of all believers—that every person is a minister in the church. God has revealed to me the necessity of encouraging believers to identify and use their gifts for ministry; then, and only then, can a church be faithful to God's Mission.

Tell us about your family.

My wife Lauren and I met in college. We started out as friends and became best friends while dating for three years. We married in 2006 and were blessed to start our life together in a nurturing seminary community. We now have three amazing children, Lucy (4), Bella (2) and David (1). I've been known to say, "I'm called to just two things in life: being a Christ-centered parent to my children and telling people about the transformational Good News of Jesus Christ." As a family, we consider foster parenting and adoption to be a part of our ministry calling and have witnessed God at work along our journey.

continued on next page



Brad and Lauren Rogers (front center) with Pastor Doug Pratt and members of Session

Pastor Brad *continued*

Was there one thing or one moment that made you believe FPC is the place for you and your family?

There were many things that led us to feel called to First Church. Firstly, I connected immediately with the APNC from the first moment we spoke; each conversation flowed easily and I sensed that God was at work, directing each of our paths. Then I traveled down to Bonita in April for the face-to-face interview and was invited to prepare a Bible study and a worship service. During worship, there was a moment, just prior to preaching, that I was overwhelmed by the Spirit's presence as I looked out over the APNC and staff. In that moment, I felt a tremendous peace that I was where God was calling me to be.

What about Lauren? At that point, she had not visited Bonita Springs.

For Lauren, her sense of call to the community took place when Pastor Doug and Donabeth came to visit our family in Rockford. After that meeting, sensing the leading of the Spirit, I asked her, "What do you think?" She answered, "If they offer you a position, we should go." I replied, "Sight unseen?" She said, "Yes." This sense of calling has been affirmed by every moment since, culminating in our trip down together at the beginning of June.

Are there certain characteristics of FPC that you found especially attractive?

What I have found most appealing is the faithfulness of the leadership and community at FPC. It is very apparent to us that the pastoral team and staff are deeply faithful. We have also been impressed by the faith of the lay leadership and the embodiment of their faith through service. It is the community of faith which has been most desirable to us.

Who is your favorite author and why?

My favorite author is N.T. Wright. His scholarship is top notch, his writing is compelling, and his faith is sincere—especially with regard to the Resurrection of Jesus.



The Rogers family

Rev. Brad Rogers... at a glance

Born: Rockford, Illinois
Baptized: Westminster Presbyterian Church in Rockford, Illinois
College: Illinois State University in Normal, IL (2005 graduate)
Seminary: University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa (2005-2008); awarded the Lois Cooper Endowed Presidential Scholarship
Pastorate: Westminster Presbyterian Church in Rockford, Illinois
Associate Pastor for Community Outreach & Young Adults (2008-2016)
Additional Service:
Spiritual Director, Tres Dias retreats
New Wilmington Missionary Conference (staff)
Secretary for the Nominating Committee,
Blackhawk Presbytery
Council of Advisors, Dubuque Seminary
Family: Married to Lauren; they have three children

More About Pastor Brad

Brad Rogers was baptized in the Presbyterian Church and began a personal relationship with Jesus at a young age. His childhood faith journey was nurtured by his church family and devoted parents who encouraged service to God and others. Brad's parents served as elders, taught a transformative parenting course and assisted with Tres Dias (a branch of the Cursillo movement similar to the Great Banquet).

During high school, Brad served as a ruling elder along with his father, who was President of the Corporation of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Rockford, IL. Brad attended the University of Iowa and graduated from Illinois State University, studying Psychology and Spanish. His summers were spent as Youth Coordinator for his home church and Summer Camp Leader for middle school students, balanced with an internship at a local engineering firm.



While attending the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Iowa, Brad married Lauren. Upon graduation, the family moved back to Rockford, Illinois where they spent the past eight years. Brad served as Associate Pastor for Community Outreach & Young Adults for Westminster Presbyterian Church. His ministry included planting a satellite community (in Rockton, IL, 13 miles north of WPC) as part of the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative (a Presbyterian movement to create 1001 new worshiping communities over 10 years, 2012-2022). Lauren served as Senior High Youth Coordinator at WPC.

During his time at Westminster, Brad admits to being challenged and stretched in many directions. He also grew spiritually and vocationally, feeling God continually energizing his ministry.

Personally, Brad has a passion for preaching and teaching, loves kids and technology, and is a strong believer in lifelong learning. He is an avid reader, and an amateur musician and photographer.

Congratulations High School Graduates

"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."
Colossians 2:6-7

We extend our best wishes and congratulations to the following students who graduated from high school in June:

Isabella Fabian

Isabella, daughter of Brian and Lucy Fabian, was confirmed at First Church in May 2011. She graduated as valedictorian from Barron Collier High School and will attend the University of Florida.

Jemma Gault

Jemma became involved in FPC last year. Her parents are the owners of Fitzgerald's Irish Pub on Bonita Beach Road. Jemma plans on attending a local cosmetology school.

Julia Rowland

Julia is the daughter of retired Navy Capt. Dana and Nicola Rowland. She was baptized in April 2005 and a member of the 2011 confirmation class. She is a gifted pianist and has been involved in our youth ministry. Julia will be majoring in political science and joining the collegiate figure skating team at the University of Delaware.

Devon Zimmermann

Devon is the daughter of longtime church members David and Sarah Zimmermann, owners of Royal Scoop in Bonita. Devon was baptized at FPC in 1998 and grew up attending Sunday school and youth group here. She became a member as part of the 2011 Confirmation Class. After serving as a camera operator for our Media Ministry, First Church has employed Devon as a PowerPoint operator and creator since 2013. During that time, she also attended classes at FGCU. Devon will be attending the University of Florida at Gainesville.

Sundays

First Church offers our “FirstLight” service at 8 AM in CenterPoint during the summer. It includes all the basic worship elements of music, message and Scripture—having the same preacher and message as the 10 AM service—but neatly packaged into a 40-minute time frame. CenterPoint offers more intimate worship in a casual atmosphere, with coffee and cookies available.

A full service is offered at 10 AM in the Sanctuary and, by video feed, in CenterPoint. While sharing in the concurrent service experience through the wonders of technology, this alternate location offers a less formal setting, with various seating options.

Our ongoing D.I.G. (Discover, Investigate, Grow) Bible study is held from 8:45 to 9:45 AM in the Chapel. During the 10 AM service, age-appropriate Sunday school classes are held for children age 6 months through 5th grade.

“First Stop”—our fellowship time—takes place in McClure Hall following the 10 AM service. Join us for coffee and refreshments, visit with friends, and take advantage of the informational kiosks for various church ministries.

Sunday Worship Schedule

8 AM First Light
10 AM Traditional Service

August 7

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

A Time of Prayer & Communion

Sundays • 11 AM • Price Chapel
Every Sunday following the 10 AM service, First Church offers a Time of Prayer & Communion (except on Sundays when the sacrament is shared during worship). All who feel a need for intercessory prayer for themselves or loved ones are invited.

During this special time, Communion is offered by one of our pastors. The sacrament, together with anointing with oil and prayer, are all components of physical, spiritual and emotional healing. Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit, “the Comforter,” to fortify and strengthen us. Oil is used, as a symbol of the Spirit, to anoint the forehead. While asking for God’s healing presence in the name of Jesus, prayer teams draw upon the faith of the whole church in believing intercession.

God is all about healing and grace so, in your hour of need, accept His invitation... and come pray with us.

Sundays in August

During the month of August, we will be suspending our 10 AM CenterPoint worship service. New online videos will not be available during this month, but audio and text versions of the weekly sermons will be available as always. CenterPoint worship will resume on Sunday, September 4.

Wherever you are...

You don’t have to miss a Sunday at FPC during the summer season! Visit the church website (fpcbonita.org) to view the sermon webcasts, listen to the podcast, or read the sermon manuscript.

Epistle *to the Bonitians*

JULY-AUGUST 2016

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Volunteers Attend “Second Chances”



Front row (left to right): Charlotte Baldwin, Lila Nichos, Lois & Jerry Faulkner, Tom Grafton. Second row: Ken Baldwin, Brendan Kennedy, Polly Grafton, Dottie Reynolds, Pat Huisjen. Top row: Dave Stauffer, Barbara Sentz, Lynne Stauffer, Cynthia Kennedy, Donzy Brinkert, Ellen Feikema, Joe Heffelfinger.

Over Memorial Day weekend, some of our thrift shop volunteers headed to the Sugden Theatre in downtown Naples to enjoy a unique comedy. “Second Chances: The Thrift Shop Musical” is a year’s journey through the operation of a Florida church’s community thrift shop. “The play was quite amusing,” said First Thrift Manager Lynne Stauffer. “It really hit home. The characters were true to life and the story was uplifting. I understand it was written by a minister who actually opened a church thrift shop.”

After lots of laughs at the Sugden, our group had a nice dinner together at Alberto’s Restaurant on Fifth Avenue.

Men’s Ministry Fellowship

Changing Men’s Hearts One at a Time

MMF SUMMER SCHEDULE

July through August

8 AM • Every other Thursday
Perkins Restaurant, Bonita Springs
(July 7 & 21, August 4 & 18)

For more information on MMF, contact
Steve Thompson (765-427-5299; smt4444@gmail.com).



Christian Faux to Attend Gordon-Conwell

Great news! FPC Pastoral Intern Christian Faux has been accepted to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. So as his 12 months of internship at FPC concludes, Christian will be heading to Hamilton, Massachusetts in early September to begin his Master of Divinity studies. The school is located about 30 miles north of Boston.

“My year-long internship at First Church is a debt I can never repay,” Christian said. “It has impacted me in so many ways, especially how generous everyone has been. Each of our pastors—Doug, Steven, June, Dr. Al and John—have invested so much time in mentoring me and keeping me on the right path academically and theologically, as well as preparing me in the practical aspects of leading a church. At a certain point I was eating up every chance to work and gain experience. I am extremely excited to start my three years at Gordon-Conwell and thrilled to continue studying something I love.”

Hear more from Christian in the next *Epistle* (September-October issue). Our in-depth interview will reveal more about his intern experience and plans for the future.



You can help Christian through the next three years!

A special scholarship program with Gordon-Conwell is in place to help Christian through seminary. If \$13,700 in donations is raised each year, the remainder of his tuition will be provided by the school. Pastor Doug and Session would like church members and friends to consider donating to this fund to show our support and encouragement for Christian as a “next generation” pastor. To contribute, checks should be made out to First Presbyterian Church with “Christian Faux” in the memo line. Donations may be placed in the offering plate on Sundays or dropped off at the church office.

First Academy of Music

Spring Recitals

First Academy of Music (FAM) held two simultaneous student recitals on Sunday, May 22. The recital in the Sanctuary featured piano and violin students while the CenterPoint recital featured students performing on piano, violin, guitar, voice, percussion and even dulcimer. In all, 56 students demonstrated their musical progress to a large audience of proud parents and friends.

Thanks to our Media staff—Tommy Hillegass, Christian Faux and August D'Angelo—FPC's audio and video technology played an important role in the recitals. The opening announcements and welcome by FAM director Cheryl Bauer were broadcast from CenterPoint to the screens in the Sanctuary. Then, from the Sanctuary, Director of Sacred Arts Jeff Faux introduced one student's musical prayer, which was "televised" on the screens in CenterPoint. The prayer in song was composed and sung by nine year old student, Eva Lye, accompanied by her teacher, Norma Reynolds. Eva is the daughter of Mark and Lisa Lye of Bonita Springs.

A reception for all was held in McClure Hall following the performances.

A third recital for adult students was held on May 26 in CenterPoint. A wide variety of musical styles—including opera arias, selections from the pop repertoire, folk songs and spirituals—was presented by adult singers and instrumentalists.



The May 26 FAM recital featured (left to right): (front row) Michele Pelletiere, Ro Golia, Jennifer Driggers; (back row) Merrick Firoz, Barbara Cusimano, Diana Cummings, Jeanne Hill, Emma Keeton



Instructor Jodie Fox (left) with scholarship recipient Amy Valdes.

Johnston Merit Scholarship

First Academy of Music awards one full-tuition merit scholarship each academic year. Amy Valdes has been named the recipient for 2016-2017 and was presented the award at the spring recital. Amy, daughter of Luis and Yoelkis Valdes, is a voice and guitar student of Jodie Fox. Amy attends the First Baptist Academy where she will be entering 10th grade in the fall.

Fall Semester Begins August 15

First Academy of Music (FAM) provides high quality musical instruction for students of all ages and levels of skill. The school was founded in 1998 as a ministry of First Presbyterian Church (under the name "Community Music School") and continues to provide vocal and instrumental lessons with the finest teachers. The faculty includes professional educators, church musicians, symphony players, and active performers. Cheryl Bauer serves as director. An experienced flutist, she is also an instructor at the school.

FAM offers private lessons on individual instruments as well as group musical experiences for children and adults. Seasonal residents can enroll at any time during the semester. Performance opportunities occur at the end of each semester in group recitals, as well as over the course of the program year as needed.

Financial assistance, provided by the Fine Arts Concert Series ticket sales and donations, is available to qualifying students aged 18 years and younger enrolled in private lessons at the school. The Johnston Merit Scholarship is given annually to a student (grade 9-12) of promise and dedication, covering FAM tuition for the academic year.

Register for the fall semester by calling the music office at 239-992-3410 ext. 232 or visit firstacademyofmusic.org. As a National Guild member, FAM is committed to making high quality arts education accessible to all.

Christian Education

Scripture Memorization

*"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."
Psalm 119:11*

The value of the Bible to the life of a Christian goes much farther than revealing the truth about God's work of redemption and the correct theology of Who God is. It also helps to guide our daily path, resist temptation, and grow in faith and obedience. One of the most helpful ways to "hide" the Word of God in our hearts is by committing key verses to memory.

Throughout 2016, First Church is encouraging everyone to become more familiar with God's Word. For each month, we have chosen a single verse of Scripture to focus upon, learn and memorize, word for word. That verse is then highlighted in our worship services, Electronic Bulletin Boards (EBBs) and Sunday publications.

July Scripture Focus

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Does Learning Scripture Increase Brain Power?

One way to become a better "learner" is to simply keep learning. A 2004 *Nature* article reported that individuals learning to juggle produced new neurons in their occipital lobe thus increasing the brain's cortical grey matter. But when the jugglers stopped practicing, the new gray matter vanished. (Draganski, Gaser, "Changes in grey matter induced by training," *Nature*, 427, 2004, p311-312)

In 2009 scientists at Oxford University reported that, when a person learns a new task, corresponding new cells in the white matter (connective tissue that wires the brain) may also be generated. (Eric Vance, "White matter helps brain learn," *The Scientist*, July 21, 2009, *thescientist.com*)

Does meditating on, studying, or memorizing Scripture verses have the potential to increase your learning capacity? There is a good chance it does... as long as you keep at it!

So if you want to maintain and encourage new brain pathways and, at the same time, develop a deeper pathway to God's heart, memorizing the Word may be one of the easiest tools to utilize. We think it's a "win-win" on both counts!

Sunday Mornings: D.I.G.

Sundays • 8:45-9:45 AM • Price Chapel

Sundays in July

The Scriptures We'd Like to Forget

Pastoral Intern Christian Faux continues to lead this unique series on Bible verses that are regularly used to stereotype Christians or uphold erroneous theologies. The purpose of this study is to disabuse the misconceptions regarding these specific passages, which are viewed within the cultural and historical context of the time in which they were written.

July 3 Feminism in the Bible

July 10 Genocide in the Bible

July 17 Slavery in the Bible

July 24 Watch Out for Mumpsimus Christians
with Pastor John McWilliams

July 31 Other Uncomfortable Scriptures

Sundays in August

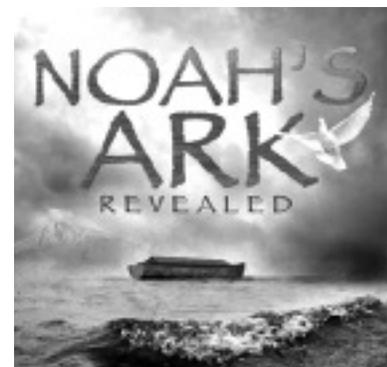
August 7 & 28

Please join Pastor Brad Rogers, who will be leading his first D.I.G. classes in August!

The Incredible Discovery of Noah's Ark

August 14 & 21

This two-part DVD study will feature an archeological documentary from "Noah's Ark Revealed." Plunge into this biblical saga and explore history's most spectacular claims. With all new findings including scientific evidence, discover the startling and dramatic conclusion of one of the ancient world's most puzzling mysteries.



Summer Breaking Bread Together

July 11, August 15, September 12 • 6 PM • McClure Hall

Your Christian Education Ministry and pastoral staff have planned a series of interesting program topics to accompany monthly summer potluck gatherings. Dinners will begin at 6 PM in McClure Hall, with the programs following at 7 PM. Details on covered dishes to bring will be announced in *First Things First* prior to each event. Please mark your calendar and join us.

Monday, July 11

The Forgotten Revolutionaries: The Story of the Black-Robed Regiment

with Pastor Steven Grant

In our day there seems to be a consensus that preachers should never address public issues from the pulpit. Not so during the time of the American Revolution! Much of the ideas, rationale and spirit that inspired and sustained the Revolution emanated from church pulpits to the extent that the British referred to the preachers as the “black-robed regiment.” Come learn about this rarely taught part of our American story.

Monday, August 15

Unveiling Grace

with author Dr. Lynn Wilder

In her book *Unveiling Grace*, Lynn Wilder reveals the gripping story of how she and her family found their way out of the Mormon Church. Lynn was a professor at Brigham Young University and, after 30 years of living in a culturally enmeshed belief system that leaves little room for critical thought, she experienced a crisis of faith. *Unveiling Grace* is a rare insider’s point of view of how a family abandoned the deception of Mormonism to journey back to the arms of the biblical Jesus. Lynn is currently a professor at FGCU.

Monday, September 12

A Rational Look at the First Amendment and Religious Freedom

with Pastor John McWilliams

Prayer: A Journey for Life

July 18, August 22, September 19 • 6-7:30 PM

Price Hall Chapel

Nowadays, we are all concerned about many things happening all around us; sometimes we become anxious, wondering if or when the chaos of this broken world will infiltrate our everyday lives. Many of us feel helpless so we talk about the need to pray...

Scripture encourages and instructs us over and over to place our trust in God (Proverbs 3:5, Psalms 25:1, 56:4, 62:8). His plans are always for our good (Jeremiah 29:11). He is our Fortress (Psalms 91:2, 144:2) and our Rock (Psalms 62:6, 94:22). He alone is our Hope (1 Timothy 4:10).

Philippians 4:6-7 says this: “Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.”

Would you like this to be your mindset? Have you ever thought you could use a “Prayer 101” class or perhaps a refresher course? Have you said to yourself, “I’m just not good at praying?” Or maybe your prayer time has become routine and repetitive. Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the thought of prayer, so you put your relationship with God on the back burner? If these thoughts sound familiar, you are not alone!

The CE Ministry invites you to attend this three-part series led by Kris Kern, a member of our CE Committee with a great passion for prayer and its transforming power.

“I have been on this ‘journey of prayer’ for over 30 years,” Kris said. “Experiencing each aspect of prayer and discovering how it draws me closer to my Creator and Savior is an amazing process. I have found it continually strengthens my faith and trust in God.”

Can prayer make a difference in the direction of our lives, our church, our community and country? Can heartfelt “talks” with God deepen our relationship with Him? We believe the answer is a wholehearted, “YES!” Expand your understanding of this blessing called “prayer” and how we can apply it to our lives. Commit to learning more by attending these three Monday evenings of exploration. Our main topics will include:

July 18	The Lord’s Prayer: Teach Us to Pray
August 22	Praise, Thanksgiving and Blessing
September 19	Confession, Repentance, Restoration and Revival



First Flix: *War Room*

Friday, July 29 • 7 PM • CenterPoint

The 2015 film *War Room* is a compelling drama that explores the transformational role of prayer in the lives of the Jordan family. Tony and Elizabeth Jordan seemingly have it all, but actually their marriage has become a war zone with their daughter as collateral damage. Their lives take an unexpected turn when Elizabeth is challenged to establish a “war room” and a battle plan of prayer for her family. *War Room* is the fifth film from brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick, and the film debut of Priscilla Shirer, *New York Times* bestselling author and Bible teacher. Filmed in Charlotte, NC; rated PG.

Summer Reading Challenge

In July 2014, “Ebola” and “Dr. Kent Brantly” were quick to become household names. A medical missionary with Samaritan’s Purse, Kent had contracted the disease while treating Ebola patients in war-torn Liberia. He spent a month in isolation at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, where he was the first person in the U.S. to receive an experimental treatment. He was named *TIME* magazine’s Person of the Year.

One year later, Kent and his wife Amber released their book, *Called for Life: How Loving Our Neighbor Led Us into the Heart of the Ebola Epidemic*. They also returned with their family to their Liberian home in West Africa for the first time since their traumatic experience. During their one-week visit, that nation was Ebola-free but, upon their return to the U.S., new cases of the disease had already popped up. *Called for Life* gives an in-depth account of their battle with Ebola.

Both Kent and Amber want their book to challenge people to ask tough questions. “To ask what it would look like to say ‘yes’ to God’s call in their own life,” Amber said. “To ask how they can better love their neighbors. And I hope it encourages people to break down the stereotypes that we all hold and to open discussions and dialogue with people.” (Source: “Ebola Survivor Dr. Kent Brantly and His Wife Release Book,” NBC 5 Dallas-Fort Worth, July 21, 2015, nbcdfw.com)

Called for Life is available at the FPC BookCenter and online at major book retailers.



The Brantly family

(Source: “After Surviving Ebola,” *FOX 59 Indianapolis*, Shannon Houser, July 29, 2015, fox59.com)

Missions... Always

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8 (ESV)

“Season” in Southwest Florida may be over, but Missions at First Church is never over! FPC is a congregation that continually lives out the above verse from Micah 6.

Do Justice:

International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global Christian organization that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world. IJM partners with local authorities to secure rescue for victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression. They also bring criminals to justice, restore survivors and strengthen justice systems.

FPC Director of Missions Trusha Barner attended the IJM Global Prayer Gathering in Washington DC, April 22-23, to pray, worship and learn — along with 1,700 other global participants. “It seemed like every culture, language and nation was represented,” Trusha said. “IJM has set a bar of excellence in doing justice in the world today, believing that slavery throughout the world can be ended in this generation.”

According to IJM, the largest international anti-slavery organization in the world, there are still over 45 million people who are being bought, sold and used against their will. In September, FPC will be involved in their new campaign called “Until All Are Free,” believing that if God’s people can join together, we WILL see a change.



Love Kindness:

Over the period of several weeks in April and May, FPC raised over \$6,000 by sending home baby bottles! What an act of loving kindness by our congregation, and leading from the Women’s Ministry, Wonder Years Preschool, and event coordinators Zarie Jones and Mimi DiTommaso. The Baby Bottle Campaign is one way the Pregnancy Resource Center in Naples is able to change and save lives.

Walk Humbly:

Members of FPC walked humbly together on May 7, participating in the “Walk with Compassion” event in Fort Myers. Gina Roberts and John Cardwell raised over \$2,000 for FPC-supported Compassion International, helping meet the most urgent needs of vulnerable children worldwide.



John Briggs, Gina Roberts and John Cardwell at “Walk with Compassion”



FPC members Zarie Jones, Harry Steele and Mimi DiTommaso helping with PRC’s Baby Bottle Campaign



Let Your Light Shine Brightly!

At Neon Kids, our mission is to partner with parents to lead children into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Neon Kids provides quality programs for children ages 6 months through 5th grade. We invite you to visit us on Sunday mornings before worship. Check your children in at the Children's Desk for both nursery or Neon Kids Sunday school. You can also visit us on the web at neonkids.org to catch up on all the latest news.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



VBS: A Blessing to 90 Children

On June 26, we wrapped up the biggest Children's Ministry event of the year with a VBS Celebration during the 10 AM worship service. Children showcased their favorite songs from VBS, shared a video and a slideshow of highlights from the week, and participated in a special Children's Message. During our two weeks of VBS (preschool and elementary), 90 children joined our Cave Quest to learn about Jesus. For the first time, First Church partnered with Café of Life in a special VBS outreach, identifying 12 children from the community to attend.

Overview of an Awesome Week!

We did some really cool things at Cave Quest. Children participated in Operation Kid to Kid—a nationwide mission project that gives kids the opportunity to spread God's love to other kids around the country. This year we raised money to repair homes of families in need. We learned some amazing Bible stories: how

the people waited and waited for Jesus to come; how Peter walked on water; and how Jesus died, rose again, and sent the Holy Spirit. In the Imagination Station, we broke open geodes and even made cave snot (I know everyone loved that part)! We played fun games in Spelunker Sports and Games, ate yummy snacks in Cavern Café and watched videos about kids who spread the light of Jesus in KidVid™ Cinema.

Lastly, we can't forget our Bible Buddies who helped us remember our very important Bible Points. Each day, an amazing Bible Buddy taught us a lesson:

- Sal the salamander – Jesus gives us hope.
- Mawtha the moth – Jesus gives us courage.
- Radar the bat – Jesus gives us direction.
- Olivia the owl – Jesus gives us love.
- Ray the glowworm – Jesus gives us His power.

Questions?

Contact Children's Ministry Coordinator Lauren Hargis
at lhargis@fpchonita.org or 239-992-3233.

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

MATTHEW 5:16

Thank You!

We want to recognize our VBS volunteers. You spelunked through the caves and helped kids discover how Jesus is the light of the world! Thank you for your service to the Lord and His precious children. We also want to thank those who brought a child, those who donated supplies or funds, and those who prayed for our VBS.



Illumination

EQUIPPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Physically Fit, Spiritually Strong!

by Rachel Steffens, Youth Ministry Coordinator

Youth Ministry Coordinator Rachel Steffens reports that, during the course of the summer, Illumination is committing time, study and effort (literally) to the theme of “Fitness.” We all know the importance of being physically and mentally healthy but, as Christians, we also need to be “spiritually strong.” Rachel has designed this series to include some time for our youth to learn (or re-learn) the health aspects of physical, mental and spiritual fitness.

“Strength is built through endurance, discipline and repetition,” Rachel said. “Some days we struggle to stick to our fitness goals; other days, we don’t want to stop! As our bodies crave health and fitness, so does our spirit. Christ gives us fitness tools through Scripture to coach us along in His strength and lead us through both the easy and the tough challenges in life. This summer series offers our youth a chance to truly focus on the physical, mental and spiritual tools that produce the endurance, discipline and passion to run this race with God on our side!”

Wonder Years Graduates

On May 18, Wonder Years Preschool celebrated their 2016 VPK Graduates. Gathering in CenterPoint, they listened as Senior Pastor Doug Pratt offered a special message about moving forward to kindergarten, based on Isaiah 41:10. Students sang “One Small Voice” by Jack Hartman, quoted

Matthew 22:37-39, and recited the Lord’s Prayer. Graduates were given *The Beginners Bible* provided by the

FPC BookCenter and a Certificate of Graduation from the preschool. After the ceremony all WYP students, parents, families and friends were invited for a fun-filled evening, enjoying a bounce house, games and prizes, cotton candy, and hot dogs with chips and cookies. Although teachers, parents and students said a sorrowful goodbye to those not returning in the fall, it was still an amazing conclusion to the school year.

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37-39



Steven's Study

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

By the time you receive this edition of the *Epistle*, our nation would have once again celebrated another Independence Day. I always welcome the opportunity to celebrate our nation's birthday and, over time, the Fourth of July has become one of my most favorite holidays. I especially looked forward to it this year as an opportunity to step back from the midst of a bitter presidential campaign and focus, if only for one day, on our history and heritage.

Sometimes I wonder if we place way too much importance on the office of the American President; it is supposed to be only one of three branches of government. The Founders were wise enough to establish three branches so as to not concentrate too much power on any one person or group. Our Founders didn't trust government, having just freed themselves from the King of England; that is why they set things up the way they did. By contrast, we seem to have developed a habit of focusing so much on the President—allowing ourselves the illusion that one person can make all things right, which is reminiscent of ancient Israel clamoring for a king. In so doing, we are essentially giving away the American Revolution in order to place our trust in one chief executive rather than in “we the people.” So it was refreshing to step away, if only for a day, from the silly and sometimes outrageous rhetoric of overwhelmingly tiresome politics.

Recently I reflected on an experience I had during my first visit to Mount Vernon. If you have never visited the home of George Washington, put it on your “bucket list.” During my first visit I happened to pass by George and Mrs. Washington's gravesite shortly before 10 AM, when there was a daily wreath laying ceremony. On this particular day there was a Boy Scout troop on a tour and a group of people from Asia who had gathered to witness the ceremony. One of the Boy Scouts was given the honor of placing the wreath, then all were all invited to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Several different emotions flooded over me in that instant and it took several minutes afterward for me to regain my composure. I even moved off by myself to think and feel it all through.

First, I was so happy for the young man who got to lay the wreath and wondered if he realized the privilege and significance of it; perhaps in time he would. To appreciate the kind of man George Washington was and what he meant to this country cannot be overemphasized. It seems



Rev. Steven Grant

that we live in a day and age when it is in vogue to cut our heroes down to size. While everyone knows our Founders were not perfect, I do not understand why we feel we must do this. Is it because too many people have been taught to be apologetic for America and our history to the extent that we have a crisis in self-confidence and so must bring past achievers down to our level? Are we so over-psychoanalyzed that we relish the chance to reveal their weaknesses? Or have we become so cynical that we feel the need to deny that there have been times when there have been “giants in the land.”

The truth is there have been giants in our land, and George Washington stands head and shoulders above them all. We must recommit ourselves to keeping the American story before us in order to counter that lack of self-confidence, cynicism and ignorance of what our Founders fought for. We must never forget our history. We do so at our own peril.

I also observed that our Asian visitors did not participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Of course not! They were not citizens of the United States but citizens of their own nation; it would not have been appropriate for them to make such a pledge. In contrast, however, to stand among people from other nations and declare my allegiance to this great nation gave the words of the Pledge and the act of reciting it that much more significance. I found myself concentrating on the words much more than usual, with a profound sense of who I was and what I stood for, personally. Doing so, figuratively of course, in front of the Father of our Country, gave the reciting of the Pledge that much more gravity and sense of commitment. I felt as never before a connection with him and with the cause for which he dedicated his life.

Yet even more important than reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, is when we proclaim before the world our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Nations rise and fall, human

continued on page 17

Spiritual Development Center

institutions come and go, but the Kingdom of God remains forever. It is no small matter to recite the Apostles' Creed or to even sing a hymn in praise of and faith in Almighty God. There are multitudes that will not do this, but we do this because it is in Jesus Christ that we understand all things and account for all things, and in Him do we trust as Sovereign over all things. To Him be the glory!

In the meantime, my friends—as we wait for His glorious return when He will make all things right, and as we live life first and foremost as His disciples—as Americans let us never forget the example of the great George Washington. Let us never lose sight of the magnificent, honorable and world-changing heritage that is truly at the essence of what America is, and who “we the people” are.

Do not be distracted from what is good in America by the self-serving campaigns of political parties. All that noise does not always reflect the character of what we are as a nation, or what we stand for and have always stood for. What I am referring to here is not mere flag waving, but to lift up a reminder that the United States of America, despite her faults, has been a great blessing to the entire world; a beacon of freedom, self-sacrifice, honor and prosperity that the world had never seen before. Never forget it or let anyone tell you otherwise. May God continue to guide “we the people” so that we will always remain so!

Pastor Steven Grant



Who We Are

Rev. Steven M. Grant, M.Div.
Associate Pastor/Program Director SDC

Alfred R. Barrow, Ph.D.
Director of Spiritual Life

Maria Karl, CBC
Certified Biblical Counselor

Rev. June G. Barrow, M.A., M.Div.
Assistant Pastor



Our Location

The Center is located directly across the street from the main church campus:

9696 Bonita Beach Road, Suite 207
2nd Floor, down the hall on the left

Our Mission

Our mission is to help individuals and families, no matter their background, meet the challenges they face in a complex world, to strengthen their relationships with one another and with God, and to offer opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

How We Serve

The Spiritual Development Center operates year-round. Biblical Counselor Maria Karl is available by appointment Monday through Friday. Certified with the International Association of Biblical Counselors, Maria compassionately applies Biblical teaching and works with all ages. To schedule a confidential appointment, contact Maria at mkarl@fpcbonita.org or 239-221-8250. September through mid-May, Dr. Al and Pastor June Barrow present classes and seminars related to marriage & family as well as spiritual and emotional growth, and are available for spiritual counseling by appointment.

Order of St. Luke (OSL)

What is OSL?

The international, interdenominational Order of St. Luke the Physician is a Christian healing ministry dedicated to developing a member's prayer life so they are equipped to encourage the healing of body, soul and spirit in others. The Bonita Springs chapter at First Church is Mercy and Grace—inspired from Hebrews 4:16... "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness so we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

OSL In-Depth Study

The Order of St. Luke offers an in-depth, detailed study of the 26 healing miracles of Jesus, which provides the foundation for membership. This coming season, classes will be held weekly on Fridays, September 9 through November 4, 9-11 AM at the Spiritual Development Center (Small Group Rm. 2), across the street from the church campus at 9696 Bonita Beach Road.

To learn more, contact class leader Margaret Gieselmann (mgieselmann@att.net). Sessions are free, but you need to register and order the class material from the website, orderofstluke.org. Cost is \$45 per individual or \$55 per couple (at same address). Upon class completion, students may be inducted into the OSL.

OSL Reunion Group

OSL members are invited to attend the Reunion Group, which resumes monthly meetings in November for further enrichment using material from the Christian Healing Ministry. Join us November 19, December 17, January 21 and March 18, 9:30-11AM (locations may vary).

Women's Connection



The Women's Ministry Leadership is making plans for the upcoming season with new studies, fellowship and events. Stay tuned for "the reveal" in the next issue.

Working Women's Fellowship

Tuesdays through July 26 • 7 PM • Lightner Conference Room

Unoffendable by Brant Hansen

In today's culture, it's almost impossible to say anything that doesn't offend someone. Wouldn't it be nice if we, as Christians, were different? This book study can help.

Unoffendable is based on Scripture and expertly written in a simple style that is logical yet amusing. Available at the BookCenter.

Summer Sisterhood

Wednesdays through July 13 • 9:30 AM

Student Ministries Center

The Armor of God by Priscilla Shirer

A devoted, devilish enemy seeks to wreak havoc on your life. His battle plan depends on catching you unaware and unarmed. This interactive study is an action plan for putting on God's armor and developing a practical prayer strategy.

Wednesday Prayer Group

1st & 3rd Wednesdays • 11 AM • Hawk Hospitality Center

Come help us pray for the concerns of families, friends, church, community, country and world.

If you have any questions about Women's Connection studies or events, please contact Donna Tenfelde (239-992-3233 ext. 293 or dtenfelde@fpconita.org).

Are you receiving the Women's Connection newsletter for the latest news? Don't miss out! Contact us at womenoffirst@fpconita.org and we'll get you on the list.

“Let’s Talk Dementia”

Speaker: Carol Howell
Author, *Let’s Talk Dementia*

Event co-sponsored by Women’s Connection and the Parish Nurse Ministry

Wednesday, July 27, 2016 • 10:30 AM
Student Ministries Center

*Located across the street from our main campus at
9696 Bonita Beach Road, Suite 203*

Carol Howell’s mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s type dementia in 2006. It was a shock to the family, and their lives were changed forever.

“Dementia is not an easy road to travel,” Carol says, “but it is more manageable when there is a basic understanding of the disease that is causing the dementia.”

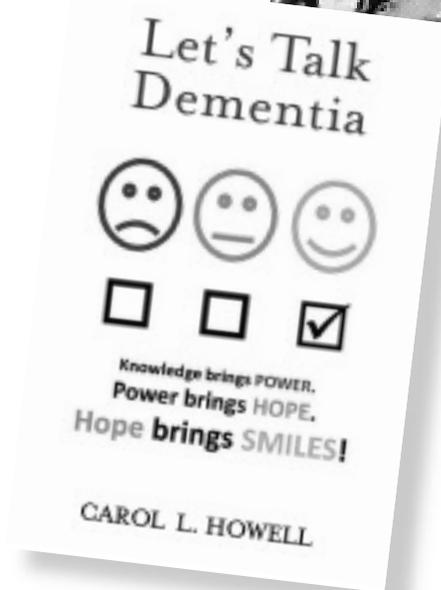
Carol is executive director of Senior Life Journeys, a non-profit dedicated to educating families struggling with the disease. Her book, *Let’s Talk Dementia – A Caregiver’s Guide* is an informative, easy to read, and often humorous look at caregiving for someone with dementia and Alzheimer’s. It has received the endorsement of Dr. Neal Barnard (bestselling author and president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine), who said: “By making medical information easy to understand and providing practical tips for dealing with countless day-to-day situations, this handy book gives you everything you need.”

This topic is so important, FPC’s Women’s Connection (WC) and our Parish Nurses have collaborated to bring Carol here to First Church to speak about her book.

“The numbers are staggering of how many of our congregation and their relatives may someday be affected by dementia and Alzheimer’s,” said WC Coordinator Donna Tenfelde. “Carol’s book can educate all of us. She writes on a sad subject, but its challenges have not diminished her sense of humor. What I love are the ‘smiles’ scattered throughout the book along with the many Bible verses.”

Carol’s motto: Knowledge brings POWER. Power brings HOPE, and HOPE brings SMILES. “Smiling is one of my favorite activities,” she says, “and laughing is next. Why? Because sometimes, you’ve just got to laugh!”

Carol is a Certified Dementia Specialist and an Endorsed



Life Coach with an emphasis on Music Therapy. She works to educate families about the disease and to allow them to experience hope throughout the process. She also brings music and rhythm to the lives of individuals experiencing the devastation of dementia.

Carol resides in South Carolina with her husband, Michael. They have one daughter who is a Physician’s Assistant in Florida. Carol says her goal is to make life wonderful for her mom as together they live with this disease.

In Order to Live *by Yeonmi Park*



Yeonmi Park was born in Hyesna, North Korea on October 4, 1993. Two months premature, she weighed under three pounds. The doctors said she may or may not live.

Her mother could not keep her warm until she heated up a stone and placed it in the blanket with the tiny girl. Telling this story on page 10 of her book, Yeonmi added, “It was up to me to live.” It seems those seven words were Yeonmi’s war cry for the next two decades.

In Order to Live is divided into three sections: Yeonmi’s life in North Korea, life in China at age 13 after fleeing the Kim regime and then South Korea. Biblical Counselor Maria Karl and Pastoral Intern Christian Faux both read and chose to review this book—the story of a North Korean girl’s journey to freedom. This book is available at the BookCenter.

Review by Maria Karl

This book shook me! It reminded me of growing up in Germany right after WW II and hearing about the Hitler regime. I was shocked to read that very similar events are going on right now—in our time—in North Korea.

In Order to Live explains what life was like for Yeonmi growing up there. As long as her father worked for the regime, it was bearable (at least there was food). But once her parents began trading in the black market, Yeonmi and her older sister were left home alone for weeks at a time. Eventually her father was imprisoned.

Comforts we take for granted are non-existent in North Korea. Most labor is manual (of the back-breaking kind); there are few cars or machinery. Food is scarce; people are thin; and fear of retribution abundant. The one TV channel is run by the government; most have never heard of social media. Citizens are loyal to the party and Kim Jong Un because that is all they know. Since Yeonmi grew up so deprived and always starving, fear of death and hunger drove her to do whatever it took to survive.

When Yeonmi was 13 (weighing about 60 pounds, uneducated, abused and brainwashed), she and her mother crossed the border to China. The first thing they experienced there was rape and slavery; they “belonged” to their broker. Yeonmi had to choose—live, be raped and traffic, or simply die.

Because of the deficit of females in China, women and girls are sold into slavery. Her mother became one of them, but eventually mother and daughter were reunited. They fled to Mongolia, where a Christian camp prepared refugees to enter South Korea. There another “brain-wash” occurred, as new arrivals were pushed daily to “confess your sins.” Instead of drawing her to Christ, the way it was done turned Yeonmi off—and I agree with her. She and “Umma” (mother) were literally starving and knew only survival. They had a hard time seeing the love of Christ. Yeonmi did eventually confess, but it was only for food.

They made it to South Korea, where education was revered, food was readily available and people had the means to purchase. But another struggle began there. Because of her age and lack of any education, Yeonmi was categorized as “refugee”—no potential.

Here is where we can look to Scripture, to Philippians 1:6... “being confident of this, that HE who began a good work in you [her] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

God began “a good work” in Yeonmi—a tiny baby girl who could have easily died. By sheer will and against all odds, she survived. She struggled 20 years for her freedom, fighting every step of the way. Although labeled a refugee, Yeonmi studied day and night to earn her degrees.

This book is not necessarily a “Christian” book but I recommend it, for educational purposes. It reminded me of the many struggles I experienced, although not nearly as harsh or devastating. Spiritual battles we experience also leave wounds and scars.

In Order to Live, no doubt, is difficult to read, but God is triumphant! He placed in Yeonmi a great yearning for freedom and justice. Today she is a well-educated author and speaker, believing that change in her homeland must happen for the sake of the people. The same hope that made her survive the worst of humanity, will perhaps be the same hope needed to accomplish that change.

“Along my journey I have seen the horrors that humans can inflict on one another, but I’ve also witnessed acts of tenderness and kindness and sacrifice in the worst imaginable circumstances. I know that it is possible to lose part of your humanity in order to survive. But I also know that the spark of human dignity is never completely extinguished, and that given the oxygen of freedom and the power of love, it can grow again. This is my story and the choices I made in order to live.”

— Yeonmi Park, *In Order to Live*

Review by Christian Faux

This book is absolutely brutal. *In Order to Live* puts forward the reality of daily life in the North Korean regime in a stark, honest, often painful way.

The first third of the book details her actual life in North Korea, how her family was regularly starving for food, and how the hyper-authoritarian dictatorship demanded absolute loyalty in every part of their lives. And despite the horrid, sub-human living conditions, everyone puts on a face as if they live in the greatest country on Earth. And if you believe otherwise, then the nice men with guns take you into the building that a lot of people go into but don’t seem to come out of so much. This actually happened to Yeonmi’s father, arrested on charges of smuggling in gold to sell. Although eventually released, he was left emaciated and weak, and stayed behind as the rest of the family fled to China.

In China Yeonmi and her mother were trafficked into sex slavery, passed around from trafficker to trafficker before making their way to Mongolia and forced to trek across the Gobi desert. Finally making it to South Korea, they found new homes in Seoul.

What this book does extremely well is highlight the depravity of everyone in all these situations. Still, throughout her story, Yeonmi is willing to make tremendous sacrifices. Her father also, by staying behind in North Korea, sacrifices. Her mother volunteers herself so Yeonmi would not be raped by one of the traffickers. By the time they were crossing the Gobi desert, they were ready to kill themselves before returning to their homeland.

You really feel for Yeonmi and her family; all the horrid things that happen to them make you want to take action, to do something for these people. But the book does not demonize any of the North Korean people; even those who would sell out their friends are cast in a light of desperation or brainwashed loyalty to the government. It reminds you that people are suffering and dying in hopelessness and desolation every single day. It’s not something you walk away from without feeling a desire to make a difference.

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Our heartfelt Christian sympathy extends to:

Bill Younger on the death of his wife, Phyllis Younger, on April 29; Sally Walsh on the death of her husband, Walter Walsh, on May 1 in Iowa; the family and friends of Betty Benjamin, who died on May 4 in Rochester, NY; the family and friends of Jean Stark, who died on May 9; the family and friends of Phoebe Phelps, who died on May 20 in Grand Rapids, MI; Tom & Margaret Winn on the death of Tom's sister, Patricia McConnell, on May 31 in Elberton, GA; Ray Herbrechter on the death of his wife, Betty Herbrechter, on May 31; Margaret & Russ Gieselmann on the death of Margaret's brother, Lemoine Briggs, on June 2 in Los Angeles; Nancy Bannon on the death of her husband, Joe "Fred" Bannon, on June 3; Elli Morawietz on the death of her husband, Rudy Morawietz, on June 12; and family and friends of Pamela Gilbert, who died on June 13.

Please remember to pray for our loved ones in the military.

The list below represents those currently serving who are loved ones to members and friends of our church. Please pray for their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, and safe return to their families. Names with an asterisk are currently deployed. Andrew Bean, Gideon Bernthal*, Cpt. David Cullen, Christian Dobush, SFC Aaron M. Haynes, Cpt. Paul J. Najarian*, Catherine Oakley, Miles Oakley, Katie Payne*, Patrick Ryan, Sarah Ryan, Barrett Schake*, Dylan Michael Sipos, Kristin D. Stahl*, Thayne Stahlecker, John Stanton, Trevor S. Thrasher, Jeffrey Tolbert, Tyler Van Kampen, Eric Williams, Zach Williams, Jonathan Wise, Deisy Wolfe, Matthew C. Wolfe, John N. Yacos, Kyle York.

If you have a prayer request, you may call the church office (239-992-3233), Sherri Feeley (239-992-2726), or complete a Prayer Request card found at the Welcome Center and place it in the prayer box provided.

Notes to the Congregation

Dear FPC Friends and Family:

I find myself searching for the appropriate words to describe the profound love and gratitude that I have felt from all of you. Hank was a very special person—to me and to each of you. His humble spirit would have been challenged with all the attention, as he never wanted to be “in the spotlight.” I am certain that he is sharing his love for all of us from heaven, and joins me in saying a sincere “thank you” for all cards, food, memorial gifts, flowers and the unforgettable eulogies presented by his friends. I pray that I will be able to maintain his “peachy keen” legacy in the days, weeks and years to come.

God Bless All of You!

JoAnn Hochstetler

To My Church Family,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the beautiful sympathy cards and the kind words at the passing of my Rudy. I am also grateful for all the prayers, kind words and hugs.

With love,

Elli Morawietz

Church Directory

All of our staff are committed to the mission of First Presbyterian Church and would like to make ourselves available to assist you in whatever way we can. The directory listing below, although not comprehensive, includes contact information that may be helpful to you.

PASTORS

Rev. Dr. Douglas G. Pratt Senior Pastor/Head of Staff
Rev. Steven Grant Associate Pastor
Rev. June Barrow Assistant Pastor

dpratt@fpcbonita.org
sgrant@fpcbonita.org
jbarrow@fpcbonita.org

ADMINISTRATION

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Ed Gonzalez Office Manager
Dave Reynolds Accountant

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egonzalez@fpcbonita.org
dreynolds@fpcbonita.org

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Maria Karl Biblical Counselor

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mkarl@fpcbonita.org

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Ed Schick Manager

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Lauren Hargis Children's Ministry Coordinator
Rachel Steffens Youth Ministry Coordinator

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lhargis@fpcbonita.org
rsteffens@fpcbonita.org

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MEDIA

Tommy Hillegass Media Specialist

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MEMBERSHIP

Rebecca Harley Membership and Volunteer Facilitator

rharley@fpcbonita.org

MISSIONS

Trusha Barner Director

tbarner@fpcbonita.org

PARISH NURSE MINISTRY

Stephanie Stec RN & JoAnn Hochstetler RN Parish Nurses

parishnurse@fpcbonita.org

PASTORAL SUPPORT

Donabeth Urick Executive Assistant, Pastor Pratt
Judi Van Cleave Pastoral Assistant

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jvanleave@fpcbonita.org

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Rita J. Flower-Opdycke Manager

flower@fpcbonita.org

SACRED ARTS

Jeff Faux Director
Peter Lewis Associate Director
Cheryl Bauer Director of First Academy of Music/
Administrative Assistant
Jeff Wain Event Manager

jfaux@fpcbonita.org
plewis@fpcbonita.org
cbauer@fpcbonita.org
jwain@fpcbonita.org

THRIFT SHOP

Lynne Stauffer Manager

lstauffer@fpcbonita.org

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Donna Tenfelde Coordinator

dtenfelde@fpcbonita.org

2016 SESSION

Moderator
Rev. Dr. Douglas G. Pratt

Clerk of Session
Tom Grafton

ELDERS

Ron Brown
John Cardwell
Jim Croley
Tom Grafton
Judy Graham
Mike Greene
Mal Griffin
John Holdeman
Carl Johansen
Stevie Joslin
David Lyons
Mary Ann McCoy
Gary Norbo
Lin Rhode
Nelson Robbins
Paul Spinka
Jack Wallace
Sharon Weisenauer

Elder Emeritus
Frank Provenzano

2016 DEACONS

Moderator
Judi Van Cleave

Betty Cardwell
Leslie Durling
Jim Gelhaar
Barb Goff
Karen Hatten
Polly Grafton

Joan Havens-Kester
JoAnn Hochstetler
Bob Lorenz
Ann Luedke
Ron Maki
Jerry Meier
Wendi Owens
Norma Reynolds
Judy Teasdale
Judi Van Cleave
Linda Wallace
Margaret Winn

Office: (239) 992-3233
Fax: (239) 992-7547

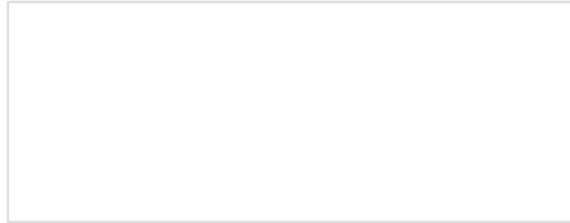
First Academy of Music: (239) 992-3410 x232
First Thrift Shop: (239) 992-0285
Spiritual Development Center: (239) 221-8250
Wonder Years Preschool: (239) 948-6677
Event Office: (239) 992-3410 x250

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FIRST CHURCH CAMPUS

Hochstetler Meditation Garden

Session has approved the makeover of the garden located between Price Chapel and the Great Room, naming it in honor of longtime church member Hank Hochstetler, who passed away on April 11, 2016 in Bonita.



Henry J. "Hank" Hochstetler
(1929–2016)

Many improvements and beautifications are being planned for this new garden area, including placement of the black granite rock purchased by Hank to honor the death of his first wife, Lois, in 2002; it would be engraved to commemorate Hank and possibly be part of a water feature. The garden's design will incorporate new paving, plantings and outdoor furniture.

Members and friends of First Church are invited to contribute to this special project. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church, designating "Hochstetler Garden" in the memo line. Donations may be placed in the offering plate on Sunday or mailed to the church office.

We hope the Hochstetler Meditation Garden will be a place that members and friends love to visit and spend some quiet time.

Hank was a true "pillar" of both our church and community. A member of First Church since December 1986, he served three terms on Session and was Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee for several years. Hank was also involved in three building expansion committees and helped oversee construction of our present sanctuary. Hank sang in our choir for 30 years and recently wrote a history of it. He served on eight Great Banquet Teams, sponsoring 17 guests and participating in every Great Banquet activity since its inception here in 2002. He was also a founder of the Men's Ministry.

Always community-minded, Hank was a leading member on the boards of the YMCA, Imperial River Conservancy, Bonita Springs Utilities and Bonita Springs Incorporation. The Bonita YMCA stands where it is as a result of his efforts. He was past president of the local Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors and Bonita Springs Utilities. Named "Citizen of the Year" in 1996, he also received numerous awards—including the Rotary "Service Above Self" in 1997, YMCA Volunteer of the Year in 2000, and "Love of Bonita Award" in 2011.

Hank was an avid reader, loved music and loved to travel. He and his wife, JoAnn, were married at First Church in November 2005.