

APC Connections

Volume 7, Issue 6

March 2015

Upcoming Events

- Mar. 1— 12:15 PM Outreach meets
- Mar. 8—Daylight Savings Time begins; 12:15 PM Session meets
- Mar. 10—11 AM Circle meets
- Mar. 15—12:15 PM Fellowship Lunch
- Mar. 22—4th Sunday Fellowship/5¢-A-Meal Offering
- Mar. 29—Palm Sunday



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Pastor's Page

Friends,

The prophet Joel hears these words from the Lord, “Return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.” Can you hear God calling to you?

Return!
Come back to me.

You’ve strayed far enough.

You’ve been gone too long.

I’ve missed you.

My heart is broken. Your heart is broken. Let’s cry together.

I’m not mad at you. I love you. I always have.

You don’t have to run anymore.

You don’t have to hide anymore.

We will share a meal together, break bread, drink wine, and celebrate that what was lost has now been found.

Joel imagines that the congregation will become holy and truly be the place of welcome for God’s people. The horn will blast, the bell will ring. People of all generations will come to-

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Pastor
Rev. Kerra English

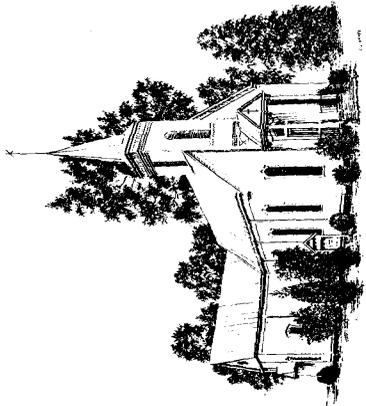
Secretary
Susan Vitale

Director of Music
Karla Bloom

Organist
Elizabeth Hargrove



Time to
Spring Ahead
**Daylight Savings Time
 begins Sunday, March 8!**



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gether for this assembly. This call to return will be the most important thing. Brides and Grooms will leave their weddings. Infants will be carried by their nursing mothers. The gathering will be solemn, but sweet. This homecoming has a primal urgency. Return. Return. There is a place for you, and it is in the heart of God. Bring to God your torn up heart, and all will be made well.

Lent is a season of return, return to God, and return to Spring. That which has pushed us to coldness and desolation begins to thaw, and we come back to the warmth of God’s love for us. Death is at work in us. Life is at work through us in Christ. Return. Come back. You’ve been missed. So, welcome.

God’s peace, Pastor Kerra

Message from Our Student Intern

Times of change often bring about opportunities for new things. The church goes through such changes as well. There are often times after the excitement brought to us in the Advent season, when the “dreary” days of winter set in and take away that “spark.” I believe it is in those times of change when God’s Spirit is alive and active; active in our individual lives as well as the life of the church. In saying that, I feel that the Holy Spirit was active making plans, opening possibilities to bring the “spark” back into those “dreary” days.

First of all I want to say thanks to the Adult Sunday School class for allowing me to open up discussion on a topic Presbyterians often become uncomfortable talking about...Evangelism. Over several weeks, there was lively and focused discussion on what it means to “evangelize” or “bear witness” to God’s goodness, love, and mercy towards us. I think, and this is my reflection, that after our discussions maybe we are not as “terrified” about such a task. Evangelism is something that is difficult. It takes most, if not all, of us out of our comfort zone. We call ourselves followers of Christ desiring to fill our hearts from God’s love through Christ. However, one of the hardest things is to share that love with others. The challenge is, as Christ states in Matthew 28:19, spreading the Gospel message is not a “maybe” but a “must.” This call to “bear witness” truly challenges our faith doesn’t it?

Over those several weeks of study together I am confident that the Spirit was working in the hearts and minds of Ashland. I do not think our discussion of evangelism

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Usher and Greeter Schedule

	GREETERS	USHERS	COMMUNION ELDERS	COMMUNION PREP & CLEANUP	LITURGIST	FLOWERS
3/1/15	E. Shea	K. Basilio, T. Blair	M. Carneal, J. Glazebrook, V. Neeley, E. Shea	S. Carneal, J. Glazebrook		
3/08/15	E. Simpson	R. Bryan, R. Cole				
3/15/15	C. Sthreshley	V. Neeley, E. Shea	<i>REMEMBER, If you cannot serve, please find a replacement and leave a message on the office phone, 798-5543.</i>			
3/22/15	F. Sthreshley	C. Schutte, J. Tate				
3/29/15	M. Summerson	S. & M. Carneal, S. & D. Moncol				
4/5/15	J. Tate	L. Herring, E. Mathes, C. Sthreshley, M. Summerson	M. Carneal, J. Glazebrook, V. Neeley, E. Shea	K. Pugh, J. Tate		



Happy Birthday to: March

- 13 Barclay DuPriest
- 19 Cade English
- 30 Elizabeth Hargrove
Suzanne Huff
- 31 Harold Starke
Robert Tate



Dearest Church Family,
I wish to thank each and everyone of you for your thoughts, prayers, cards, and gifts of love throughout Richard’s illness and death. Your love and graciousness has uplifted me. I am truly blessed to be a part of such a loving and giving “family.” God’s blessings to you all! — Susan Vitale



- Shelby Coleman in the death of her sister Jewell Davis on Thursday, February 5.
- Annette Shuff and the Vitale Family in the death of their aunt, Jan Vitale on February 9, 2015.



SAVE THE DATE!
Ash Grove Women's Retreat
will be held at Richmond Hill
on
November 13-14, 2015.

From the Ashland Police Department

We would like to **invite you to attend a meeting** on Thursday, **March 5** from 7 PM to 9 PM to discuss the growing issues related to long term residency in our various motels. The meeting will take place **at the Ashland Church of God** at 407 Myrtle St.

With nearly 1,100 lodging rooms, a conservative estimate is that approximately 200 people are long term residents in our motels. Alarming, in the first six months of 2014, police calls for service at the motels in the Town of Ashland increased dramatically and these locations accounted for over 11% of the total police calls for service in the town. That being said, not all of our long term residents are burdensome on police and other public services, but they are subjected daily to the acts of drunkenness, disorderly conduct, drug use and unhealthy environments.

Even more unfortunate, we are seeing more of our motels that traditionally only served overnight guests, transition to catering to long term residents. With a total lodging stock of over 1,000 rooms, the problems associated with long term residency in our motels can increase exponentially in a very short time frame. We are concerned that both our governmental resources and the resources of our faith community will simply not be able to keep pace with the demand for services.

We cannot ignore the human condition involved. We know there are families and children living in our motels that do not contribute to the conditions that cause disorder and the demand for police service. However, we also know that those same families are living in the midst of daily exposure to criminal acts, many that are likely not reported to the Ashland Police Department. This is a difficult and serious issue, but one which we can make a positive impact if many wise minds come together as one. Together, we can help the last, the least and the lost and continue to make Ashland a great place to live and work.

We hope to see you on March 5. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call on me, Douglas A. Goodman, Jr., Chief of Police at 412-0603.

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AND the last minute opportunity to host Peter and Brendan Mayer in concert was a coincidence. I hope that this congregation can witness within these two happenings, God's active involvement in the life of Ashland church. Your willingness to step out of the comfort zone and successfully pull together a concert event was a true testimony to allowing God to work in your hearts. One of the greatest gifts of Ashland is its genuine hospitality. This was able "to shine" by allowing the Spirit to work through an event like a concert. Opening the doors was an act of stepping out in faith into the unknown. However, you all were willing to take that step and the concert was a huge success!

The uniqueness of evangelism is that there is not a "one-size-fits-all" formula for success. Focusing on the end results moves us away from the real reason for sharing the Good News with others. For the result is not up to us. The result is only in God's hands. Let us be thankful that God has allowed us to take part in the glorious unfolding of God's plan for the world.

In our stewardship season, we talked about having a Heart for Generosity. I had shared a quote relating to responding to God's generosity as "extravagant". As we all seek to live faithful lives in obedience to God, following Christ's charge to "bear witness", let us be thankful and grateful this Lenten season for all that God did, continues to do, and will do in the future. May Ashland continue to find ways to engage in "reckless hospitality."

Christ's Blessings, Brett

"I believe that extravagant generosity is closely aligned with courageous faith. People who truly trust that God will provide are better able to give sacrificially. People who truly believe that God loves everyone are better able to love their neighbors. People who truly know that God has a plan for us are better able to release their own plans, their own resources, their own intentions, and share in the radical abundance of God. I deeply want to trust God like that — to have a faith that allows me to engage in such extravagant generosity, such reckless hospitality" (Rev. Kari Nicewander)



Presbyterian Women

PW Circle will meet Tuesday, **March 10 at 11:00 a.m.** in the parlor for study (Lesson 6) and lunch. Bring a sandwich. Beverages and dessert are provided.



Lenten Study

Between now and including/not including Palm Sunday (depending on the breakfast), the Adult Sunday School Class will be looking at the study, *“Hosanna, a Spiritual Journey through Lent and Holy Week.”* All are welcome to join us!

Fun, Food, and Fellowship!

Congregational Care Committee is planning a luncheon on **Sunday, March 15**, right after worship. Come and enjoy some time with friends!



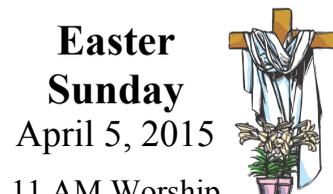
March 29, 2015

Watch for more news concerning Sunday School & the Palm Sunday Breakfast!



Communion Service

April 2, 2015 at 7 PM



Easter Sunday
April 5, 2015

11 AM Worship
No Sunday School

Come early and bring fresh flowers for the Living Cross!

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing Easter Sunday, April 5

Since 1949 Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God's love with those in need. Your generous gifts assist those affected by natural disasters, provide food to the hungry, and help build strong communities.



Session News

Presbytery of the James is seeking Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders to be considered as Alternate Commissioners to the **2016 General Assembly**. The 222nd General Assembly will meet June 18-25, 2016 in Portland, OR. If you are an Elder and would like to be considered for this position, please contact Julie Tate, Clerk of Session, to complete an application. Applications are due by Wednesday, April 1st, 2015.

Do you ever wonder what business has been conducted by your Session? Approved Session Minutes are available in the church Library. Look for the *Session Minutes Notebook*. — Julie Tate, Clerk of Session

Coordinators/“Stewards” for Fellowship Hours

In an effort to help alleviate the burden on the Outreach Committee who has been supplying food and drinks for our 4th Sunday Fellowship hours over the past few years, the following groups have volunteered to host as scheduled:

- **March 22** — Worship Committee
- **April 26** — Christian Education Committee
- **May 24** — Stewardship and Finance Committee
- **June 28** — Choir



As of now, we still need either a group or individual to volunteer to “host” fellowship hours for July 26, August 23, November 22 and December 27 (or possibly December 20). Dates for September and October are filled. Remember, the coordinator is not expected to do it all! He or she will enlist the help from others to see that things are set up, food is supplied, and clean-up is done. If you are willing to sign up, contact Karen Dorgan at kvdorgan@gmail.com or call 883-6103.



NOTICE pertaining to **pictures for the new pictorial directory**: Please contact Karen Dorgan if you do not have a current photo of yourself to submit for the new pictorial directory. Karen will be glad to take a picture of you after morning worship. Pictures can also be submitted electronically to kvdorgan@gmail.com or you can provide a printed photo to either Karen or Ginger Young. They would like to have current photos of **ALL** church members and hope to have the directory compiled early this month, so please don't delay!