



First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

Church School: 9:15 a.m.
Worship 10:45 a.m.
110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
Phone (850) 222-4504 Fax (850) 222-2215
email: office@oldfirstchurch.org
website: www.oldfirstchurch.org
December 8, 2009

**Have you thought about giving
Equal Exchange Coffee
as a gift?**



**First Presbyterian Coffee Sunday
is
December 13
after worship in the Conference room.**

**Coffee is just \$7.00 per bag. With \$1.00 going to the Witness Council's Community Outreach Fund.*

College Students and Young Adults

**Join us for the
Annual Breakfast and Bowling Gathering**

December 22, 2009
10:30 a.m.

We will begin our time in the Calvin Room at the church for breakfast and catching up and then we will head over to Seminole Bowl for some fierce competition! Want more information?

Contact Thomas Guthrie at
Thomas@oldfirstchurch.org.



First Presbyterian Church Advent/Christmas Events

Sunday, December 13

4:00 p.m. Evensong Service
6:00 p.m. Caroling & Chili Supper

Sunday, December 20

4:00 p.m.
Evensong Service

Tuesday, December 22

10:30 a.m.
College Brunch and Bowling

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve Services
5:30pm & 10:45pm

Monday, December 28

Through
Thursday, December 31

Church Office Hours
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Reminder To Session

There will be a called meeting of the Session on Sunday, December 20 immediately after worship.

LECTIONARY READINGS

December 13, 2009

(3rd Sunday of Advent)

Zeph. 3:14-20; Isa. 12:2-6;
Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

Join The Fun!



**FPC's Annual
Chili Supper And Caroling
On
December 13 At 6:00 p.m.**



Pastor's Column

Brant S. Copeland

One of the speakers at last month's meeting of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians was Prof. Mark Achtemeier, who teaches at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. Mark and I were in seminary together. Seminary must have been particularly challenging for him, not because he wasn't brilliant, but because both of his parents were on the faculty. Mark told the Covenant Network about how his mind has changed regarding the gay marriage and the ordination of gay people in the church. Early in his speech he said:

... if you had told me just eight or nine years ago that on this date I would be standing before this group, speaking out in favor of marriage and ordination for lesbian and gay Christians, I would have declared you out of your mind.

But here I am, and here you are. And all I can say is that because of this experience I have learned never to make confident predictions about any situation in which God is involved.

God has indeed led me, "through many dangers, toils and snares," to a different, and I think far more coherent, understanding of the Bible's message for lesbian and gay believers. I want to offer some testimony today about how that happened.

If there is one thing I want to emphasize above all else in this testimony, it is that this journey has not involved any kind of retreat or qualification of my strong commitment to the authority of Scripture, the Lordship of Christ, and the belief that God calls people to lives of personal holiness. I come to you today as an out, self-affirming, practicing conservative evangelical.

There is a destructive myth circulating in both the right and left wings of the church, which says that if you're really serious about biblical authority you will of course embrace a traditionalist point of view in this issue, whereas a more progressive stance requires you to hold onto the scriptures more loosely. Well I don't believe it, and neither should you! It is time to put these misleading stereotypes to rest.

Of particular importance is Mark's understanding of how experience shapes the way we interpret the Bible. He is unwavering in his commitment to Biblical authority. He doesn't think experience trumps the Bible, but he does think that experience opens us to understand the Bible in new ways:

This is a hugely important point. There is a vast difference between vetoing what the Bible says on the basis of experience, and looking for understandings of the Bible that make powerful sense of our experience. One of my theological mentors, the late Dr. John Leith, was fond of saying that Christianity has proven itself across the centuries by its ability to account for the hard facts of human life and experience in a way that was more satisfying and more powerful than any of its rivals. I believe that! One of the signs that Christian understanding of God and God's way with the world are true is their ability to make coherent sense of peoples' lives.

Mark's journey in this matter is similar to mine. I rejoice in his courage, integrity, and honesty before God. He is now suffering considerable abuse from those who consider him a traitor to the evangelical cause. I encourage you to read the full text of Mark's remarks at www.covenantnetwork.org.

Ten Thousand Villages Presents



One Enchanting Holiday Open House **Saturday, December 12** **11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Ten Thousand Villages invites you to their Open House celebrating the holiday season. It is sure to be a special day, full of candlelight, hors d'oeuvres, fabulous customer service and a gift registry. Give-aways throughout the day are complements of their many merchant friends in Market Square. Local professional musicians fill the air with beautiful music.

PLUS

Little Village Kids Sale **Sunday, December 13** **1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**

A children's tent full of items under \$20.00 and volunteers to help your kids select and wrap their presents for Mom, Dad, grandparents, and teachers. They will have cookies, hot chocolate and coffee. No Drop Offs Please.



Brightest Star Gifts

Bring your Brightest Star gift (unwrapped) to the Education Building this Sunday, December 13 during church school or at the Caroling and Chili Supper event. If you didn't choose a star off the tree, you can just choose one of these age groupings and purchase a gift.



Currently BBC has children in these ranges for whom they are providing gifts: infants (2 girls/4 boys); 1-3 years (19 girls/10 boys); 4-7 years (23 girls/29 boys); 8 - 11 years (27 girls/27 boys); 12-14 years (15 girls/19 boys); 15 - 16 years (13 girls/12 boys)

Montreat College Conference **January 2-5, 2010** **Full Cost \$140.**

We have one registration space left for this conference. If you are interested in attending with our group, please contact Thomas Guthrie ASAP-Thomas@oldfirstchurch.org.

High School **&** **Middle School Youth Groups**

Sunday, December 13, 2009
6:00 p.m.
Westminster Room

We will all meet in the Westminster Room, gather our supplies and go out to Christmas carol to members of our church and community. We will return to the church for a delicious chili supper.

December 20 - Both groups will meet in the evening.

Mark Your Calendars **For the Annual Church-Family** **Dogwood Acres Retreat!** **January 17 - 18, 2010**

Join us following worship on Sunday for hikes, games, a bonfire and a barn dance. On Monday we will worship, canoe, relax and see the site of the new labyrinth being built at the camp. We will also have time to see if the young people in the congregation can beat the adults this year in a Kickball re-match!! Fun for ALL ages.

Charity Benefit Concert

Voces Angelorum

All-volunteer
Women's Community Chamber Choir
Directed by Charles Witmer

Friday, December 11
7:30 pm
Holy Mother of God Greek Orthodox
Church Hellenic Center

1645 Phillips Road
Sponsored by
Ladies Philoptochos Society
(*Friends of the Poor*)
The philanthropic arm of the
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Admission - Donations Appreciated
Proceeds to benefit **Refuge House**
Greek holiday pastry boxes available for purchase.

Church School

Church School for all ages begins at 9:15 a.m. and ends at 10:15 a.m. There is childcare for infants through preschoolers in the main floor nursery. Elementary School aged children should come up to room 305 for community time. They will be dismissed by 9:30 a.m. to their classrooms.

ABC (Adult Bible Class)

Calvin Room

Korey Lowry will lead us through Habakkuk 1:1-3:19.

Faith and Families Class

Library

We will continue our Advent Study, *Repentance, Faith, Hope and Love*.

Hearing and Sharing the Word Class


Conference Room

We begin an Advent study of the predictions of the Messiah.

Inquirers' Class

Westminster Room

Bob Spivey will lead our third discussion of *THE FIRST PAUL*, by Borg and Crossan. Focus of the discussion will be Chapters 5-6. If you have read the material, that's fine, but Bob will not assume it.



Pastor's Book Club
Jan. 10, 2010
The Cross and our Context
by Douglas John Hall
@ 6:00 p.m. at the Westminster Oaks Pool House

Prayer Labyrinth At Fellowship

On Thursday, December 31 Fellowship Presbyterian Church will have a prayer labyrinth open in their Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to come for a time of prayer as we end 2009 and move into 2010.