

Thank you in advance for supplying items for the Romanian Mission Trip this July. There is a bin in the Church Office if you would like to drop off the medical needs like over the counter drugs (Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc.) or toothpaste and brushes. We will be having a VBS while we are there and are in need of glue sticks, and ribbon. Please keep us in your prayers and that we will reach out to many.



# EPistle

July / August 2013

## The Gospel and Dress Codes

by Pastor Bruce

I was speaking with a member of our church after one of our services and it came up that one of our visitors had remarked to her how well dressed our people are. They concluded that we must be a wealthy church. And I must admit, compared to most churches in the world we are very wealthy.

If you look around our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings many come to worship in suits and more formal dresses, and yet others dress more casual. One of the trends I see in church is young men dressed in nice shorts and long-sleeved collared shirts. It is a nice look I think. One of my friends, who will remain nameless (though I don't think he would care if I mentioned his name, for he is not ashamed by how he dresses for church), wears a polo shirt, khakis and flip-flops, even in the winter.

If one looks closely (and who really looks that closely?), one might conclude that we don't have a dress code at EP, other than you have to be dressed of course. How should we be dressed for church? Is there a dress code?

Some people in our church believe to dress up for church is a way to honor God, a kind of worship even with our dress. Therefore, on Sundays the men wear suits and women wear nice dresses. The children are dressed formal as well. For these brothers and sisters they want to offer God their very best, even in how they dress

for worship on Sundays.

Some people dress up all week for school and work and want to dress more casual on Sunday. They are dressed nicely, just less formal than others. Some dress casual because they don't own a coat and tie, not because they can't afford one, but because their work does not require it. This was the case for my dad.

Allow me to apply the gospel to this question about what to wear to church. If the suit and dress crowd looked down upon those who dressed more casually for worship then they would have missed an implication of the gospel. Christ has completed all that God requires of us for a relationship with him. It literally is finished. Though it's nice to see everyone dressed up, God does not require it for worship. We are free to dress however we desire. The only caveat I would make about this truth is that how we dress should not cause another worshiper to be tempted or to sin. Worship is a corporate experience, and we need to keep that in mind.

And the gospel speaks to the casual lot that might look down upon those who dress up for church. We are not to think of our brothers and sisters as stuffy or stiff for wearing a suit or a formal dress to worship. The gospel places us all in the same category, sinners in need of a

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## 50th Anniversary

by Tom Beall

Our Lord has been gracious to His people. Almost 50 years ago, He gave a vision to two men to begin a church that honored Him in the Annapolis/Anne Arundel County area. That vision became EP church and has grown today to 12 churches in which over 3,000 people worship Him on Sunday mornings. Thousands of people have been affected by the ministry: many have come to Christ, while others have grown in their faith, and used their gifts in acts of service. Over 100 men and women have gone on the mission field either oversees or in this country. Today, God continues to give us a vision to serve Him by planting new churches, discipling His people, and taking the good news of the Gospel to a dying world here in Annapolis and throughout the world.

Next year we will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We want to celebrate what the Lord has done over the last 50 years and look forward to where He might be taking us over the next 50 years. August 29- September 1, Labor Day Week-

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Savior. A dressed-up sinner is the same as a sinner who dresses casually. We need to see everyone in view of Christ's work and show no partiality toward the formal or casual. The gospel does not tell how we should dress for worship, but it does tell us how we are to respond to our brothers and sisters no matter how they are dressed. We are to love them as God loves us, unconditionally. We cannot allow how someone dresses to divide us. In fact, we don't want dress to be an issue at all.

If this is our attitude, it will help our visitors feel more welcomed as well. Most people who visit our church for the first time have no clue how to dress for EP. Our hope is that no matter how they are dressed they will see people dressed just like them and find a place here. Our goal is not to make much of how we are to dress on Sundays, but to make nothing of it. EP does not have a dress code. We want you to feel free to dress as you desire. If that is in a suit, then by all means wear a suit. If you want to dress more casually, then dress casually. And to my friend who wears flip-flops, oh never mind, you don't care what we think about how you dress any way.

## The Effects of Grief

by Carolyn Woodie

Everyone's grief experience is unique because every relationship and loss is unique. However, there are some characteristics of grief that can be common in all losses. A loss of a loved one affects a person mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually. These feelings and characteristics can be very normal.

- Mentally, a person may be numb with the inability to concentrate or even to hold a thought. They can be forgetful, absentminded and disorganized even if they were the most organized person on earth before the loss. Thoughts may be so jumbled that making *any* decision is almost impossible. They may feel they are literally going out of their mind.
- Emotions may be overpowering and confusing. A grieving person is emotionally fragile. They may be easily offended. They may have unpredictable or even inappropriate reactions. They might experience several emotions at once – rage, sorrow, pain, dread, disappointment, resentment, fear, envy, helplessness, anger, loneliness, and sadness. Emotionally it is a very confusing time.
- Physically the crushing fatigue and the inability to sleep are confusing and disturbing. Food holds no attraction. A person could feel a physical pain in their heart or feel like they have a rock in their stomach.
- Socially they could be fearful of being around people, especially large groups of people. Usually sociable, a grieving person may become ill at ease and afraid. Some people are very silent and others face grief talking and talking ... as if they can talk their way out of their pain.
- Spiritually this is one of the most difficult aspects of grief. How can a person understand how a loving God could have taken their loved one from them? Some are openly angry at God. Others, afraid of directing their anger towards God, direct their anger towards other family members or other people in general. They may withdraw from church activities, worship and a relationship with God.

These are all very normal reactions to grief and loss. If we have a friend grieving, or if we ourselves are the one grieving, we want so much to have things go back to the way they were *before* the loss. However, things will *never be the same!* The challenge is how do we adjust to this new normal – this new life without our loved one? These are the topics we share and discuss in GriefShare.

How do we face these changes? How do we deal with the overwhelming pain? How do we go on? As each loss is unique, there are no "pat answers", but there is hope in the name of Jesus. Come join us for the next 13-week session of GriefShare which will begin on Wednesday, October 2 at 7:00PM in The Parlor. For more information or to pre-register, contact Paul and Carolyn Woodie, carolyn.woodie@verizon.net or Walt and Karen Asplund 410-923-3285 - asplundmd@yahoo.com.

## Good News

by Linda Cate

This past spring at Germantown Elementary School in Annapolis, sixty kids gathered together for six Tuesday's from 3:15 to 5:00 in the afternoon, to be part of The Good News Club. A ministry team led by Christy Lenham and Laurie Nelson, including Nancy Crooks, teen helpers, two parents and a teacher, worked tirelessly to bring God's Good News to the those sixty kids. I was privileged to join the team for the last three weeks, and I'm so glad I did! Here is a snapshot of this special afternoon. The kids would come in to the gym after 3:00 and pick up their name tag and a snack. As they relaxed, they ate and our team circulated among them. The teen helpers, Caleb and Lydia Ray, Si Mitchell, Andrew White, and others, were the key players to a smooth and "controlled chaos" snack time. Then Ingrid, a parent, Christy, and the teens would take the group outside for fun and games while I cleaned up in the cafeteria and Nancy prepared the music room for our Bible story and singing time. The kids would come in from outside ready to cool off and we would bring them in to the perfect large space for the capstone of club time, the Bible story and gospel presentation.

The Good News Club is a program designed by Child Evangelism Fellowship. We followed the main ideas and tweaked it to fit our group of kids. They really enjoyed the singing time led by Laurie Rice and her daughter...VBS songs including all the motions. We missed our live VBS band but the recorded music by Jana Alayra worked great too! Nancy would tell the Bible story in her gifted style, including a gospel presentation and we would wrap up with the kids telling several of us their Scripture verses they had learned during the previous week. My favorite part was looking the kids in the eye (literally) and telling them that Jesus loves them.

Dismissal time was 5:00 at the front door of the school. The second to last week, Christy was waiting with a first grade girl named Carmen for her ride and asked her "What is your favorite part of Good News Club?" Carmen looked up at her and said, "Learning about God." That heart warming comment made all the hard work worth it!

PS - Another Good News Club took place this spring at Hillsmere Elementary. Forty-five kids participated weekly in the club which was led by Tamar Cooper, Mary Anne Stevenson and Lisa Plaisance. They praise the Lord for His blessing on that club too! Please pray for all the Good News Club children that God's Word would take root in their hearts.

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end, 2014 will be the weekend for the official celebration time, so put that on your calendar now and plan to join us. We will be having other events and remembrances during the year as well. Whether you have been at EP since the beginning or have just come in the past year, you are a part of God's plan and history here, so plan to join us that weekend.

We are beginning to put together a team to work on the year of celebration and would love to have you join us. If you are interested, please contact Tom Beall at the Church Office. Also, do you have pictures, stories, testimonies, or remembrances that you can share with us? We are looking for pictures of the people of EP throughout the 50 years up to today. This would include church events, Sunday School classes, small groups, ministries, get-togethers with church members, history of the buildings, retreats, and anything that shows God's people involved in the body here at EP.