

JANUARY / FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Sunday, January 27 8:00 AM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>) 9:15 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 11:00 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 6:00 PM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>)	6:00 PM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>)		
Tuesday, January 29 9:30 AM Women’s Bible Study 6:45 PM Battalion	Tuesday, February 5 9:30 AM Women’s Bible Study 6:45 PM Battalion	Wednesday, February 6 6:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:30 PM Women’s Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth/Men’s Bible Study	Wednesday, February 13 6:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:30 PM Women’s Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth / Men’s Bible Study
Wednesday, January 30 6:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:30 PM Women’s Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth/Men’s Bible Study	Wednesday, February 7 7:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 8:00 AM Women’s Bible Study 4:00 PM Cherub/Junior Choir	Thursday, February 8 9:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:00 PM Crossroads	Thursday, February 14 7:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 8:00 AM Women’s Bible Study 4:00 PM Cherub/Junior Choir
Thursday, January 31 7:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 8:00 AM Women’s Bible Study 4:00 PM Cherub/Junior Choir	Friday, February 9 9:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:00 PM Crossroads	Friday, February 15 9:00 AM Men’s Bible Study	Friday, February 21 7:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 8:00 AM Women’s Bible Study 4:00 PM Cherub/Junior Choir
Friday, February 1 9:00 AM Men’s Bible Study	Sunday, February 10 8:00 AM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>) 9:15 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 11:00 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 6:00 PM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>)	Sunday, February 17 8:00 AM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>) 9:15 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 11:00 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 6:00 PM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>)	Sunday, February 24 8:00 AM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>) 9:15 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 11:00 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 6:00 PM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>)
Sunday, February 3 Communion Sunday 8:00 AM Worship (<i>Chapel</i>) 9:15 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>) 11:00 AM Worship (<i>Sanctuary</i>)	Tuesday, February 12 9:30 AM Women’s Bible Study 6:45 PM Battalion	Tuesday, February 19 9:30 AM Women’s Bible Study 6:45 PM Battalion	Tuesday, February 26 9:30 AM Women’s Bible Study 6:45 PM Battalion
		Wednesday, February 20 6:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:30 PM Women’s Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth / Men’s Bible Study	Wednesday, February 27 6:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 6:30 PM Women’s Bible Study 7:00 PM Youth / Men’s Bible Study
			Thursday, February 28 7:00 AM Men’s Bible Study 8:00 AM Women’s Bible Study 4:00 PM Cherub/Junior Choir

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Events that are open to the congregation to join at anytime are listed above. For a list of weekly Small Groups, Bible Studies, and Sunday School classes, check the brochure rack in the Narthex .

EPistle

Monthly Publication of Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Annapolis

January / February 2013

My Daughter and Her Union with Christ

by Pastor Bruce O'Neil

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As I was writing this article I was thinking about what I was going say to my daughter on her wedding day. I had the rare privilege of walking my daughter, Sarah, down the aisle and then turning around and performing the wedding service for her and her fiancé. I was a little concerned that I will not make it through the whole service without bursting in tears, but I was more concerned about what I would say to her, Josh (her fiancé) and to all who will be present. We live in interesting times. Many twenty-something's, my daughter Sarah’s age, don’t look at their futures with high expectations or with great hope. Some avoid setting goals because they are afraid it will lead to a mid-life crisis later. They don’t want to look back later and wonder, “What have I done with my life?” Thinking too much about tomorrow leaves them paralyzed. The poet, David Wilcox, captures the heart of many twenty-something's when he writes: “I was dead with deciding, afraid to choose. I was mourning the loss of the choices I'd lose.” The twenty-something parents are frightened as well; they are scared to death that all their hopes and dreams for life has not been realized as they had expected it would. While their children ask, “What if my life doesn’t go anywhere?” Their parents declare, “My life hasn’t turned out as I had hoped!” “I never thought adultery would happen to me?” “I never could have imagined myself a widow.” “I don’t want to be a mother of a deceased daughter.” Many are left confused and disappointed.

How do we deal with the fear that our lives will be disappointing to us . . . and to God? The answer is the doctrine of our union with Christ. The Christian’s life is inextricably linked with the life of Jesus. The branch is connected to the vine (John 15:5). As the Father is in Jesus and he is in the Father, so are we “in Christ” and he is in us (John 17:20-26). What happens to him happens to us. We follow him and share in his life; his sufferings, his future, his inheritance, and even in his reign. Because we are “in Christ” our fundamental life story has already been written. As we who have “put on” Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:27), our lives have a predictable trajectory. We will live like Jesus through suffering and sacrifice, rejoicing and rejection, obedience and fellowship, service and sadness, death and resurrection. And our lives will end like his . . . in glory. This is how Jesus experienced our fallen world. This is how we will experience it too. My life path has already been mapped out by Jesus’ life, who calls himself “the way” (John 14:6). The script has already been written. It is a done deal. All this takes pressure off of our living life now. If I am united with Christ, my focus can be on staying connected to Jesus. I don’t have to obsess with the particulars of the decision that are before me. What matters most to my health and well-being is simply whether I am connected to the vine. We spend a lot of time thinking about the “plot” of our lives. God is apparently more interested in

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Is the Church a Safe Place to Hurt?

by Carolyn Woodie


I had the privilege of hearing a message given by Nancy Guthrie who with her husband, David, host our Grief-Share videos. Her topic was a challenge to all of us to make our churches a safe place for hurting and sad people. She had such good points, I wanted to share a few of them with you.

We are human and we hurt and we also hurt one another. Hurting people are like a “big ball of hurt.” Anything that rubs up against them makes them squeal in pain because any additional pain hurts even more when you hurt already. So, how can we make our church a place where hurting people feel safe?

First, allow people to *be* sad. Sometimes people are afraid to come to church when they are grieving because they are afraid they may cry. Songs and words they’ve sung for years take on new meanings. They may be afraid that someone will ask how they are doing and they will begin to cry. Struggling through the loss or pain and trying to understanding it in God’s perspective often brings tears. Other people may judge because they see

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character development. The reality of our union with Christ speaks to both. Holiness happens from the inside-out and not the other way around. It is not about me, struggling away out here in my world, trying to be more like Jesus; instead its Jesus living in my heart (Ephesians 3:17). He is remodeling his own house. Our union with Christ means we get to enjoy his victory . . . now. Sarah Hughes went to the 2002 Olympics as a figure skater. When she was asked if she was going to win a medal she said, “I have already won; I am here.” Sarah skated as though it were a prize to simply be in the Olympics. Jesus has already won the medal for us. We are simply to marvel at the privilege of being included in the games. Our union with Christ means our lives, even our pain, is sweetened by the fellowship with God. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have had a perfect love for one another from eternity. The greatest wonder of the cosmos is that God has decided to share that perfect love with us, his creatures. We are to revel in it like a child who sees her parents hugging in the kitchen and runs up and joins them for a “family hug.”

The Christian life is not simply a matter of pain now, gain later. We are given, right now, an incredible fellowship with God. We have been enveloped in God’s family

and we live all of life within the warmth and security of that embrace. And if I am suffering it is not a deviation or a dead end, but part of the story~his story~that is my story too. If I expect my life to proceed smoothly and it is interrupted by pain, I will be surprised and angry. But if I expect suffering to be a part of what it means to be in union with Christ, then I rejoice, not in the suffering (for that is insane) but in the privilege of sharing in his suffering (2 Corinthians 4:10-11).

Therefore, our union with Christ means I am free from my fears. The reason the Apollo 13 story seems so glorious now it is because we know how it ended. We know they all got home safely. But I suspect that Jim Lovell, Jack Swaggert, and Fred Haise would have given anything to relive that mission with the knowledge that they would make it home safely. Jesus wants us to know the ending of our story. Otherwise, the terror of the unknown would distract us from living life to the fullest. We see the end of our story in Jesus’ own story. We do get to come home safely. Sarah and Josh, and all those who are “in Christ” embrace the predictable seasons of life as those who are confident in the quality of the plot, committed to character development, and enjoy our relationship with the protagonist. Christ is the “hope of glory,” and hope does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).

Angel Tree: Where it All Began

by Dee Chalfant

Six million. That’s the cumulative number of prisoners’ children served by Angel Tree® in the U.S. over the past 29 years. And an ex-prisoner started it all. Mary Kay was a safecracker, a bank robber, and one of America’s Most Wanted. Arrested in June of 1972, she quickly collected 11 federal indictments and 35 charges against her. But her 180-year sentence turned into a six-year sentence—during which time she asked God to change her hardened heart. On the three Christmases that she spent at the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women in Alabama, local church groups brought the inmates gifts of toothpaste and soap. Intrigued, Mary Kay watched as her fellow prisoners wrapped up the small gifts and gave them to their children at the Christmas visit. “Most children wouldn’t think much of such small gifts, but in prison there was such joy on their faces!” says Mary Kay. “It didn’t really matter to them what they got; it was from *Mama*.” After being paroled, Mary Kay accepted Prison Fellowship’s challenge to become their first Alabama State Director in 1982. One of her assignments was to create a Christmas project for prisoners. At one of her speaking engagements, a conversation with an ex-prisoner’s daughter solidified the project’s focus. “What about the inmate’s kids?” the woman asked. “*They* are the real victims.”

Mary Kay recalled the toiletries that prisoners gave their children on Christmas. So she and a crew of volunteers began creating a program to provide *real* gifts for prisoners’ children. Their plan was to erect a Christmas tree at Birmingham’s Brookwood Mall, encouraging shoppers to buy presents for specific children. Then someone suggested writing the children’s names on paper ornaments shaped like angels—creating an “Angel Tree”! So Mary Kay helped cut out 100 paper-angel ornaments and then visited prisoners to invite them to sign up their children. “God never wastes anything,” Mary Kay says. “He used my own criminal past to give me credibility in their eyes. And they trusted us.” Mary Kay called the caretakers of the children and asked what they wanted for Christmas. Then, she wrote each child’s name and the “gift wishes” on an angel ornament. And from this beginning, Angel Tree was born. And our church is part of that vast community that participates each year.

ACTS Open House

Monday, January 28, 9-11 AM (snow date February 4). Are you considering homeschooling? Are you pondering if there is a different, more structured way to accomplish the goals you have for your child’s homeschool education? Come to Annapolis Classical Tutorial Service’s Open House! This is an opportunity to see curriculum, visit classes, and talk with parents and teachers. Mark your calendars and plan to take a closer look. Please visit our website for more details about curriculum, daily schedule and much more! http://www.edline.net/pages/Annapolis_Classical_Tutorial, email at actsinquiries@gmail.com, or 410-266-8091 ext 129. ACTS is a ministry of EP Church of Annapolis to homeschooling families in the Annapolis area and beyond.

Short Term Missions Opportunities

Do you sense God is calling you to share your faith with others but you only have a short amount of time? Are you interested in looking into missions work to see if God might be calling you to take His Gospel to those who have not heard it? Do you want to spend a couple of weeks this year serving our Lord in ways you have not done so before? This year you have the opportunity to serve on one of 3 EP Missions Committee sponsored short term mission trips locally and overseas. 1) A team will be traveling to Europe in the spring to support the Mission to the World area conference; 2) A team will be traveling to Romania to work with the local churches to do evangelism and outreach; and 3) The Youth ministry will be going to Chattanooga, Tennessee in the summer to work with a local PCA church as they outreach into their community. Each of these trips presents unique opportunities for you to become a partner in ministry and to be a part of what our Lord is doing to take His good news around the world. These are 10 day – 2 week trips designed to give you the chance to use your gifts and abilities, and to gain a broader vision of the work of the church throughout the world. Please prayerfully consider whether the Lord would have you join us and also pray for God to use these trips to His glory. If you are interested in more information, please contact Tom Beall at ext. 117 or at tabeall@epannapolis.org.

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tears as a lack of faith. Hurting people need friends who won’t be scared off by their tears and will allow them to be sad. So, we should make room for tears and sadness and weep with those who weep.

Hurting people need others who overcome the awkwardness to engage. Often we avoid hurting people and say nothing because we are so afraid we will say something stupid or say something that will add to their pain. Trust me, hurting people know when they are being avoided. So, pray about what you say, but don’t avoid. It is safe to say, “I don’t know what to say.” Don’t try to fix them, don’t give them *your story*, don’t tell them you know how they feel (because you don’t). But, you can share a hug and say “I’m so sad with you.” Grief is a lonely place and hurting people need courageous people to press into their lives and walk alongside of them without trying to fix them. Hurting and sad people need people to pray for them. As Nancy said,

“Prayer is asking God for things He has promised to give. – His presence, His power, His purifying power in our lives. Prayer is not a manipulator of trying to get God to give us what we want, but to welcome His work in our lives.” We need to learn *how* to pray for those hurting and sad people we know. God will show us.

Let’s pray that God will help us to make our church a welcome place for the hurting and sad people among us and also for those around us in our neighborhoods and workplaces who are hurting. GriefShare, a Bible-centered grief support group meeting here at EP, will begin again on February 20th. If you are grieving, come join us or bring a grieving friend. Brochures are in the information racks and in the office. To pre-register or for more information, contact Paul and Carolyn Woodie 410-626-8430 - carolyn.woodie@verizon.net or Walt and Karen Asplund 410-923-3285 - asplundmd@yahoo.com.

(taken from a message by Nancy Guthrie)