

PrEParing for Marriage

by Janet Collins

Preparing for Marriage is a course for seriously dating or engaged couples, or those married less than a year. Now is the time to register for the spring session. The course begins on February 2 and continues each Sunday through May 4, in Room 304 from 9:15 to 10:45am, excluding Easter weekend. Brochures detailing course content are available in the Church Office.

Of all the plans a bride and groom make together, planning for their life AFTER the wedding is extremely important. Please take advantage of this opportunity to grow your relationship and build solid foundations for the future. For additional information or to register, please see the church website or call the Church Office.



EPistle

January / February 2014

Happy New Year

by Pastor Bruce O'Neil

In Paul's letter to the church in Philippi he writes, "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-4). Obviously Paul had a tender connection with this congregation. In these opening words to those whom he deeply loved he told them that his prayers for them were works of joy. And this joy was because they, Paul and the congregation in Philippi, were in a partnership of the gospel in mission.

What is the relationship between the Church and the mission to take the gospel to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20)? Lesslie Newbigin, a British Missionary once said, "It is not that the God of the Church has a mission, but that God of mission has a Church." Newbigin is making two points here. First, it is God's mission, not the Church's mission. God is saving his people and gathering them into local churches. Sometimes we think God is passive and the Church is active, but this underestimates God's passion for His glory, for His name to

be known in the world. God is not serving our mission, rather we are serving His. And second, God calls the Church into partnership in His mission. This makes our work, the work of the local church, matter.

As we move into the new year, 2014, God is using us in his mission. Beginning on January 12th our church plant in Crofton, Trinity Presbyterian Church, will begin worship services. This is an important moment in the life of our church, not simply because we will plant our first church in ten years, but that we will partner with this congregation in the mission of God in west Anne Arundel County. Please be in prayer for Trinity and all those who attend. I know Tom Wenger, their pastor, will preach the gospel.

We believe about sixty adults will leave EP and join Trinity in Crofton. We are glad. It is with joy we are sending this core group to start this church. However we are realistic. We love them and will miss them. We are asking God to fill their empty seats here with people

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Angel Tree Follow-up 2013

by Dee Chalfant



We will have delivered presents to 62 "angels" by the time you read this article. I have talked with several of the caregivers and I know how appreciated these gifts are and what your thoughtfulness means to these families. You gave the greatest gift of all—the gift of Christ's love and an awareness that someone cares!

In talking with those who participated, I could tell that you were also blessed by this ministry. Amidst all the other Christmas activities, you took time out to make phone calls and/or purchase gifts or even to deliver them. I would like to thank the Church Office Staff who not only put up with my phone calls, but have also contended with my emails! The Youth Ministry stepped up this year and volunteered their services for delivering gifts to four of our Angel families. I would also like to thank those who delivered the gifts to their "angels" and made the follow-up call back to me so I would know that the gifts were delivered.

Thank you again to all of you who participated and prayed. Although Christmas may be over, the miracle of Christmas lives on throughout the year. God bless you in 2014.

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who need to hear the gospel. Our experience is that it is not long after starting a new church that new people replace those who have left. Until then we will need you, who remain, to help make up for the loss we may experience in leadership, service and financial support.

As Tom Wenger has been transitioning this past fall, the elders identified some areas of need for leadership here at EP. One of these areas is college ministry, specifically reaching students at Anne Arundel Community College. We want to continue to minister to our college students while away at college and particularly when they come home in the summer. Andrew and Tammy Graham have been leading this ministry and they have recognized the need for someone who can give more time to be involved with students at AACC. This would be a great help to them. We have seen students over the years leave our high school ministry and feel lost at EP because they are too old for the youth ministry and too young for the career ministry. Therefore, we are looking to develop a partnership with the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO). This is a campus ministry that specializes in ministering on community college campuses and partnering with local churches. Josh Thompson serves on staff of this ministry in Butler, PA.

Another leadership need we want to address this year is in outreach. All of us are responsible to bear testimony to Christ by sharing the gospel with our family members and friends, but we need someone to champion this ministry, provide leadership and equip us to be effective ambassadors for Christ. It is our desire that this new staff person will also help us to reach our diverse community.

This is also a transition year with our worship music ministry. We are actively looking for a Music Director to lead this important ministry at EP. Until we find the person God has for us, we have a transition team in place and they are doing a wonderful job for us every Sunday. There are a host of wonderful volunteers who are involved each Sunday, but I want to mention four who are leading the volunteers: David Burge, Bill Gabbard, Alicia Sweeny and Lois White.

I ask you to pray that God will lead these search teams and our church to the right people that God has for us. EP is a wonderful place to serve and we rely on the leadership of our professional and gifted staff. Adding these three staff will help us continue to move forward into God's mission here.

The last item I want to mention to you is that 2014 is our 50th anniversary. We will be celebrating it all year long, culminating in a big celebration weekend on Labor Day weekend. Please plan on being in town that weekend. And whether you have been here all 50 years or this is your first year at EP, you are part of what God is doing here and we want to thank the Lord for it. Amen.

EP 50th Anniversary News

by Tom Beall

This month we begin celebrating our past 50 years, living out the Gospel in our daily lives today, and looking forward to what our Lord will do in our future. On the 2nd Sunday of each month in 2014 we will be viewing together a video during our worship services of God's faithfulness to us here at EP.

Dates to put on your calendar:

May 17 - Musical concert by many of the musicians that have led us in worship over the years.

Aug 29 – Sept. 1 - 50th anniversary celebration weekend. Picnics, reunion gatherings, and a praise and worship celebration. Invite your friends who are no longer worshipping here with us to join us.

Happy? New Year

by Carolyn Woodie

The new year often signals new beginnings in our lives. We start with a clean calendar and usually look forward to what the next year will bring. Someone grieving the loss of a loved one however may view the new year with dread. It may be very difficult for a grieving person to begin a new year feeling very lonely, without the relationship with the one that they lost.

The new year may be a good time for us to open our hearts to the healing that the Lord can bring. Do we hold on to our grief and refuse to move forward? As one of our GriefShare experts states, "If healing means that God has to resurrect our loved one, then it is time to redefine healing." The world says "time heals all wounds." But, maybe you have found out that time alone *doesn't* heal. That is because God does the healing. There is a new year ahead. There is a *new normal* without our loved one ahead. Life will never be the same, but we can adjust to this new life with the Lord's help. We will adjust, if we are open to His healing. Life is a gift. God has more for us to do on this earth. What will He have YOU to do this new year?

Are you grieving? Come to GriefShare and meet with others who are adjusting to their *new normal* and seeking to find out what the Lord has for them to do. GriefShare is a safe place to come and share with others who understand. The next session of GriefShare will begin on Wednesday, February 19, from 7:00-9:00pm in the Parlor. To save a place 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. Brochures are in the Church Office.

Did you know that there are over 7,000 GriefShare groups held in over 15 countries? If you know of someone who would benefit by attending a GriefShare group, just go to www.griefshare.org and search by city or zipcode to find the group closest to their location.

EP 50th Anniversary Calendars

by Tom Beall

EP 50th Anniversary Calendars are available to purchase. The calendars have wonderful pictures and themes that celebrate our past and the many aspects of the ministry of EP over the years.



Buy one for your refrigerator at home and your office at work. Cost: \$6.00 or 2/ \$10.00.

Call Tom Beall or Sarah Elder for more details.

ACTS

by Sue Vroblesky

Considering homeschooling? Wondering if a tutorial might be helpful? ACTS, a classical tutorial for Grades 2-10, is hosting an Open House **January 27, 2014 from 8:30-11:30** for parents interested in homeschooling. Visit our classes, look at curricula and weekly lesson plans, and talk with ACTS parents and staff about their experiences.

Please stop by, introduce yourself, and see if ACTS might be of benefit to you and your family. ACTS-aged children are welcome to accompany their parents and sit in on classes. If you would like to bring your younger children, childcare will be available. Please contact Sue Vroblesky at barbvro@msn.com so that we can save a spot for your young ones.



Assisting homeschooling families in the Classical Christian education of their children