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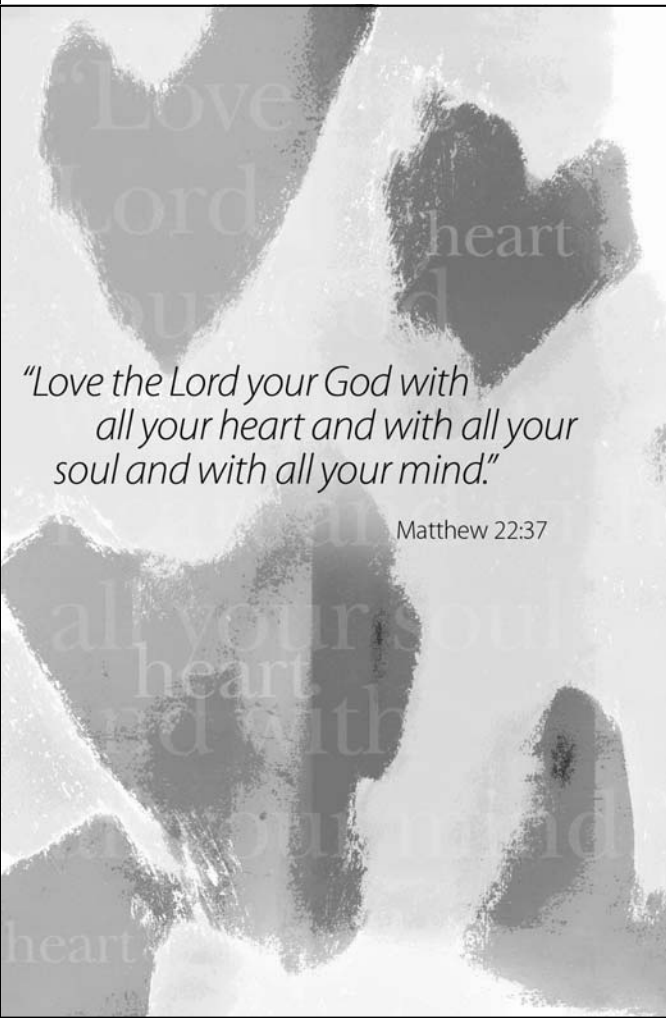
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February

2011



*"Love the Lord your God with
all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your mind."*

Matthew 22:37

Worship the Lord with Us!

Sunday Worship

Sunday School for all ages: 9:00 am

Worship Service: 10:15 am

Listen to "A Place of Grace"

every Sunday at 11:00 AM on 560 WFIL.

FIRST CHURCH WINDOWS is published by:

The First United Methodist Church

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Monday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm


(Closed for lunch 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm)

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In Windows This Month...

From the Pastor's Heart 4
Preaching Schedule..... 6
Wee Soccer 7
Facing Life with Faith Weekend 8
The RYVER 10
Missionary Messages..... 12
Calendar..... 14
Birthdays and Anniversaries 21
Wings of Prayer 22
The Kid's Page..... 26



The submission deadline for the *March* issue of Windows is February 10th.

**THANK YOU FOR
SUPPORTING WINDOWS!**



From The Pastor's Heart

The year 2011 has begun and one thing we know for sure is that the weather is pretty unpredictable. Since Christmas we have had snow storms one after another. The amazing thing is how many different forecast predictions on one storm we can hear in a day.

There is good news as we read God's word - that as God gave King Solomon a promise to rely on, we too can rely on the many promises God has in His Word for us. The other day I was reading about King Solomon and how after Solomon finished the great temple, the Lord responded to his prayer. The Lord said to King Solomon, *"I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, **if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever.**"* (1 Kings 9: 3-5)



As we walk with integrity of heart and uprightness God will establish our way. I have seen that over and over in my life and in our church this past year. The good news is that the Lord knows what we are facing. We can simply say "Lord, your will be done. I surrender my life and days to you, Lord." The Lord will establish our path. It may not always be where we thought we needed to go but if He is leading us there, then that is the best place to be. My prayer for you is that you might find that place with the Lord's leading in your life this year.

There are three exciting things I want to share with you for the month of February. Besides our regular services and small groups, Bible studies and Sunday school classes and Wee sports, we have some special things happening in February:

1. On Sunday mornings we are in a new Sermon series that will help us to understand and live out values that matter to God!!!
2. On Sunday, February 6, we will be celebrating God's care in our lives with a "Celebration Sunday." There will also be a special time of Communion.
3. I am really looking forward to our "**Facing Life with Faith Weekend**" on February 26th and 27th. The weekend will begin with a Marriages Matters night focusing on how God helps us with the challenges we all deal with in our families. On Sunday morning there will be a special time for our teens and college aged at 9:00 am dealing with the challenges they often face. At 10:15 am we will have a special service continuing the theme "Facing Life with Faith" for all ages. Our weekend will be led by the Maher family, a family that, in the midst of some amazing life challenges, allowed their faith in Christ to guide and strengthen them in ways they never could have dreamed! You will not want to miss this weekend. It will be a great time to bring others along with you!

We have spent 2 weeks of concerted prayer with one another so let's not stop praying and being open to God leading in our lives together. On February 6th, 2011 at 6:00 pm, we will have another prayer service in the Sanctuary. Join us as we seek the Lord together. Some will choose to fast their evening meal, others may not. Just do what the Lord shows you to do!

It is with hope and great joy we look to the year ahead. May the Lord's blessing be yours. It is a privilege to be your pastor.

In Christ's love and service,
Pastor Sam



**Collingswood First United Methodist Church
Under Construction 2011: Trusting God for The Future**



LIVING ON PURPOSE

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him . They will be like a tree planted by the water...It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah 17: 7-8

Sermon Series On “Our Values That Matter to God.”

- February 6 Celebration Sunday - A special service of music, testimonies and communion.
- 13 Living Out Life’s Mission, Part 2
Matthew 3 :15-17
- 20 Values That Matter To God
Matthew 28 : 18- 20
- 27 Facing Life Challenges With Faith Weekend
- March 6 God’s Special Children Service

This is a sermon series on the values that matter to God. We will go on a practical journey of exploring our purpose and some key values that are important to God. We have identified nine core values from God’s Word that we, as a church, believe are at the core of all we do. These core values stem from our passion and mission of “Loving God ... Loving People ... and Connecting with our Neighbors” with God’s love. Each message will lay foundation for our journey together. Don’t miss any of these and future messages and services. Invite a friend to come or listen to our radio broadcast on WFIL 560am at 11:00am every Sunday morning. Keep this special series in your prayers. If you miss a service, you can order a CD from the office. What a great way to begin our New Year together. Happy New Year!

WEE Soccer is Back!

Dear Friends,

First United Methodist Church is beginning the 2nd season of the winter Indoor Soccer for Children program for boys and girls in kindergarten through grade 3. Games are played on Saturday beginning January 22nd and run through Saturday, February 26th.

Last year's program was highly successful in addressing the wishes of our church community – especially our children. Many families – and children themselves – have shown a desire to get more involved in our church – whether it be a member of the Sunday service congregation, Sunday School, Master's Men or Bible School. Indoor Soccer for Children is a program designed for children.

We thank the Lord for giving us the opportunity to provide this program for our children. God works in wonderful ways and being a part of our church family is one thing that will be of benefit to us all. Thank you again for this opportunity to serve our children and the Lord.

For additional information call Ed Hill or the church office at 856-858-1186.



We are looking forward to this special weekend!

Facing Life with Faith Weekend
February 26th and 27th

The weekend will begin on Saturday, February 26 at 5:30 pm with a Marriages Matters night with our focus on how God helps us with challenges we all deal within our families. Then, on Sunday morning there will be a special time for our teens and college aged at 9:00 am dealing with the challenges they often face. At 10:15 am we will have a special service continuing the theme “Facing Life with Faith” for all ages. Our weekend will be led by the Maher family, a family that, in the midst of some amazing life challenges, allowed their faith in Christ to guide and strengthen them in ways they never could have dreamed!!! You will not want to miss this weekend, it will be a great time to bring others along with you!

Here is some more background on the couple...

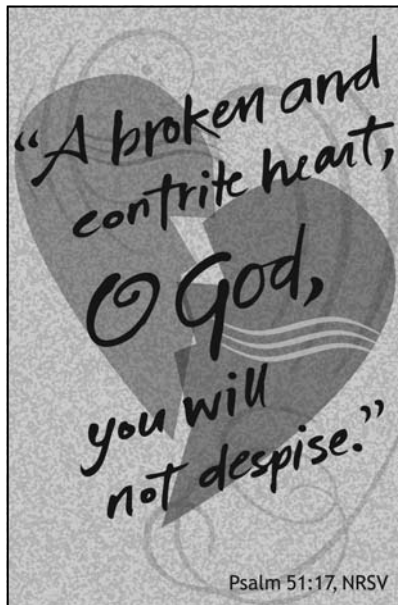
John and Andrea Maher had high aspirations for each of their four children and raised them in a strong, loving Christian home. They have been happily married for thirty-four years. John, a retired Police Chief, is the current Executive Undersheriff in Southern New Jersey and Andrea writes a column called “Family Matters,” and co-hosts a weekly radio show, “That Guy’s Mom.” Both co-teach the adult Sunday School at their church and have an extensive resume of service in their church, as well as in their community.

In the past five years, tragedy has befallen two of their sons - their oldest son, John, suddenly died at the age of 28, and their youngest son, Matt, is serving a five and a half year prison sentence for aggravated manslaughter due to a drunk driving accident. Matt was “That Guy” who grew up achieving in every area of his life. He was a role model, active in his community, excelled in academics and athletics, earned himself a full scholarship to Temple University, and eventually signed a professional contract as a soccer player. Now he is “That Guy,” a drunk driver, who killed an innocent man and who now resides in prison.

But the story doesn’t end there...

The Maher family unflinchingly held onto their faith believing that they serve a loving God who does all things well, regardless of their circumstances. They fervently beseeched the Lord in prayer to use their awful tragedies for His greater purpose. From the onset of the tragic news, they, along with their son Matthew, dedicated themselves to honor the memory of the victim, Mr. Hort Kap, by continuing the call of finding a higher purpose in this unspeakable tragedy. This story is compelling in that it exemplifies the power of forgiveness and redemption. It magnifies the role of faith to sustain us. It is a living example of how bad things can happen to good people. It's about choices, consequences and how our actions can change countless lives - for the good or bad. It offers hope in navigating the storms that enter our life. God has taken this story, and in a short amount of time, it has spread to all fifty two states and 92 countries. We are humbled by His graciousness to use fallen people who turn to Him for strength and guidance to further His Great Commission in the midst of the storms.

Please take the time to check out their web site, www.themattmaherstory.com, or listen to "That Guy's Mom" radio show to learn more about this story that is touching lives and spreading the good news of Christ to the lost, bruised, and hurting.



Senior High (grades 9-12) meets on Sunday nights and **Junior High (grades 6-8)** meets on Wednesday nights, both from 6:00-8:00 pm (for relationship building and spiritual topical discussions), and **everyone** meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am (for deeper Bible teaching and spiritual life training) except for the following:

- ♦ **ryver staff** – (first Sun) – *for all youth leaders – praying, planning, preparing*
- ♦ **All-ryver Games** – (first Wed; all grades) – *come meet people through sit-down games, open-gym, etc.*
- ♦ **All-ryver Serving** – (last Sun; all grades) – *focused on meeting needs in our surrounding community*
- ♦ **All-ryver Worship** – (last Wed; all grades) – *experience God through music, teaching, and arts*

COMING EVENTS



Sunday, 2/6 - 6:00 pm

Great food! Great game (hopefully!) Great commercials! Or just hang out and play games with great people! Open to grades 6-12. Cost: no charge, but we will accept donations for the food. **YOU MUST SIGN UP BY WEDNESDAY, FEB. 2!**

Blue Mountain Trip - Sking/Snow Tubing - Saturday, 2/12
We'll be meeting at the church at 10:30 am (and returning around 8 pm) to give you as much snow time as

possible. Registration forms and payments (pricing varies) are due in ADVANCE - No later than Sunday, 2/6! Students are encouraged to pack a bag lunch & dinner, or you can buy it there. In case of bad weather, trip will be rescheduled for Saturday, 3/5. So get some friends and let's go play in the snow!



Thursday 2/17 to Friday 2/18

If you are in grades 9-12 and interested in going to a Christian college after high school, this trip is for you. During these 2 days we'll travel to Lancaster Bible College and Eastern University where you'll have the chance to sit in on chapels and classes, eat meals, and tour the campuses as you search out where God may be leading you. We have room for 9 people (upperclassmen will have first priority) and you must sign up by Sunday, 2/6.



CHILI/SOUP COOK-OFF:

Keep perfecting those chili and soup recipes! Since several of our special comedy acts will be on the road in January, we are moving the date for our chili & soup cook-off with its LOL chaser to Saturday, March 19th at 5:30 PM. Whether you enter the cooking competition (prizes will be awarded!) or perform for our LOL night or just come for the fun - you won't want to miss this!



Helen

So much has happened since I arrived in California to begin a Certificate Program in Spiritual Formation at Talbot School of Theology at Biola University. It has been a real eye-opener to learn how people grow spiritually and how our family of origin influences the way we relate to others, God and ourselves. In one course, we looked at the way that the church has cared for souls throughout the ages and we tried out different methods of relating to God and other believers. A favorite method of daily devotions has been using a book of Celtic prayers written and spoken centuries ago, yet fitting for believers in our day as well. I especially appreciated their way of committing the ordinary daily chores and activities into God's loving hands and creating space for God morning, noon, evening and bedtime. As a result of taking a course on how to interpret the Bible, I have been blessed by getting into the habit of reading verses in context (at least the whole paragraph and often the whole book in which they occur). I've been learning how to appreciate the special features of each type of literature (stories, prophecy, gospels, poetry, etc.) and how to interpret and apply each type. Most of all, I have been blessed getting to know my fellow students and teachers who are modeling the principles they are teaching us.

Saints Prison Fellowship

*Now may the God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound
in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 15:13.

*Do not remember the former things, nor consider
the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing,
now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?*

I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18-19

Praise God for a bountiful 2010: thousands of miles of travel and more than 200 games played without any major problems.

Dave & Andrea Brunner

Thank you all so much for helping us in prayers and giving so that we may minister effectively. Our winter storms have slowed down across our country and we have seen the bluest sky we have seen in a long time. As of December 22, 2010, we have become grandparents for the first time. Alec Philip Brunner came early and weighed 6 lbs. and 6 oz and is doing well. Rejoice with Andrew and Sarah (his parents) and with us as we celebrate this birth. Our son, Andrew, is in his last year at Appalachian Bible College in WV.

Chuck & Bev Truxton

Thanks for your prayers for us during this short Home Assignment in the USA. We were able to visit with many friends and supporters and wish that we had been able to see everyone who is a part of our support team. Your prayer support is vital. God has used some people in very special ways to help with our financial support. Some have supported us right from the time we joined SIM in 1972, and helped us with passage and initial outfit needs. Some of those dear friends are with the Lord. On the other hand, one friend who started supporting us with \$10 per month in 1972 is still sending us \$10 per month and has never missed a single month! I know we could do the math, but it's really not about that is it? It's all about HIM and how your prayers and gifts have translated into changed lives – the “letters written on our hearts.” (2 Corinthians 3:2) And you are a letter written on our hearts, too, because of your partnership with us in our ministry in Nigeria.

Armand & Jean LeBlanc

“Hi, my name is Robert, My family has been killed and I'm in danger.” So began refugee day which we have once a month at the fellowship. His real name wasn't “Robert,” just his nick name because the GI's couldn't pronounce his real name. Neither could I. We had about 95 families - Iraqi Arabic speakers and Iranians come to the refugee day for food and clothing distribution. Pray for an Arabic speaker to help with Iraqi refugees. The number of refugees coming has dramatically increased in the last few months. Sometimes we don't have enough to give to all but this week we were able to help each family.

The Christmas service/party was led by the refugees. They had 2 Iranians speak, a couple of skits/plays depicting the Christmas

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February 201

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story and its truths. They cooked and served the food. Our team did some cooking, decorating and transporting. About 140 attended. 11 New Testaments were given out to unbelievers. Lift up the word to bear fruit. Jean and her co-workers had 15 Iranian ladies over for a Christmas tea and cookie bake. An Iranian woman shared the devotional. There were a few non-believers in the group. Lift up their need for salvation.

Our daughter, Lori's, visit was a great encouragement. We had not seen her in 2 years. Pray for her to keep up the pace and be strong in the Lord.

Neale & Carol Goetsch

For your many letters and greetings over the past month we want to express our humble thanks. As I re-did my prayer list this week (if you receive this letter YOU are on it) I was struck by how many dear ones have entered His presence in the past twelve months. What joy is theirs as they now behold HIM, whom having not seen, they loved.

Curt & Carol Detwiler

Carol and I want to wish you a Happy and Blessed New Year. May our Lord continue to draw you closer to Himself in your heart, soul, and mind. The month of December was a busy one for us here in Cary. Here are a few words from a TWR listener on a recent visit to Kabylia.

We recently attended a service in Kabylia with 50 baptisms. A Muslim family invited me for dinner in the evening. The people asked many questions on prayer, like, "According to the Bible, how often should we pray, each day? Is there any number, like 5 times?" When I answered, "Jesus recommended us to pray not 4 or 5 times per day, but 24 hours without stopping," they were astonished. The father of the family exclaimed, "To pray without stopping? But who is able to do that?" Afterwards, I explained that to pray unceasingly does not mean to kneel unceasingly, but to live in the Spirit, to be in contact in prayer with God. I then recited the verse from the Bible with Jesus' words in Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." All were amazed. They exclaimed, 'Frankly that is

true, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.’ They said, ‘We recognize that the Word of Jesus is the true word of God.’ That evening, all the family members gave their lives to Jesus. On the day of worship, all 15 of them came to church. It is in this way that the Gospel spreads in Kabylia. Since then, this family is determined to listen to the broadcasts of TWR.

Pray for this family because they are in a fierce spiritual struggle.

Don & Norma Toland

A misnomer that people have of those in Christian service is that when they retire, they retire to “No work and all play.” Especially with former missionaries, this is not usually the case. Since I retired (as per the government), I remain serving Wycliffe as a “retired” volunteer. I still coordinate several representatives around the country and act as their advisor/trainer. I travel to New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, the National Capital Area, and to Philadelphia to represent Wycliffe at government sponsored Workplace Giving charity fairs. The government has a program called CFC (Combined Federal Campaigns) that allows government employees to give to the charities of their choice on a monthly basis through payroll deduction. By establishing good relationships with many government departments around the country with many phone calls and emails, Wycliffe is invited to attend charity fairs to pass out literature and to tell the Bible translation story to the government workers.

Norma and I continue to praise the Lord that we are still active in volunteer service with Wycliffe. The Lord is providing for us through several faithful supporters. We thank each of you faithful ones who continue to be members of our team.

Fellowship House

It’s really cold as I arrive at Fellowship House today. There is a sign in the window announcing “Code Blue” and advising everyone to be on the lookout for vulnerable individuals who might not be able to survive this weather without assistance. Inside the office I find staff members Doreen and Jonathan bustling around the kitchen getting ready to prepare hot soup and sandwiches for the street people in the neighborhood. We cannot provide housing, but

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

we do have ingredients from the Food Bank, and we have the facility and the expertise. Doreen tells me there is one volunteer who can “make soup out of anything!” When the weather turns cold, Fellowship House will be a place for nourishment and loving concern for the sake of Christ.

I am continually surprised at the wide variety of ministries that take place here. Run down the list of those things Jesus mentions in the last judgment scene in Matthew 25. “I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, etc., and you ministered to me.” A lot of those things go on here every day. From children’s work to youth work, to addictions counseling, to feeding the hungry, the love which Jesus calls for is being carried forward on South Broadway. They say it is the worst, most dangerous city in the nation and now services from law enforcement to social support are being drastically cut because of the neglect of the needy for the sake of the well off. Matthew 25 concludes, “Come ye blessed of my father, for I was hungry and you gave me food...”

Don & Esther Parsons

A very blessed New Year to all of you! We have come to an end of a year of many transitions and blessings. Please pray with us about the following as 2011 begins:

- For wisdom regarding our kids’ education. They are all doing well, but we have questions as we look to the future.
- For our monthly support. We praise the Lord for some special gifts that have helped keep our support up, but we need at least \$500 of regular monthly support.
- That God would raise up many from around the world to work on SEND teams. We want to see many missionaries, from all nations, engaging the unreached with the Gospel.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel.

Dave & Liz Givens

In some ways, 2010 could be called our Year of Islam. We began the year in the southern Philippines with a team from Philadelphia Biblical University who worked in medical clinics, explored sustainable agriculture, tutored Muslim students in computer skills, while we mentored the PBU students into a deeper relationship with the Lord and missions. Another PBU team is returning to the southern Philippines in January.

Liz wrote a curriculum called I ♥ Muslims, a six-lesson study guide for small groups to accompany a video series on Islam done by SENDmedia. Hundreds of copies are being used by churches around the country, and we're getting good feedback that this series is helpful in identifying how we can better relate to the Muslims we know here in the USA. (<http://www.send.org/ihm>)

2010 has also been a Chinese year. We visited Beijing in January and deepened friendships with the university officials. We returned in June with a large team to teach English.

SEND International is growing, but more importantly, the mission is changing to focus on those who have the least chance to hear the gospel. We're excited with these changes and want to continue to assist as God gives us open doors for ministry.

In 2011 we expect to help with a conference in Thailand for our China and Taiwan workers, teach a month in Beijing, host an ESL training in Michigan for missionaries and volunteers, then return to Beijing with a team for the English program -- and that's just the first six months!

Larry & Fay Buckman

Zeito Xavante's testimony is one for the books. Zeito completed our 3 year Bible Institute program, and then did an internship with a Terena pastor while completing his high school. He went to the World of Life Seminary, raising his tuition from Brazilian churches. He met a Brazilian lady during a mission trip and married her.

Zeito and his wife, Ana, are completing an internship with Word of Life in a northern Amazon tribe. They plan to return home as missionaries with UNIEDAS. The Xavante leadership has given him the title to property that was used by the foreign mission before the government expelled them.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your prayers and encouraging letters as we move toward the goal of helping Indians.

Neil & Wannee Thompson

Wannee and I returned from our final trip as National Director, one of a string of "lasts" over the past three months. I started out in Boston and then we met at BWI to begin our Maryland & Pennsylvania tour of many faithful, long term (20-45+ years!)

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

supporters, friends and family. We returned feeling tremendously blessed by God and His people.

As we finished sharing at one meeting, a hand went up. The voice said, "I have a vision and I'd like to share it with you." You might think that this vision was that of a 20-something excited about finding God's will for lifetime ministry; you'd be wrong. This was the vision of an 80-something retiree still passionate about reaching the Thai in Central Thailand! We left Calvary Fellowship Homes in Lancaster, PA once again blessed by the lives of our retiree community.

Dana and Debbie Cherry

We wanted to thank you for your prayers, cards, and notes of sympathy. God has been comforting us and is helping us as we adjust to life without Debbie's dad. Debbie's mom also wanted us to express to you how much she appreciated all your cards and prayers. It is never easy to adjust to life without someone you love, but it helps so much to have family and friends who can surround you with their love.

We decided to move in with Debbie's mom for the time we are here in the states. We hope that our staying with her will not only give the kids some much needed stability, but also allow us to help mom adjust to life without dad. Of course we will still be doing some travel in order to share with churches and visit with friends and supporters, but at least this way we will be able to spend as much time as possible with mom and will be able to get Danielle enrolled in a preschool program.

Ellie Hall

I am so thankful that my thesis could be completed in time, and that everything could be packed up to come back to the US for six months. Please pray for the Lord's leading in my time here in the US. Pray that He would guide the way I use the time, and who I meet. Please pray also for a good rest. Pray for good communications and relationships with the people I am working with in Asia and for peace. Also pray that God would prepare the way for a good meeting with church leaders, probably in April 2011.



Birthdays

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Feb. 6 | Jim Doyle
Marilyn Ellis |
| Feb. 7 | Stan Sheaffer |
| Feb. 8 | Florence Twigg |
| Feb. 9 | Ruthmaria Weinberg |
| Feb. 10 | Carol Vernon Grant
Ruth Smith |
| Feb. 11 | Kacey Ehret
Julie Ross |
| Feb. 14 | Ruth Davis |
| Feb. 16 | Jadon Hamilton
Rose Hamilton |
| Feb. 17 | Lou VanPelt, Jr. |
| Feb. 18 | Marva Wallace |
| Feb. 20 | Jennifer Schwehm |
| Feb. 22 | Cheryl VanPelt |
| Feb. 23 | Philip Sheaffer
Barb Oliver
Ruth Wolf |
| Feb. 24 | Barbara Edelman
George Hemphill |
| Feb. 26 | Jane Doyle |
| Feb. 27 | Jennifer Kennedy
Jennifer Skalko |

If you have not already done so, please give your dates (birth dates and anniversary dates) to the church office in writing or by e-mail: maria@fumccollingswood.org.

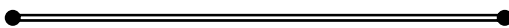


Wings of Prayer

We praise God for the amazing faithfulness we have experienced this past year and for the Lord's guidance, care, healing and provision for every need. It is our hope and prayer that everyone in our church family would draw closer to the Lord during the coming year. Please pray specifically for our church, its ministries, our congregation and beyond. We also lift up those whose needs are known to God:

Joe Cilcone, Betty MacNamara, Ken Landis, KJ Schmitt, Nancy Marino, Ken Steward, Betty Averell, Arnie Arnold, Bea Williams, Nancy Kearney, Jack Latch, Jason Piligno, Kim Aurig Hartke, Annie Hartke, Lily Reckeweg, George Stevens, Christine Fink, Florence Keller, Cynthia Fuester, Warren Creely, Mildred Young, Helen Lewin, Betty Andrew, Caroline Gerelus, Paul Gaehring.

Here are some thoughts and prayers to meditate on in the new year. May the Lord's blessing be upon you as we seek the Lord's will to be accomplished in all our lives as we journey this year together.



A Prayer for Self-Change and Guidance

O Lord, tell us what to do. We do not have the insight, the knowledge or the wisdom to handle life on our own. We are so often conditioned by error and mistake. We humbly ask you to take our life and make it what it ought to be. Hear our prayer that something wonderful will happen.

Grant, O Lord, that there may be within us a deep desire to be truly different, better than we have ever been before. May this change take place in us now. Please bless us with healing, peace, faith, love, goodness and dynamic life. For this we give you thanks. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

-Norman Vincent Peale

Thoughts on Prayer

- ◆ We must come out from prayer the most rapturous and sweet, only to do harder and ever harder works for God and our neighbors. —St. Teresa of Avila
- ◆ More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. —Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Morte D’Arthur”
- ◆ Prayer is not an old woman’s idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action. ... Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one’s weakness. ... It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart. —Mahatma Gandhi
- ◆ A day hemmed in prayer is less likely to unravel. —Unknown
- ◆ Prayer should be short, without giving God Almighty reasons why He should grant this, or that; He knows best what is good for us. —John Selden
- ◆ Prayer is the fair and radiant daughter of all the human virtues, the arch connecting heaven and earth, the sweet companion that is alike the lion and the dove; and prayer will give you the key of heaven. —Honoré De Balzac
- ◆ Our prayers should be for blessings in general, for God knows best what is good for us. —Socrates
- ◆ Love to pray - feel often during the day the need for prayer, and take trouble to pray. Prayer enlarges the heart. Ask and seek, and your heart will grow big enough to receive him and keep him as your own. —Mother Teresa

A Prayer for Today



Whatever happens today, Lord, help us to remember your presence. If we find ourselves in the shadows of disappointment or rejection or pain, let us see your comforting light. If we are in the radiant light of success or acceptance or wholeness, may we acknowledge your providence and grace. Wherever we are, grant us the assurance of your nearness. Amen.

A Prayer of Confession

Dear God, we admit we've fallen short in all areas of our lives. We haven't followed you faithfully, and we haven't shown love to our neighbors. We don't deserve your forgiveness. But we confess our sins, knowing that you are a God of grace. Thank you for offering us your riches at Christ's expense. Give us a clean slate and help us live for you, now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

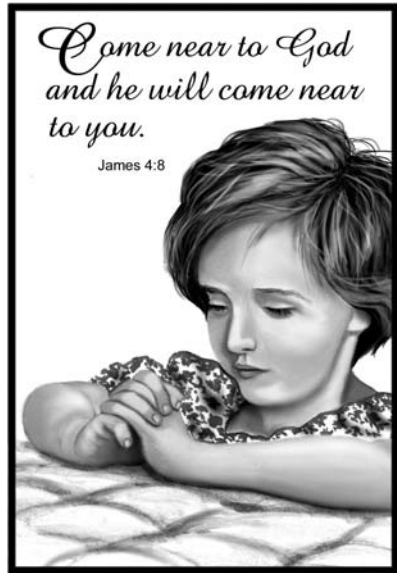
A Few Ways of Praying

1. Put your hands together and make a bowl-like vessel of them. Ask God to fill your entire being with the Holy Spirit. Expect to feel a powerful presence within yourself.
2. Pray in "radar" mode. Recall how radar works? A radar transmitter sends out electronic waves. When the waves hit an object, such as a boat, a building or a vehicle, they bounce back and appear on a monitor. So, try praying by letting your mind/spirit send forth loving thoughts toward God and others. When you sense that there is a response within yourself, sit silently and enjoy what you feel.
3. As you travel in your car or go on a walk, look around to see what God may be trying to show you. A beggar, a handicapped person or children at play, for example. Send an arrow prayer toward God and say, "Heavenly Father, please let those people feel your presence and your power. And help me to do the loving thing toward them." If you are walking in or near gardens or woods, look at the captivating beauty of flowers or trees or a flowing stream. Offer a prayer to God for the blessings of nature which lift up the human spirit. The more we appreciate the wonders of our fascinating world, the more we will sense the presence of God.
4. Spend time thinking about God's purpose for you. What do you think God's will for you is? Pray for empowerment and guidance in doing the will of God.



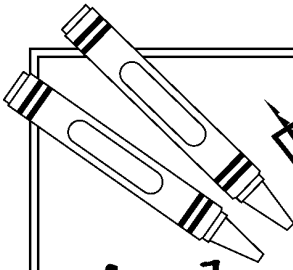
How to Pray

- ✠ Pray where you are. God is present everywhere and ready to listen.
- ✠ Pray, when possible, in a quiet place where you can be alone. It is good to fix your mind deliberately on God, apart from confusing distractions.
- ✠ Pray to God simply and naturally, as to a friend. Tell him what is on your mind. Get help from the prayers of others.
- ✠ Pray, remembering the good things God has done for you. Give thanks for all your blessings.
- ✠ Pray for God's forgiveness for the unworthy things you may have done. He is near to a humble and contrite heart.
- ✠ Pray especially for those things that will make your life more Christ-like.
- ✠ Pray for others, remembering the help they need for the situations they confront.
- ✠ Pray for the world in its need, and for God to guide you toward ways you can help.
- ✠ Pray that God's will be done in you. His purposes are deeper and wiser than our own.



A Prayer for Our Church

Lord Jesus, we pray that you will somehow give us ears to hear, hearts to love and wills devoted to serve; that in the days to come this congregation may be known not for our glory but for thine alone - a congregation of people who know you; that this place may be an oasis, a place where people come to find out about you, where lives are straightened out and made whole, where people find the peace that passes understanding. Give us, we pray, a heart to desire these things above all else. We pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.



PUZZLE

A Love Letter

In the New Testament, John writes a letter about God's love and the love we should show to other people.

DIRECTIONS: Working from left to right, write down all the 1's in the word blanks. Continue with the 2's and finally the 3's. Then read about love, from 1 John 4:11-12, NIV.

lives 3	in 3	us 3	Since 1	and 3	God 1	so 1	loved 1	his 3
us 1	love 3	we 1	If 2	also 1	is 3	made 3	we 2	ought 1
to 1	love 2	love 1	one 1	complete 3	one 2	another 1	in 3	us 3
another 2	God 2							

1 John 4:11-12, NIV

Answers: Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

PIECES OF LOVE



Send special reminders of your love by creating messages that people can assemble and enjoy.

What you need:

- Large wooden craft sticks
- Tape
- Permanent markers
- Scissors
- Zippered sandwich baggies

What you do:

1. Make a rectangle out of seven craft sticks by placing them next to one another, long side against long side.
2. Tape the sticks together.
3. Turn the sticks over and draw a special picture or message. You can include this Bible verse: “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19, NIV).
4. Cut through the tape to separate each craft stick.
5. Put all the sticks in a baggie.
6. Give your special messages to family members, friends or teachers — along with directions for viewing them.

Bible Quiz

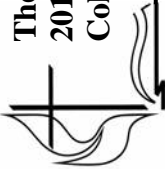
First Corinthians 13 is a popular Scripture reading at wedding ceremonies. The so-called “love chapter” provides an extended definition of what Paul calls “the greatest” gift (verse 13).

Which of the following characteristics of love isn’t found in 1 Corinthians 13?

- A. Love is patient.
- B. Love rejoices in the truth.
- C. Love believes all things.
- D. Love is childlike.

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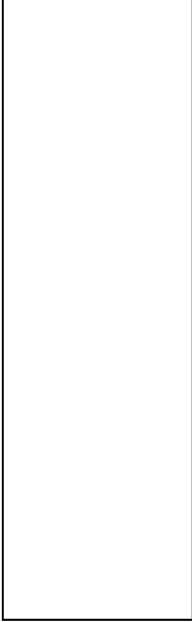
Answer: D



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Loving God...Loving People...Connecting With Our Neighbors