



First Things

First Presbyterian Church of Akron

March 2011, Issue 109

Dear Members and Friends of FPC:

Ryan and I have thoroughly enjoyed preaching through the book of Acts as we have been encouraging us all to **Act Up** and **Learn from the Early Christians**. We certainly do have a lot to learn from the saints who went before us, the saints who started the early church. We have been learning about the coming of the Holy Spirit, the stresses and strains and the growing pains of the early church. We have learned about sacrifice and persecution, the spreading of the Gospel as people came to Christ, as well as the unbelievable challenges the church faced.

I, personally, have been challenged by our walk through the book of Acts- what the church needs to learn and model, what is important if the Church of Jesus Christ seeks to be salt and light in the 21st century.

On February 3rd, I attended a workshop at John Knox Presbyterian Church in North Canton that gathered people from Muskingum Valley and Eastminster Presbyteries. The leader of the event was George Bullard, Strategic Leadership Coach with the Columbia Partnership (a Christian ministry organization that seeks to transform the capacity of the North American Church to pursue and sustain vital Christ-centered ministry). The title of his workshop is: **Will Your Congregation Still Exist Ten Years from Now?** He reports, “North America has at least 350,000 congregations. Best estimates indicate one percent of these congregations close each year. In ten years 35,000 congregations will no longer exist. Will your congregation be one of them? What is the survivability of your congregation?” He goes on to ask, “What if we were to expand the definition of exist? What if it included not only those congregations who are no longer alive, but also those congregations who lose their vitality? Congregational vitality is the capacity to create and sustain meaningful Christ-centered, faith-based existence that focuses more on being in mission than on maintenance....” He had a lot to say that day in February; a lot that I am still processing.

When I read the book of Acts, it is obvious that the early church faced many obstacles, issues, persecution and challenges. The church is no different today. The church has and will always be one generation away from extinction. Bullard’s haunting question and title of his workshop, “Will Your Congregation Still Exist Ten Years from Now?” all depends on how you and I will address the various challenges and opportunities we face. The leadership and I are not satisfied to sit back and do nothing as it relates to the survivability, vitality and vibrancy of our church. We are working hard to make sure that the legacy that we have been given continues on far into the future so that those who follow us will know that we did not sit back and do nothing, like some churches are doing today. There are churches that do **not even** know the right questions to ask. I ask you to pray for the leadership of our church as we seek to be faithful and lead us boldly for Christ in 2011.

Yours in Christ,

Mark



**WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
ON SUNDAY MORNINGS IN MARCH**

TRADITIONS

(Traditional Service -9:00 a.m.)

March 6th

Communion

Series: Act Up! We've got a lot to learn from the early Christians

Part IX: "Change, for the Good"

Scripture: Acts 10 & 11

Preaching: Mark Ruppert

March 13th

Series: Act Up! We've got a Lot to Learn from the Early Christians

Part X: "Unrecognized Answers to Prayer"

Scripture: Acts 12

Preaching: Mark Ruppert

March 20th

Series: Act Up! We've got a Lot to Learn from the Early Christians

Part XI: "Doing God's Work in Difficult Situations"

Scripture: Acts 13

Preaching: Mark Ruppert

March 27th

Series: Act Up! We've got a Lot to Learn from the early Christians

Part XII: "How to Handle Rejection"

Scripture: Acts 14:8-28

Preaching: Ryan Lawrence

FLOOD

(Modern Service - 11:15 p.m.)

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FEBRUARY SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Session approved (Worship Team) that we will use the method of intinction (Latin- "to dip in" where the bread is dipped in the grape juice) for serving Communion on Sunday, March 6th.
- Session approved (Stewardship & Finance Team) the First Presbyterian Church, Akron budget for 2011.
- The Session ratified the recent e mail/phone request from Bobby and Wendy Wilson to have their baby baptized, if necessary, at the hospital once the child is born.

Per Capita

Each year First Presbyterian Church asks for a payment of per capita, which your Session then distributes in portions to Eastminster Presbytery, to the Synod, and to the General Assembly which are our Presbyterian levels of government. FPC is required to pay the per capita for each individual member who is listed in our roster as an active member. **This year the per capita amount is \$29.00 per person, and we are behind.** If you haven't paid your Per Capita, please do so as soon as possible. Thanks

Food Pantry

In the month of January, the Food Pantry served groceries to 325 households equaling 1323 people. Four hundred people were also fed at the Walk in Meals throughout the month.

All of this was made possible by your generous contributions. You can continue to give to the Food Bank by writing a check to FPC and putting Food Bank in the note at the bottom of the check.



2011 Special Opportunities for Growth: Check them out!

FollowtheRabbi.com *That the World May Know*

Mr. Ray Vander Laan will return to Holmes County

Friday-Saturday, March 25-27, 2011

Contact Mr. Joe Mullet @ [330.204.6813](tel:330.204.6813) for more info

Sponsored by Talmidin Studies

Mr. Vander Laan has led hundreds of trips to Israel, has lived and studied with rabbis in Israel, and shares his learning thru books, tapes, and DVDs. His latest DVD is out and he will share it at this conference. A small group is already planning to attend from Akron FPC.

@ the Holmes County Expo Center, 3149 State Rte 39, Millersburg OH

JoyceMeyer.org

Joyce Meyer was a very broken child, was redeemed and healed by the Father, and was led to ministry. She believes that if she can survive, then you can too and gives you the tools to do so, thru books, tapes, and DVDs, thru radio, TV, partnering for local and world mission, and the internet. Her goal before the Father takes her home is to reach the entire globe by being able to reach people with the Good News that they are loved and that God wants them to live the life for which His Son Jesus died. JM Ministries now reaches 2/3 of the world. A small group from AkronFPC is already planning to attend.

Mrs. Joyce Meyer of Joyce Meyer Ministries stationed in Fenton MO is coming to CSU's Wolstein Center @ 2000 Prospect Ave., Cleveland OH Thursday-Saturday, November 3-5, 2011. Phil Wickham will lead worship.

September 15-17, 2011 is the Annual Women's Conference (not just for women) with a focus on "Live Life" in St. Louis, MO @ the Dome just up the hill from the mighty Mississippi River. Last year's outstanding guest speakers included brain scientist, Dr. Caroline Leaf [drleaf.com], who presented the discoveries of how we are wired faith wise and that we have the power to control our toxic thoughts, and Mr. John Maxwell, motivational speaker for Fortune 500 companies who, with great humor, presented on communication, connecting, and leadership. In addition to Joyce Meyer, Leaf and Maxwell are published authors with very strong faiths. Maxwell [JohnMaxwell.com] has published a leadership bible. It's quite an experience to worship, learn & grow, and heal with thousands of other women (and men)!

Happy Birthday

The following people have a birthday in the month of March.

All of the above birthdays came out of our member directory. If I missed you or you are not a member and would like your birthday listed, please email Ann McCord at McCordr@AOL.com. Thanks.

March 2nd - Colina Wells
Mary Younkin
March 7th - Lewis Roberts
March 8th - Stephanie Snyder
March 11th - Edward Daniel Whetstone
March 12th - Michelle Stover
March 14th - Alice Loutsenhizer
March 19th - Misti Drope
March 22nd - Cindy Bell
Joe Gibson
March 23rd - Rylee Drope
March 27th - Jessica Jones
Tony D'Eramo
March 30th - Andrew Hampson
March 31st - Natalie Garlock
Daniel Oldham



Youth Ministry Update

Breakout Conference in Akron: March 4th & 5th

Satellite Youth Group: March 6th & 20th

Location: TBA

4-6 PM

Unleashed Middle & HighSchool: Every Wed.

Middle School 5:30-7:30 PM

High School 7-9 PM

Youth Fundraiser Meal (tentative): March 20th

Brunch

More details TBA

Youth Sponsored Walk-In Meal & Game Night:

March 27th

Preparation at 3:45 PM

Meal at 5 PM

Open Question Night and Games at 6:30 PM

With Sympathy



The congregation would like to express their sympathy to Debbie Lobbe on the death of her mother Helen Ebner. Helen died on February 1, 2011.



The congregation would like to express their sympathy to the Barsan family on the death of Cheryl's mother Elner Adams. Elner died on February 16, 2011 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

A New Addition



The congregation would like to congratulate Wendy and Bobby Wilson on the birth of their infant daughter Mia Taylor. Mia was born on February 19th weighing 6 lb. 14 oz. Mia is the younger sister to Nina, Anna and Ella Wilson. Proud Grandparents are Frank and Peggy Weaver. Please continue to pray for Baby Mia and the Wilson/Weaver family. Mia was born with a severe heart condition and has a long way to go before she can be called healthy.

Kudos to You



We would like to congratulate Doug Kohl for being named the Executive of the Year. Doug was honored by being given the title of Akron Chapter of Sales and Marketing Executive International 2011.

TURN YOUR CLOCKS AHEAD

Daylight Savings
Time is upon us. Be
sure to turn your
clocks **AHEAD** one
hour on March 13th.





Bible Studies and Fellowship Time

Tuesday Club

The Tuesday Club will resume meeting in April. Hope to see you then.

Evening Circle

Evening Circle will be meeting at the home Lois Ingram, 600 Mineola Ave., Akron at 7:30 pm on March 15th. Please see Edie English if you have any questions.

WNGs

"They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength... They shall mount up with wings as eagles..." Isaiah 40:31

Women of the church are invited to participate in the Wednesday Night Intergenerational Caring Group at 7:00 pm. See Pat Franklin for meeting locations..

Presbyterian Women's Circle

The "revealing" study of Revelation will continue on Monday, March 7 at 10 a.m. in the parlor. This group, associated with Presbyterian Women USA, welcomes all women to participate in this study led by Rita Vincent.

Men's Bible Study

Wednesday Morning, 6:30 am. Contact Roy Davis for more information.

Thursday Morning, 6:30 am. Contact Tony Miller for more information.

1st & 3rd Bible Review

Ladies of AkronFPC: Join the 1st & 3rd Bible Review women's fellowship and study as we resume meeting on the first and 3rd Tuesday, March 1 & 15, 2011, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the parlor---weather permitting. Contact Suzanne Gibson with questions or weather forecasts. .

Hikers Group

Come and enjoy the winter beauty while hiking. Each Saturday, a group meets at 10 am at the church and goes out to various locations for a hike. Hiking lengths vary. All are welcome. Afterward, they go out for lunch but you don't have to if you have other plans. See Edie or Verne for more information.

Prayer Concerns

Remember to pray for our government leaders.

Pray for our military: Paul Jones - Air Force, Robert Welch - Marines, Chris Welch - Air Force, Adam Philips - Army, Matthew Harris - Army, George Keebler

Please continue to pray for: Grace Collins, Jim Warner, Ned Oldham, Lois Ruppert, Mary Loudin, Pam Oldham, Jeanne Huber, Baby Mia Wilson and the Wilson and Weaver families, Frank Randall, Phyllis Hillebrand, Arnold Ruppert, Evelyn Bell, Ray Cook, Jan Tregoning, Rev. Bill and Esther Clark, David Starkey, Paige Starkey, Meg Davis, Ann McCord, Bud Franklin, The aftermath of the BP Gulf Oil Leak, Countries that are experiencing political and social unrest. The earthquake victims in New Zealand, The PCUSA, President Obama and elected officials, The Global Financial Crisis and the un and under employed.

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As a caring Christian community, First Presbyterian Church welcomes all people as we proclaim, witness and teach the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and service.

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT CHURCH OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT ANGLICAN CHURCH
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9th**

Once again our congregation and the congregation of Church of the Holy Spirit (825 East Buchtel Ave.) will gather together on Ash Wednesday, March 9th. A simple meal of soup and salad will be served from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and the service will begin at 6:45 p.m. If you plan to attend the meal, please, call our church office at 434-5183 by Sunday, March 6th so that we can inform them. Communion will be observed as a part of the service- grape juice (our tradition) and wine (the Anglican tradition) will be available. Ashes will also be available to those who find it meaningful.

Plain English:
***Today is the struggle between yesterday's
experience and tomorrow's hope!***

First Presbyterian Church of Akron

***Traditional Service begins at 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School begins at 10:05 a.m.
Flood Service begins at 11:15 a.m.***

Dr. Mark T. Ruppert - Pastor

Rev. Harry B. Van Fleet - Pastor Emeritus

Ryan Lawrence - Director of Youth Ministry

Charles Kobb II - Director of Music Ministry

***Ann McCord - Director of Christian Education
/ First Things Editor***

Judy Bailey - Church Secretary

Carin LeSeur - Flood Worship Coordinator

Heidi Guttermuth - Organist

Sandy Schafer, Tim Dzoch and Amy Phillips - Sextons