



CALVIN CHATTER

The Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia
Serving Christ & Neighbor in the Heart of Winchester since 1800

Vol. 43, No. 2

www.firstchurch-winchester.org

February 2012

Focus on Mission: Opportunities to Fill “the Hole in Our Gospel”

By Dave Thalman

The women of our Wednesday Morning Bible Study have touched many of us recently by their transformational reaction to **Richard Stearns**’s book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*. This book has opened their hearts and lives to the vast ways that we can respond to the call of Christ to love our neighbors, and especially reach out to those in the world who are suffering from severe poverty, disease, and injustice. Now, we all have opportunities to read and discuss this moving book and examine how we personally can respond to God’s will for our lives and to fill any “holes in our Gospel.”

There are many opportunities to reach out to those who need us in Winchester and beyond. First Presbyterian Church has many established relationships with organizations that specialize in serving those most in need. These organizations always need more volunteers, growing resources, and unending prayers. Listed below are the many connections we already have through our Ministry Council and other groups of our church.

In the Winchester community we are connected to these programs:

- Jubilee Kitchen – established and coordinated by our congregation that serves a hot meal to those in need on 50 Saturdays during the year

- Highland Memorial Presbyterian Church – offering pastoral care and a food pantry to Winchester’s North End community
- Congregational Community Action Project (CCAP) – providing assistance to those unable to meet their daily needs
- Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter (WATTS) – a new ministry sheltering the homeless and providing two hot meals during our coldest months
- Four-Cents-a-Meal – normally collected in church on the fourth Sunday of each month goes to feeding the hungry in our community and to famine relief in Ethiopia
- Boys and Girls Club – providing after-school programs that meet the recreational, cultural, educational, and health needs of our most vulnerable and challenged children
- Boy and Cub Scouts – institutional sponsors for Troop 2 and Pack 2 that meet in our facilities
- Faith in Action – providing transportation to medical appointments and treatments for those who want to remain independent but can no longer drive themselves
- Free Medical Clinic – assisting with medical needs for those without insurance and who are unable to afford private care
- Red Cross blood drives - increasing vital blood supplies for surgical emergencies
- Fremont Street Nursery – providing quality, affordable pre-school and day care on the north side of Winchester
- Habitat for Humanity – building decent, affordable housing

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

- Laurel Center – working to end sexual and domestic violence by providing emergency shelter, hospital companionship, and crisis intervention
- Literacy Volunteers of America – providing tutors and materials to help teach adults to read and write
- Volunteer Emergency Families for Children – helping children and youth in crisis by recruiting, training and supporting volunteers who provide short-term shelter care and mentoring to abused, neglected, runaway, homeless and at-risk children and youth throughout Virginia
- Winchester Day Nursery – providing affordable, quality day care for special needs children
- Winchester Union Rescue Mission – expressing Christ's love to men in the community by providing food, shelter, spiritual guidance, and vocational instruction, thus enabling them to reclaim a productive role in the community

And the gospel tells us to go out into the world, not just stay in Winchester. We are connected to these organization that address national and global mission issues. Almost all of these programs have web sites with more information. Current information is often found on our mission kiosk.

- Youth mission trips and projects – active participation that gives our youth a rewarding, hands-on mission experience
- Shenandoah Presbytery - care of pastors, disaster response, hunger programs, peacemaking, and the Presbytery's 20-year partnership with the Illubabor Bethel Synod in Ethiopia
- Shenandoah Presbytery's iCARE program, through which you can directly sponsor orphaned children in Ethiopia
- Ethiopia Partnerships – furthering relationships with our partner congregations in Mettu and Ketta by providing scholarships for worship and music leaders, supporting annual visits, funding for their ministry to widows and orphans in Mettu, assistance to a medical clinic, and library books

- Guatemala – continuing to build relationships and learning about the context of poverty there, supporting a village medical clinic, empowering women leaders through the Faith Stories project
- Central Asia – continue to support the general work of Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship and specific support to a mission worker in Central Asia
- Missionaries – continuing support for three PC(USA) mission co-workers, including Karla Koll and Amada Craft in Guatemala, and Drs. Les and Cindy Morgan in Bangladesh
- PC(USA) special offerings for One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, and Peacemaking that connect us to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, PC(USA) ministries with child advocacy, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program
- World Vision – 30 Hour Famine program to feed starving children in the Horn of Africa
- World Vision – providing clean water wells for impoverished communities

We are interested in connecting concerned volunteers with agencies that can use your support. Often monetary support gets to the problem fastest. But many of us who have volunteered our time and talents have had the amazing experience that we always felt that we came away with more than we gave. In many cases we as a congregation have connected with these areas of service because one or several persons who were passionate about a cause stepped up and developed a service opportunity—like raising money for not one, but four World Vision wells! Please let us know about areas where you would like to become more involved. We are always looking for new ideas. Our pastors and elders on the Ministry Council, **Dave Thalman** and **Susan Kagey**, can connect you with existing service opportunities or talk about new areas that need our attention. We hope you will read *A Hole in Our Gospel* and seriously consider the question that Richard Stearns faced in his decision to become the leader of World Vision: “Are you willing to be open to God’s will for your life?”

Last Call for Directory Photos

Did you miss getting your picture taken by Olan Mills when they were here taking photos for our new directory? If you did not get your or your family unit's picture taken by Olan Mills, you need to provide a picture to be included in the directory. It's not too late for you to submit an alternative picture. Call **Dave Rusch** at 868-1777 before February 5th. Having all our members represented in the pictorial part of this new directory is so important for the entire membership and especially the newest members. Being able to see fellow members and connect names to faces is such a help for our church in developing closer fellowship. Help us make this new church directory as complete as it can be!



GOLFERS! SAVE THE DATE

So the weather is not really the best for golf right now but on September 8—just a few short months away—the weather is going to be fantastic! Please save this date for the Second FPC-hosted Golf Tournament at Rock Harbor Golf Course. What will be different this year, you wonder? Last year we donated 100% of the proceeds to the WATTS program, and this year will be no different. However, this year we are going all out—we are looking to host 32 teams to make this a significant fundraiser for the program. We will cast a wider net for golfing teams to participate. Please keep this in mind for your donations planned for this year, whether you own a business or are an individual who wishes to support this important program. We welcome your donation whether large or small. You can make a difference in the lives of the area homeless as your donation will support them with food and shelter during the cold months. So save the date! Questions, suggestions or want to help out? Call **Vicki Laird**, 667-9309 or email at hvlaird@comcast.net.



Disaster Response Work Trip

By Dave Thalman

Our tenth work trip since Katrina in August 2005 from Mountain Valley Mission Community and the WV Eastern Panhandle will return to the New Orleans area February 25-March 3, 2012. We will work for Project Homecoming, a ministry of the Presbytery of South Louisiana in partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). We will stay at the Olive Tree Volunteer Village, which is an indoor facility (former church), unlike the “pod villages” we have experienced before (camping). Last year we learned that more than 40,000 homes still need rebuilding. Project Homecoming is committed to rebuilding homes devastated by Hurricane Katrina that belong to families who are low-income, uninsured, underinsured, disabled, and elderly. With the help of volunteer labor, along with construction materials donations, they make rebuilding affordable for those who would not otherwise be able to return home. You can check out Project Homecoming at <http://projecthomecoming.net/>.

If you can't join us this year, a donation of Lowe's or Home Depot gift cards will help provide construction materials (put in offering plate or bring to church office).

Come to a planning meeting on Wednesday, February 1, at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Please let **Dave Thalman** know if you are interested or have questions (723-0433, dthalman@comcast.net). Please spread the word and come help us continue this vital disaster response ministry.



iDisciple

Coming February 12, iDisciple is a brand new Sunday school gathering of young and middle-aged adults to discuss and explore the common threads of Christian faith in daily life. Join **Brian** and **Paige Lineweaver** and other leaders in the Graham Room, on the northeast corner of the building, off Loudoun Hall.

CCAP NEEDS

In addition to food items, there is a desperate need for children's clothing (new or gently used, size 5-16), including shoes and socks. Gift certificates designated for this need are also helpful. Men's winter clothing is needed, including gloves, hoodies, long underwear, socks, etc. CCAP is also beginning to collect prom dresses, jewelry, and shoes. Dresses should be in good condition. Finally, there is a need for full size blankets.



Wonderful Wednesdays Are Back!

Our spring Wonderful Wednesday meals will coincide with the Lenten season beginning on Wednesday, February 29 through March 29. We need five cooking teams. Each team will be responsible for planning, cooking and serving one night. The kitchen is a great place to spend time with old friends and meet new friends. You can be as creative as you wish. The only rule is to **KEEP IT SIMPLE!!!** Check your calendars so you can choose the best date for your team. You may sign up in the gathering area. If you have any questions, please call **Debbie Lawall**, 869-1489; **Monique Derby**, 665-2733 or **Jenny Callis**, 723-0262.



THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

The annual meeting of the congregation will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 12, at 12N. Items for consideration include receiving the annual narrative and financial reports for 2011, voting on recommendations for changes in terms of pastoral calls, electing the 2012 Nominating Committee, voting on a recommendation of the Session regarding a piece of property given to the church as part of the capital campaign, and any other business appropriate to the meeting. Please plan to attend. Childcare will be provided during the meeting.

One Book, One Congregation

In 2012 read a life-changing book *The Hole in our Gospel* by **Richard Stearns**, president of World Vision. The book addresses the questions: What does God expect of us? Is our faith just about going to church, studying the Bible and avoiding the most serious sins, or does God expect more? Have we embraced the whole gospel or a gospel with a hole in it? Books will be available for purchase through the church office in January for \$12. Books will be available for borrowing from the church library. The book is also available for purchase online (through Amazon or christianbook.com) in large print, audio CD, and Kindle e-book formats. There will be many opportunities to read the book: individually with the opportunity for a talk-back session on February 26 in Fellowship Hall, a weekday night men's Bible study, in the Thoughtful Christian Sunday school class, and the Sycamore Sunday school class (later this spring).

The ONE BOOK, ONE CONGREGATION MEN'S BOOK STUDY starts Wednesday, February 1st from 7-8 p.m. in the Donegal House. The study will run for six weeks on Wednesday nights. Please contact **Dan McCoig** (dan@firstchurch-winchester.org) for more information.

The ONE BOOK, ONE CONGREGATION TALK-BACK SESSION takes place Sunday, February 26th during the Sunday school hour in the Fellowship Hall.



HVAC RENOVATIONS UPDATE

By the time you read this, bid packages will be in the contractors' hands. We will receive the bids the first week of March. At that time, we will select a mechanical contractor and an electrical contractor and have a total cost for the project. It is our plan to award the contracts by the 15th of April. For further information, contact **Brent Miller** at brmiller@visuallink.com or (540) 888-4200.



**CCAP Sunday
3rd Sunday
of each month**

February 19

*"Humble yourselves
before the Lord, and he
will lift you up."*

James 4:10

**Four Cents-A-Meal
Hunger Offering
4th Sunday
of each month**

February 26



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

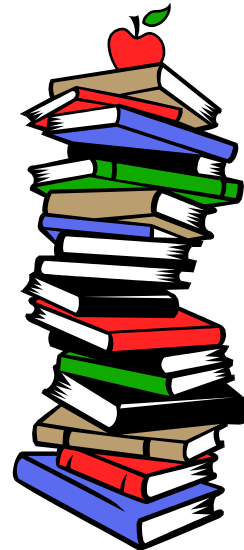
Many thanks to those who have made a commitment to the ministry and programming budget of the church for 2012. We have received 260 commitments totaling \$704,422. Last year we received 271 commitments totaling \$715,000. If you have not yet made a commitment, we urge you to do that through the cards in the pew racks. This is not only useful for your personal planning but helps the Session in its budgeting. We did meet our budget in 2011. Final figures will be available at the congregational meeting on February 12, 2012 at 12N. Additionally we have received 71 pledges for the building debt reduction for \$88,915 for 2012 against last year's figures of 86 commitments for \$128,849. We took a big bite out of the debt last year. Please help us to continue that effort.



BOOK AND A BUCK—WE MET OUR GOALS!

By Ed Pendleton

Thanks to your generosity, we have collected 1,131 books for the children of Mettu, Ethiopia, and the town's library that they use. We hope duplicate books can be sent to the orphanage in Gore, Ethiopia, and the girls' school in Addis Ababa. We also collected \$1,014 to apply toward shipping these books to Ethiopia. We exceeded both our goals of 1,000 books and \$1,000. We will end our campaign at the end of January, so there is still time to contribute books and bucks before we transport the books to Massanetta Springs and the funds to Books for Africa in early February. Thanks for your support and for making a difference in the lives of these children!



**40 Spiritual Practices for Lent
Ash Wednesday [Feb 22] through**

**Easter Sunday [Apr 8]
Excluding Sundays**

Adapted from

<http://sacredscreaming.blogspot.com/2010/02/40-spiritual-practices-for-lent.html>

Day One: Ask for help. Lent begins when we recognize that we can't do everything ourselves and we depend on God's grace for our lives. Experience God's grace by asking for and receiving help for something we can't do on our own.

Day Two: Follow "Journey to the Cross" www.d365.org an online special devotional for Lent/Easter. Journey to the Cross features specially composed music, daily scripture readings and brief reflections.

Day Three: "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Turn off the TV, computer, phone and rest in the stillness. Even if it is just for 5 minutes.

Day Four: Prayer walk in your neighborhood (where you live or work). Simply walk around and pray for what you see, hear, touch, and smell.

Day Five: Prepare and cook a "simple meal" of rice and beans for lunch or dinner. Give the money you save in preparing this meal to an organization that feeds the hungry. Pray before the meal and be reflective about those for whom this is their only meal.

Day Six: Start seedlings. Plant seeds in small jars and place them in the light. May they be physical reminders that we partner with God in creation.

Day Seven: Open your awareness to those things that are destructive in the world—sources of injustice and oppression that result in destructive behaviors that hurt individuals, communities, and creation.

Day Eight: Practice the Daily Examen. One of the long-established spiritual practices in Christianity, championed by Ignatius of Loyola

(a Spanish reformer and contemporary of John Calvin, who sought to reform the Roman church from within), is a discipline of self-examination and repentance Ignatius called examen. For more information:

<http://norprov.org/spirituality/ignatianprayer.htm>

Day Nine: Make a joyful noise to the Lord. Make music by singing a song you have memorized or put on a CD and sing along. Let your voice praise God.

Day Ten: Journey with Jesus. Read Matthew, Mark, Luke or John from beginning to end during Lent and journey with him from the manger to the empty grave.

Day Eleven: Circle of gratitude. Before meals invite everyone around the table to share one thing they are grateful for that day

Day Twelve: Call or visit someone who is lonely. This might include an elderly shut in, stay at home parent, someone who has recently lost their job or a grieving widow.

Day Thirteen: At the end of the day ask yourself "Where did I see God today?" Make a list.

Day Fourteen: Caring for others as ourselves take acts of truth-telling and confrontation. Abstain from laughing at jokes or comments that are hurtful to others. Share with that person your commitment to caring for God's children.

Day Fifteen: Keep a prayer journal (can be on the computer or in a paper notebook). Include prayers of joy, concern, and questions. Write down the prayers offered to God for yourself and for others.

Day Sixteen: Remember your baptism. Place a bowl of water in a visible place in your house. Touch the water and remember that we are linked to Christ and the Christian community through the waters of baptism.

Day Seventeen: Write a letter to God

Day Eighteen: When attending worship pay attention to how the music, liturgy, conversation, and fellowship time affect you. Be open to how God speaks to you through community.

Day Nineteen: Prayer on the move. When in the car be intentional about turning the radio off and not talking on the cell phone. When you are alone in the car, use that quiet time to be in prayer.

Day Twenty: Jesus didn't "convert" Christians, he formed disciples and sent them out to continue the formation process. Reflect on ways you have been shaped by the teachings of Jesus and shared them with others.

Day Twenty-one: Find a psalm or a hymn text that is meaningful to you. Write the words out and study them. Choose a different portion of the text for each week of Lent and memorize it.

Day Twenty-two: If you consider yourself a spiritual "dropout" reach out to someone you trust and talk about your feelings.

Day Twenty-three: Practice random acts of anonymous kindness.

Day Twenty-four: Pray the scriptures by using the ancient art of Lectio Divina. For more information: <http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html>

Day Twenty-six: Think of persons who haven't

heard from you in a while. Give them a call, or send them a card. If there is something that needs mending in your relationship, take the first step.

Day Twenty-seven: Find ways to live more simply, sharing God's good gifts with others by protecting the environment and supporting local farmers. Read stickers and labels to see where your food is grown. Make efforts to buy food grown within our community or state.

Day Twenty-eight: Learn the names of individuals contributing to the leadership of the local community. Offer prayers for them. Express your appreciation for their service.

Day Twenty-nine: Make a prayer wall at home. Put up a large piece of paper and encourage family members to write or draw pictures of the prayers of joy and concern they have for that day. Pray together for each person and for the prayer they have expressed.

Day Thirty: Slow down and observe the Sabbath. Whether Sabbath time is one hour in a day or a 24 hour period, take time to intentionally stop "working" and spend time in worship, prayer, and family time.

Day Thirty-one: Follow your breath as it leads to God. Simply observe your breath. Inhale and exhale slowly, recognizing that breathing is a life sustaining and God-infused action.

Day Thirty-two: Fast. The purpose of fasting is to support our prayers and heighten our awareness of a most basic human need. Paying attention to our hunger can help us connect to our thirst for God and the emptiness we feel. Fast one day or one meal to join our physical needs to spiritual ones.

Day Thirty-three: Spring cleaning can be more than a way to get rid of "stuff." Along with asking yourself "what don't I want" also practice asking "what don't I need?" Invite God into these questions and explore together a journey of letting go of the excess in your life.

Day Thirty-four: Light a candle. Pray as it is lit “Lord thank you for the gift of your Light in the midst of all darkness. Let this candle be a symbol of our faith in your presence among us.”

Day Thirty-five: We follow Jesus and journey with others whose heritage has left a path before us. Reflect on your faith journey and remember the names of those in whose footsteps you are following and who is on the road with you now. Find a way to share with them your gratitude for journeying with you.

Day Thirty-six: Find ways to recognize people as children of God. Make eye contact with the grocery store clerk. Smile at strangers.

Day Thirty-seven: Try fasting from a different kind of hunger, consumerism. Choose one day in Lent, or one day each week to prayerfully explore consumer spending habits and how we often buy more than we need. Refrain from making purchases on that day.

Day Thirty-eight: Death is inevitably part of the

Lenten journey as we tell the story of Jesus death on the cross and find assurance of our new life we have because of the resurrection. Take this time to remember those who have new life with God and be strengthened by the witness of their lives. Take out photos of family members and friends who have died. Talk about these people with your children or share their stories with a friend.

Day Thirty-nine: Learn and practice the traditional practice of praying the Stations of the Cross. Ask a friend who attends a Catholic church if you might attend a Lenten program with them that prays the stations, or visit: <http://www.markdroberts.com/htmlfiles/resources/stationsofthecross.htm>

Day Forty: Practice resurrection. We are the people of resurrection and hope, called to live passionately and compassionately with others, to defy death, to forgive, and to bring others back into the community, to do something that is life-giving, that fights death and needless suffering.

Connections 2012 begins in February

The pastoral staff -- Rich, Dan, and Maren -- have set a goal of telephoning every household of our congregation in 2012. In a larger membership congregation, getting to know one another can sometimes be a challenge.

The telephoning initiative is called “Connections 2012.”

Presently, the pastors pray daily for members and friends of the congregation and deeply appreciate the prayers of the congregation for each of them. One goal of Connections 2012 is to encourage the sharing of joys and concerns from members of the congregation that the pastors might pray to God for and about.

So, expect a telephone call from either Rich, Dan, or Maren in 2012. By the way, they promise not to call during the dinner hour.

In Memoriam, with Christian sympathy to the families

Jan 1 Marvin Gore
Jan 3 Harold Bowman
Jan 11 Peg Romine
Jan 17 Madeline Stewart

DEADLINE FOR THE March CALVIN CHATTER is February 12.

Send submissions to calvin.chatter@verizon.net.

CALVIN CHATTER

Winner of the annual Award for Publication Excellence (APEX) since 1998

CO-EDITORS: Dan McCoig, 540-662-3824, and Susan Kagey, 540-678-8616 or calvin.chatter@verizon.net

EDITOR EMERITA: Chi-Chi Kern

Produced and published monthly (except July). Circulation 750.

Publisher: First Presbyterian Church, 116 S. Loudoun St., Winchester, VA 22601, Tel. 540-662-3824

Fax: 540-662-8498

Email Address: info@firstchurch-winchester.org

World Wide Web Home Page: <http://www.firstchurch-winchester.org>

Founded July 16, 1788; Organized September 7, 1800

Sunday Worship Services 7:30 a.m. (Boyd Chapel), 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

New Stone Gathering (Fellowship Hall), 8:30 a.m.

Coffee and Cookies 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Richard W. Reifsnyder

Associate Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Dan M. McCoig, Jr.

Associate Pastor: The Reverend Maren Sonstegard-Spray

Parish Associate: The Reverend Elizabeth Lewis

Director of Children's Ministry: Todd Bowman

Minister of Music: Roger Callis

Director of Adult Handbell Choirs: Lynn Reifsnyder

Organist: Pat Byers

Music Leader for New Stone Gathering: Amy Bowman