



## FEBRUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Rev. Robert R. Malsack, Interim Pastor

Sunday Mornings:

8:30 am Worship Service, Sanctuary

10:50 am Worship Service, Sanctuary

Childcare (located one level below the Sanctuary) available during all morning services.

### *Pastoral Reflections*

It was Sunday morning, January 1<sup>st</sup>, the dawn of a new day, the dawn of a new year. Marsha and I were visiting our oldest daughter at the home of her friend Vince. The home sits on the Colorado River across from Parker, AZ. I arose early to spend time in meditation and contemplation. With the river rolling by and the desert mountains in the distance, a beautiful setting was provided to think about my Lord. One of my readings was Exodus 14, the story of Israel's exodus from the land of Egypt. What an exodus it was by the powerful hand of God. The departure, the Egyptians in hot pursuit, the apparent dead end at the Red Sea, the miraculous parting of the sea, the destruction of evil, and the setting free. What a story of God's mighty deliverance of His people. One of the thoughts within my reading suggested that if the Lord had told His people all that He was going to do in their exodus beforehand, they might very well have chosen to stay where they were. My mind wondered, 'Why?' I wasn't sure if I agreed with that thought.

Upon completing my devotions, I walked back up to the house. Vince asked if anyone wanted to take a ride with him in his off-road vehicle. 'Sure.' I said somewhat surprising myself with my exuberant answer. Vince enjoys racing off road and he has a vehicle called a pre-runner used to learn racecourses. So out to the pre-runner we went. I got in on the 'passenger' side and was immediately strapped in tightly with a belt using 3 buckles. Next a very strong helmet was placed on my head and lastly, a brace was wound around my neck. I started to wonder if I really wanted to do this. Too late now. The engine was fired up and away we went out into the desert. At first, there were some washouts to be passed over, which appeared to be significant jarring bumps, but the shocks on the vehicle took the bumps in such a manner, I felt like I was floating over them---at 50 mph. Now we came to a straight stretch and time to accelerate---60, 70, 80, and at one point up to 99 mph. You could say, 'the telephone polls looked like a picket fence'. At first I thought, I should be scared but then I thought, Vince knows what he is doing, he is experienced at this form of driving, and he is smart enough not to do something 'stupid' that is going to jeopardize his passengers or the vehicle. I trusted him. So I completely relaxed and enjoyed the ride and indeed, it was thrilling.

Upon safely arriving back at the house, I thought again about my morning devotions and the question raised in my mind, 'why would the people of God have chosen to remain if God had told them what He was going to do?' Then I thought about the invitation to take a ride. If it had been told me everything that I was in for, I might have chosen not to go. But because I didn't know and I trusted the driver, I began the New Year with quite a thrill.

Then I thought about this in light of the dawning of a new year. It is not given what 2012 holds but if God would divulge His plans, I might very well not want 'to go' or at least go kicking and screaming. But He has securely strapped me in so I will be safe. Further, He is behind the wheel and is experienced with this course. He even drove it Himself once. He knows what He is doing and His highest priority is the salvation of His passengers. So, I simply need to sit back, trust His driving, and enjoy the ride. For when it is completed; I will have had 'the ride of my life'.

With Love,

[revbob@fpcsparta.org](mailto:revbob@fpcsparta.org)



### Session Highlight

The session held its regularly scheduled meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. The following is the summary of the actions taken:

The session received with regret the resignation from session of John Krejci because of conflicts with his schedule. John's strong leadership on the Mission Council was applauded.

The annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

An explanation of the summer schedule for staff, originally passed in the fall, was clarified. During the summer months the church will not be opened on Fridays. This will provide a significant savings.

The session's contract with Pastor Bob will expire February 1<sup>st</sup>. It was agreed to continue the contractual agreement on a month-to-month basis until the PNC is led to the one who will be the installed minister of the church.

A balanced budget for 2012 was presented and passed with an amendment to fully fund the per capita tax. It is hoped that the members of the congregation will be willing to assume their portion of the per capita tax by giving an additional gift of \$29/member.

The recently completed banners from the Sunday morning Banner Design class were received enthusiastically. The two banners reflect the church's mission statement and will be hung on each side of the Sanctuary in the balcony. Pastor Bob will preach two sermons on the Mission Statement in February.

The next session meeting, February 27<sup>th</sup>, will be devoted to the structure of the session for the coming year.

### Youth Ministry News

*The Old Testament reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:06*

### JAM (Jesus And Me) Program (K-8th Grade)

2/12 - Laser Tag Event - TBD

2/19 - JAM: 4:15 - 6:00 pm

**For more information please contact David Barone, [youth@fpcsparta.org](mailto:youth@fpcsparta.org) or 973-896-4104.**

### Senior High Fellowship

#### Senior High January Calendar:

2/10 - Game Night - 7:30 - 10:00 pm

2/12 - Senior High Fellowship - 5:15 - 7 pm

2/26 - Senior High Fellowship - 5:15 - 7 pm

3/3 - Coffee House Talent Show

**For more information please contact David Barone, [youth@fpcsparta.org](mailto:youth@fpcsparta.org) or 973-896-4104 or Bob Forrester, [beforr@earthlink.net](mailto:beforr@earthlink.net), or 973-809-0119. Please also visit [www.fpcsparta.org](http://www.fpcsparta.org) or the First Presbyterian Church of Sparta Facebook Page.**

### Blessed Beginnings

Blessed Beginnings is having an Open House and Registration Friday, February 10th from 9:00 to 11:30 am. There will be a discounted registration fee for anyone who registers their child at the Open House.

**PW NEWS**

**Monthly Gathering**

**Thursday, February 9, 2012**

**at Noon in the Community Rooms**

*We invite you to join us for our February meeting.* As a way of sharing the talents God has given us, we are asking you to bring samples (if that is possible) of your talents, hobbies or interests. You can also talk about it if you do not have anything to show. We will share and talk about them in our fellowship time together. Please bring your own sandwich. Dessert and beverages will be provided. Be with us as we enjoy Christian fellowship, devotions, and program.

**No Board meeting in February**

**Presbyterian Women of Newton Presbytery  
Annual Retreat**

**GET AWAY WITH GOD**

*"Sabbath Keeping.....Rest, Restore, Renew"*

*Led by Linda Gaden at Villa Pauline in Mendham, NJ*

*Friday evening, February 24th to Sunday, February 26th at noon*

*Call Marie Chesnutt for further information*

**FEBRUARY CIRCLE MEETINGS**

**"WRAPPED IN LOVE" CIRCLE: Wednesdays, February 1 & 15, 10 a.m.**

The knitting circle will meet at the home of Sheila McMeen. **In case of bad weather**, please call Sheila (729-7539) to see if the meeting will be held. *We also ask you to call Sheila if you are not able to attend.* We invite you to join us as we work on prayer shawls. If anyone would like to work on a shawl at home, please let us know. We invite anyone who would like to learn to knit to join us.

**BOOK CIRCLE: Thursday, February 9, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Rosemary Dietrich.** If you enjoy reading, please join us for this monthly time of discussion and fellowship. The book we will be reading for February is Augie March by Saul Bellow. New members are always welcome! For further information, call Sheila McMeen (729-7539) or Frankie Smith (729-7523).

**"BAD GIRLS of the BIBLE" STUDY CIRCLE: Tuesday, February 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Community Rooms.** Please join us as we continue our study of the Book of Ruth. Please bring your Bible with you to each meeting. A video will be shown, followed by Bible Study and discussion. Call Gail Shawger (729-5901) for further information.

**DEBORAH CIRCLE: Thursday, February 16, 10:00 a.m. in the Library.**

Join us as we continue our Bible Study from PW Horizons, "Confessing the Beatitudes". We will be discussing Lesson 3, "Greatly Honored Are the Humbled". Please read Matthew 5 and Psalm 37 in preparation for the study. Our discussion will center on how Jesus renews God's promise to those whom society humbles. We invite you to join our active discussions and studies. Call Ann Muyskens (726-9704) for further information. We welcome all newcomers.

**RUMMAGE SALE**

Rummage already? The semi-annual PW Rummage Sale will be held this year from April 15th through April 21st. Drop off days will be Sunday, April 15th from noon to 6 pm and Monday April 16th from 9 am to 6 pm. PW has decided to put the Rummage Sale on a bit of a diet. Due to the great cost of disposing of unsold, heavy items, we are **NO LONGER ACCEPTING** the following items:

## **FURNITURE, TELEVISIONS, COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, EXERCISE EQUIPMENT & BABY CAR SEATS.**

We will continue to need clothing, shoes, bags, small appliances (coffee makers, crockpots, and the like), household items and Rummage Plus (decorative items, new or designer things.)

The Rummage Sale will continue to benefit the needy of Sussex County with its normal Wednesday Give-A-Way Day. All funds raised by the sale of items will be used for mission work in the county or where need is great around the world.

### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN PURPOSE**

*Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, to support the mission of the church worldwide, to work for justice and peace, and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.*

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## **Adult Studies**

**Sunday Morning Education Hour (9:40 - 10:40 am) Options:**

### **The Wisdom of the Lord**

**Led by Pastor Bob in Pehrson Hall**

*Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1: 24b*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom Psalm 111:10*

We are a culture that prides itself in our intellectual genius. Has there ever been a culture more advanced in knowledge? Yet the behavior of so many is in direct contradiction to that level of expertise that is exalted. Are we as wise as we are smart? What is the difference? Throughout scripture, the wisdom of God is something to be desired above all else. What is the wisdom of God? Through this study we will look at wisdom as seen in scripture. Four great books of wisdom, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs/Solomon, will be studied for the pearls of wisdom they contain. These books receive less attention than most of the rest of scripture. Maybe that is why there is a shortage of the profound wisdom they contain. An outline of the course is as follows:

2/5 - *How did this guy get in here?* **Ecclesiastes - little known, and little read; how unfortunate.**

2/12 - *Was Job really patient?* **Job - a healthy perspective on life.**

2/19 - *How to make love to your spouse?* **The Song of Songs/Solomon - wisdom for romantic love**



### **BANNER DESIGN**

**Meeting upstairs in the Annex**

The Banner Design class will be considering future banners this month.

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

**Meeting in the History & Prayer Rooms**

Intercessory prayer is the topic we will be studying on Sunday mornings during the Education Hour. If you are interested in exploring why we should be praying please join us. For more information please contact Debby Ormsby, debby.ormsby@nicholsonconstruction.com, or 973-670- 3302.

### LIFE ISSUES CLASS

#### **Meeting in the Church Parlor**

We will continue our discussion of the book If the Church Were Christian by Philip Gulley. We will discuss the chapter on "Meeting needs would be more important than maintaining institutions." From the flyleaf of this great discussion starter: "While many denominations claim to be growing, the largest group in American religious life is the disillusioned--people who have been involved in the church yet see few similarities between the church's life & the person of Jesus." We are discussing, again from the flyleaf, "Is this really what Jesus called us to do?" We are delving into what Jesus does call us to do, individually, as well as, a community. We extend to each & every one of you a personal invitation to meet with us & help us discuss this timely topic.

### HEBREWS CLASS

Led by Carole Bradley; meets in the Library.

### DURING THE WEEK ADULT STUDY CLASSES

**Monday Night Study:** God's Word Bible Study at 7:00 pm in the Church Parlor. We are watching Kenneth Bailey's DVD collection of the Parables. Contact Margaret (729-6197) for more information.

**Tuesday Night Men's Study:** 7:30 pm in the Library

Contact Doug Ellsworth ([dkells@ptd.net](mailto:dkells@ptd.net), 729-4472) or Bob Felten (bobfelten@gmail.com, 973-670-1985) for information.

**Wednesday Evening Bible Study:** 7:30 pm in the Upper Room of the Annex, led by Pastor Bob:  
**Spiritual Disciplines**

The spiritual disciplines class will complete the study of the book *Spiritual Classics* in the month of February. The choice of articles will come from the 6 that were not covered over the year. The specific articles will be announced in the insert each Sunday of February. The Lenten focus for the featured class will be announced during the month of February.

**Wednesday Night Women's Bible Study:** 7:30 pm in the Library. We are reading & discussing Andy Stanley's "Enemies of the Heart: Breaking Free from Four Emotions That Control You". Andy examines how *four enemies of the heart* (guilt, anger, greed & jealousy) can infiltrate our lives and damage our relationships. Contact Kathy Vincelette (973-222-0290) for more information.

**Thursday Evening Bible Study:** 7:30 pm in the Library

This is a small group study for fellowship and prayer, meeting every other Thursday. Meeting 2/2 & 2/16. Please contact Tony Bacchetta ([tony@askcai.com](mailto:tony@askcai.com)) for more information.

### February Birthdays:

- 01 Dorothea Bolger, Julie Burdsall
- 02 Harvey Hummel, Andrew Felten
- 03 Bridget McGahey
- 04 Edward Shawger, Barbara Hayes
- 05 Kristi Butera, Stephen Finegan
- 06 George Criezis, Tricia Anderson
- 07 Judith Forrester
- 08 Kathy Melick, Nicholas Prezioso
- 09 Sage Errichetti



10 Erin Scott, Ben McDonald  
11 Rebecca Wiltshire  
12 Tippy Kerwin  
13 David Muyskens, Peter Ormsby, Brittney McGahey  
14 Leah Dykstra, Matthew Dunbar, Tate Maloney  
15 Kimberly Finnegan  
16 Christopher Jurevich  
17 Beverly Bennett, Kaylin Botha  
18 Jake Rotunda  
19 Anthony DeMarchi, Mary Finnegan  
20 James Blecker  
21 Jean Kinney, Keith Urbanski, Kylie O'Neil  
22 Kelly Criezis, Anita Cooper, Peter Karl, Kenneth Roenicke  
23 David Wellman  
24 Kendra Payne  
25 Tony Bacchetta  
26 Helene Larson, Alison LaChac  
28 Nate Simmons

## February

### Church Calendar

(see articles for details)

01 - Wrapped in Love 10 am, Worship Team 6:45 pm  
02 - Property Council 7 pm, PNC 7:15 pm, Chancel Choir 7:30 pm  
05 - Communion, Worship 8:30 am, Coffee Time 9:30 am, Adult Studies & Sunday School 9:40 am, Worship 10:50 am  
06 - Mission Council 7:30 pm  
07- Staff Meeting 12:30 pm, Worship Team 6:30 pm  
09 -PW Lunch/Meeting 12 pm, Chancel Choir 7:30 pm, PW Book Circle 7:30 pm  
10 - Blessed Beginnings Open House 9 am  
11 - Annual Meeting of the Congregation 6 pm dinner, 7 pm Meeting  
12 - Worship 8:30 am, Coffee Time 9:30 am, Sunday School & Adult Studies 9:40 am, Worship 10:50 am  
13 - CE Council 7:30 pm  
14 - Staff Meeting 12:30 pm, Worship Team 6:30 pm,  
15 - Wrapped in Love 10 am, Membership Council 7 pm  
16 - Deborah Circle 10 am, Chancel Choir 7:30 pm  
19 - Worship 8:30 am, Coffee Time 9:30 am, Sunday School & Adult Studies 9:40 am, Worship 10:50 am  
20 - Media & Tech Meeting 6:30 pm, Worship & Sacraments 7 pm, Finance Council 7:30 pm  
21 - Staff Meeting 12:30 pm, Bad Girls 6:30 pm, Worship Team 6:30 pm  
22 - Ash Wednesday Service 7:30 pm  
23 - Chancel Choir 7:30 pm  
26 - Worship 8:30 am, Coffee Time 9:30 am, Sunday School & Adult Studies 9:40 am, Worship 10:50 am  
27 - Session 7:30 pm  
28 - Staff Meeting 12:30 pm, Worship Team 6:30 pm



29 - Lenten Service 7:30 pm

**Also Meeting in February: (See "Adult Studies")**

**Worship Schedule for February**

The month of February brings the beginning of Lent. Please see our Lent Booklet for our schedule.

**February 5<sup>th</sup>** - regular worship at 8:30 & 10:50 am with Communion. The Souper Bowl offering to be taken on behalf of the needs of hunger in the area

**February 12<sup>th</sup>** - regular worship at 8:30 & 10:50 am. Focus: Mission Statement Part I

**February 19<sup>th</sup>** - regular worship at 8:30 & 10:50 am Focus: Mission Statement Part II

**Wednesday, February 22** - Ash Wednesday service at 7:30 pm with the imposition of ashes

**February 26<sup>th</sup>** - First Sunday of Lent, regular worship at 8:30 & 10:50 am

**Watch for announcements of additional plans during Lent**

**Prayer and Healing Time**

**February 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm**

**Sparta Ambulance Building**

Spend a quiet contemplative time just soaking with our Father. Worship in song and prayer, a short message and celebration of the Lord's Supper. Prayer teams are available for those seeking healing, inner or physical, all in the powerful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do we have your current email address so we can stay in touch with occasional messages? If not, please email me at [fpcchurc@fpcsparta.org](mailto:fpcchurc@fpcsparta.org).

Please consider having your Sparta Notes emailed to you each month. It would save us both postage & paper costs. Thanks. Diane



**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup> 6:00 pm, Pehrson Hall

Church Members come and enjoy a relaxed meal before we are called together for our meeting. Copies of the 2011 Annual Report are available in the Narthex and also available at the meeting. If you take one, please be sure to bring it to the meeting with you. Nursery will be available for your children.

A head count is needed for planning the dinner so please complete and tear off below and drop in the collection plate.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Dinner: Name & Number of people attending:

\_\_\_\_\_

I (we) can't attend dinner but will be attending meeting:

Name & Number of people attending:

