

NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005 | VOLUME 5

Sunday Sermon Series

Dr. Gareth Icenogle
Developing Mature
Character in the
Psalmdic School
of Prayer

January 16
"Patience," Ps. 40:1-11

January 23
"Courage," Ps. 27:1-9

January 30
"Integrity," Ps. 15

February 6
"Nobility," Ps. 2

February 13
"Confession," Ps. 32

February 20
"Security," Ps. 121

February 27
"Joy," Ps. 95

March 6
"Trust," Ps. 23

March 13
"Hope," Ps. 130

March 20
"Blessing"
Palm Sunday, Ps.
118:1, 19-29

An Interview with the Pastor's Wife

National XPress Editor Richard Armstrong interviewed Vida Icenogle, the wife of NPC's new pastor, Gareth Icenogle.

[Editor's Note: Mrs. Icenogle is a very accomplished businessperson who has spent nearly thirty years working at the highest levels of institutional finance and now runs her own part-time consulting firm in that field. But for the purposes of this interview, we decided to focus on who she is as a person and on her journey of faith.]

NX: First things first, is it "Vee-da" or "Vie-da?"

VI: It's pronounced "Veeda." My maiden name was "Smith," and my parents wanted to give me something very unusual to go along with that rather common name, so they found this name, which means "life" in the Romance languages and "the beloved" in Hebrew.

NX: What do you think is the best part about being a pastor's wife?

VI: The best part is making the commitment to be a partner with Gareth in his ministry, and to be a confidante for him.

NX: The most challenging part?

VI: The most challenging part is to maintain a pri-

vate life while at the same time living a very public life. I probably felt this most strongly when it came to my children. Gareth and I tried to give our kids the best of what we had been blessed with, being raised in

Christian homes, while protecting them from an "overexpectation" because their Dad happened to be a pastor.

NX: Speaking of that, do you think it's difficult to be a "Preacher's Kid?" Do you think your own kids handled it well?

VI: I think they did handle it well, but it's a very unusual experience. Very few of their friends at school really understood what it was like. But one time in Bethlehem they both came home from school very excited because they each had met this really 'cool' person whose Dad was also a pastor, and it turned out they were siblings, too! So they felt very

Continued on page 2



NATIONAL X PRESS

A bimonthly publication
of The National
Presbyterian Church

DEADLINES:

Nov./Dec.: Oct. 1
Jan./Feb.: Dec. 1
March/April: Feb. 1

STAFF

Editor Richard Armstrong
Staff Editor Kate Brinkley
Desk Editors

Worship: Sally Kaplan
Outreach: Keith Patman
Congregational Care:
Sonny Rimback

Nurture: John Halvonik
XPress@NatPresCh.org
202/537-7574

Music at National – Live and on CD

By Jan Childress

Pincipal Organist Bill Neil and Associate Organist Mary Mozelle are not only busy concert performers but active recording artists as well. Bill's latest CD, "A Festive Proclamation," recorded in the sanctuary last spring, is available for sale in the bookstore adjacent to Stone Hall. Bill describes the recording as "a gift to the church," filled with popular masterworks often requested by NPC members, such as the *Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor* by J.S. Bach and Widor's *Tocatta* from Symphony No. 5, heard every Easter morning.

Last fall, Mary recorded "The Wedding Book," a collection of ceremonial music for organ and

Continued on page 5



The Alpha Course is Coming Back!

By Rick and Betty Hawthorne

Do you know someone who seems to be looking for meaning and purpose, wondering what is true in life, or trying to decide what to believe? The Alpha Course can provide the answers and a safe place for discussion of these topics. Through video lectures and small group discussion, the course covers the basic beliefs of Christianity, with biblical teachings and nice touches of humor.



Randy Edwards

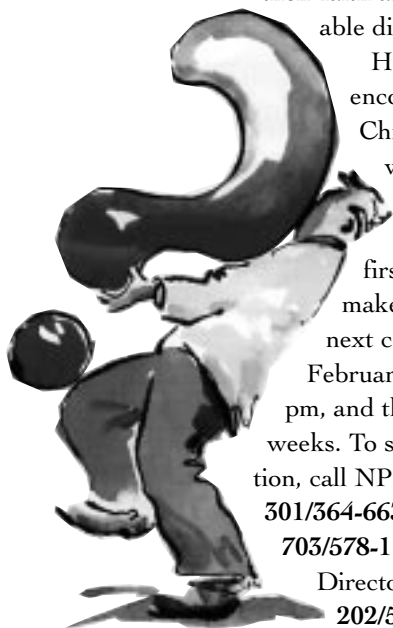
The Alpha Course was developed and filmed in London at Holy Trinity Brompton Church, with Nicky Gumbel teaching, and is now given in churches all over the world. Last April, NPC hosted Nicky and other speakers at a two-day Alpha Conference, attended by over 1,000 people. It took the work of many volunteers, ably led by Hunter Weimer, to make the conference a success. Many more churches are now equipped to bring the course to their communities.

"I found Alpha to be a great place to explore questions about our Christian faith, and discover new things about it," explains Randy Edwards, who led a discussion group at the Alpha course last spring. Alpha has proven to be an effective way to welcome seekers and help believers become more knowledgeable. Many NPC members say it has strengthened their faith and made them more comfortable discussing their beliefs.

How can you use this resource to encourage someone to learn about Christianity? Do you have a friend who seems curious about your life at NPC? Invite them to the Alpha course, and attend the first night with them if it would make them more comfortable. The

next course will start on Tuesday, February 8, with a special dinner at 7 pm, and the course will continue for ten weeks. To sign up or to get more information, call NPC members **Linda Lang**, 301/364-6630, or **David Bollinger**, 703/578-1120, or NPC's Outreach Director, **Hunter Weimer**, 202/537-7483, or e-mail Hunter, HWeimer@NatPresCh.org. See our

web site for further information, www.NationalPres.org. x



Continued from page 1

blessed by that, and all four of them remain friends to this day.

NX: How do you feel about moving to Washington? What are your initial reactions to the area?

VI: We're very excited about it. I think of this as an environment that will give me some opportunities for growth both personally and professionally. I'm a big fan of art museums and concerts when I travel, and I've always enjoyed Washington in that regard. By the way, National Presbyterian was always the place we'd come to worship if we were in Washington on a Sunday!

NX: What do you think are Gareth's greatest strengths as a pastor?

VI: I'm his biggest fan, so you'll have to keep my comments in perspective. I really enjoy his preaching. I enjoy his teaching. But I especially admire his leadership abilities. He has been blessed with a bright mind, so he can figure things out, set a vision, and develop an agenda. But he knows that churches are organizations made up of volunteers who choose to work out of a sense of goodwill and commitment. So he's good at helping people reach their own decision to participate and contribute.

NX: Of all the different ministries of the church, where will you want to direct your own energies?

VI: I'm very passionate about leadership, so I'm looking for opportunities to do some things in that arena. I'm also passionate about music, so I'm seriously considering the possibility of joining the choir. I'm really looking over a variety of opportunities to get more involved, just as any new member would.

NX: Speaking of music, what do you think is the purpose of music in worship?

VI: I think it's a vehicle to invite us into the presence of God. I think it calls us to a sense of that awesome majesty that takes us from the finite to the infinite. It puts us in touch with the core aspects of who God is — beauty, graciousness, and ultimately, love.

NX: Who were some of your role models when you were growing up and today?

VI: My parents, of course. I feel very blessed that my parents and a very special aunt encouraged me to pursue higher education, to have a career of my own, and yet to remain committed to my faith. As an adult, Coke Evans (wife of former NPC pastor Louis Evans, Jr.) and Rev. Dr. Roberta Hestenes were important mentors for me as I served on the U.S. Board of World Vision. There are also others I know through my professional life who have modeled well-integrated lives pursuing excellence in business and faith.

NX: What are the challenges of being a serious Christian in business, particularly in the rough-and-tumble world of finance?

VI: When you work alongside people every day and try to do the best job you can, often under difficult circumstances, it never ceases to amaze me how often the "life journey" questions come up. And these are the opportunities you get to gently share your Christian faith with others and see the transformation that Jesus can work in their lives. x

Church Hosts NPS at Pancake Breakfast on Shrove Tuesday, February 8

By Susan Holt

It's time once again to toss the pancakes...and for the kids at National Presbyterian School to eat as many as we can toss. The children will come to Stone Hall for a Pancake Breakfast, games with Pancake Man, and a brief homily by Rev. Eunice McGarrahan on Shrove Tuesday, February 8.

Last year, on February 24, the NPC Children's Ministry hosted a Shrove Tuesday pancake breakfast for the students. Children's Ministry Director Kathy Daniels and Mitch Gore, Youth Ministry Director, with staff and volunteers, organized a much-loved program. Bob Rich turned out hundreds of delicious pancakes, along with fresh fruit, juice, and milk, for the children to enjoy during the presentation, which centered around a Lenten message.

In the Christian calendar, Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. The origin of the name "Shrove" comes from the archaic English word "to shrive," meaning to absolve people from their sins. It was common in the Middle Ages for shrovers (priests) to hear people's confessions at this time, preparing them for Lent.

The practice of eating pancakes and pastry began in the Middle Ages when Christians had to abstain from all animal products during the forty days of Lent. This practice necessitated the consumption of all eggs and animal fats no later than the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. Each country can claim its own peculiar spin on the custom: in Ireland, for example, on "Pancake Tuesday" very thin pancakes are eaten hot with a sprinkling of castor sugar and lemon juice. Other countries prefer to call the day Fat Tuesday: in France (Mardi Gras) and Sweden (Fettisdagen) the day is celebrated with consumption of rich pastries, generally eaten only on this day.

In addition to the food traditions associated with this special day, there have historically been various games, contests, and races throughout the day. One such game is to toss pancakes at a target, with the winner supposedly gifted with good luck throughout the coming year. Conversely, it was considered bad

luck to drop a pancake. In fact, Napoleon blamed the failure of his Russian campaign on a pancake he had dropped years before at Malmaison during the Candlemas season.

At last year's pancake breakfast we were extremely fortunate to have our very own Pancake Man, who attended the event resplendent in costume and mask, ready to oversee feats of skill and derring-do. In addition to organizing the terrific decorations, Kathy Daniels had secretly tagged a number of the students' chairs, and those children were called to participate in pancake-tossing games on the stage to the amusement of the audience. Pancake Man and his staff had the events well-in hand, and there were probably no more than two or three dozen pancakes and a couple of quarts of syrup on the stage floor when the competition was over.

Rev. Eunice McGarrahan gave a homily and spoke briefly on the history of Shrove Tuesday. With the help of fifth grader Luis Bowser, she told the children to give her examples of the bad things that happen to us and the not-so-good things we do to others. Every example given resulted in another book being put in Luis' backpack. With each added weight, she'd ask him, "Can you play basketball now?" Finally, she asked him if he could do anything, and he said, "No!" "Do you need someone to help take off your backpack?" she asked. "Yes!" Luis replied. This was to illustrate the Lenten lesson that on Shrove Tuesday in England, people clean out their houses, representing the forgiveness and fresh start they receive from God's forgiveness.

At the close of the breakfast, Pancake Man magnanimously bestowed The Golden Spatula Award on Headmaster Jay Roudebush. The criteria for the award have been lost in the mists of time, but the sentiment was genuine, and it is understood that the award holds a prominent place on the Headmaster's office wall. It is certain that all participants look forward to this year's breakfast with great anticipation. X

Music

Continued from page 1

trumpet, with Charles Seipp, U.S. Army Band, at National. The CD will be released early in 2005, but selections will be heard first in Mary's recital on Sunday, February 20, at 3 p.m. in the sanctuary. Joining them will be National Symphony Orchestra cellist Yvonne Caruthers, who frequently collaborates with Mary on recital programs. In recognition of President's Day, Mary will perform a rousing "bells and whistles" organ arrangement of John Philip Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. And to honor Dr. Gareth Icenogle at

the beginning of his first full year of ministry at National, her program includes *Sonata No. 1* in F minor by Felix Mendelssohn, one of the pastor's favorite composers.

National's magnificent Aeolian-Skinner organ needs to be recorded more frequently, says Bill Neil. "This instrument is one of the great church pipe organs in the United States," he explains. "It should be heard far and wide." These CDs and the concerts taking place in 2005 are part of an exciting new recording initiative that will highlight the sanctuary organ, individual performers, and the chancel choir. Profits from the organ's CD sales support its maintenance and endowment. X



Living into a New Name

By Dr. Gareth Icenogle

Naming is a very important part of being a human being. In the Hebrew tradition, there was always an intimate connection between the name and the true nature of a person.

When John the Baptist was pointing to Jesus, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God.” And as the disciples of John began to follow Jesus, Jesus turned and looked at Peter, saying, “Yes, today you are Simon, the son of John, but tomorrow, you will be Peter, the son of God.” He understood Peter to be one who would be called to something new. His new life would be different than what Simon had been living.

When Jesus names Simon, “Peter,” he is delivering a clear statement to Simon about his new identity in God. God adopts him; God chooses him and claims him. God is taking possession and responsibility for him. As Jesus walks with Peter, Jesus expects that this Simon will become Peter.

The Spirit will transform you and change you into the new image of who God wants you to become. In God’s presence, you are not locked into who you have been in the past.

There is a wonderful exchange between Peter and Jesus at Caesarea Philippi when Peter finally gets it right. Jesus says, “Who do you say I am?” And Peter replies, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” Jesus says, “Flesh and blood does not reveal that to you, but God, my Father in heaven, has made that true for you. Blessed are you, Simon, son of John. You are now Petrus, the rock, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” That is an amazing attribution to somebody who has been as ambivalent and fuzzy as Simon.

“Who do you say I am?” When you answer that question, you enter into a relationship with the great Rock, Jesus Christ. Another attribute of being “the rock” involved the great confession Peter makes at this point: “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” We often forget that there is a

change and sanctification of those who follow Jesus. It is in the rock, the solid character, of the changed man, that Jesus will build his church. Simon will no longer be Simon; he will be Peter, the Rock. God builds the church upon “living stones:” people who change, people who are not the same as they used to be. God invites us into new life to demonstrate our new name. He beckons us to a new nature and completes our giftedness to the full extent as we walk with Jesus Christ. We are committed to the process of being changed, to be transformed into the image of Christ, to be sanctified, to be made holy, complete, to become mature.

We are expected, as we follow Jesus, to invite other people into such change. To help them change, we participate with God’s Spirit to hold them accountable to change. As we exemplify change in our own lives, we call attention to the One who makes things happen, Jesus Christ. And we reject the lie that you cannot change. If you believe that, you are betraying the very theology upon which this church is built.

How did Jesus lead Simon to become Peter? With a vision of whom Peter could become, Jesus called him out, prayed for him, and led him, day after day, through a consistent modeling of life, a constant confrontation of wrongness, and appropriate affirmation and accountability. Jesus called Peter to transforming faith all the way to the end of his life and beyond, into the resurrection. Speaking the truth in love consistently to him, Jesus never gave up on Peter. When he names Simon, Peter, he declares a completion point out in the future. “Peter, you will grow to maturity and your maturity will be powerfully effective in the lives of others.” God, who begins the work, will complete it.

The grace of God comes to us so that we might become whole, healthy and mature, even in our weakness and sinfulness.

Don’t wait to let the grace of God change your life. God’s grace desires to speak to you in such a way that you will become new and live into your new name and nature. If all you have left at the end of life is to confess the old name and nature, what a tragedy. Let God change your life. Let Jesus give you a new name. ✕

NATIONAL PRESS

The National Presbyterian Church
4101 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20016
www.NationalPres.org

First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit No. 9384