

NATIONAL X PRESS

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB 2010 | VOL. 1

WINTER SUNDAY SERMON SERIES

Worship at 8, 9:15, and 11 a.m.

In Faithful Hands

In Revelation

January 17

In Faithful Hands

Earl Palmer

January 24

First Love

Earl Palmer

January 31

Jesus Talks About Truth and Purity

Guest preacher: John Huffman

February 7

Jesus Talks About Spiritual Vitality
and Loyalty

Guest preacher: John Huffman

February 14

An Invitation to Supper

Earl Palmer

February 21

The Good Creation

Earl Palmer

February 28

The Grand Symphony

Earl Palmer

*For a complete schedule of worship
services, please check our web site,
www.NationalPres.org.*



NPC's Urban Missions Efforts Bear Fruit *2009 Marks a Year of Much Growth in Mission to our City*

By Gabe Chikes, NPC Urban Missions Committee Chair

After lying dormant for two years, NPC saw the resurrection in 2009 of an Urban Missions program that has touched many lives with the love of Christ. What a blessing it has been for us to witness or be personally involved in this effort to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and give hope to those who too seldom have felt any.

Our most recent Urban Missions effort began in April when a core group of NPC members gathered to consider how NPC might develop an urban/local mission program that would become sustainable — a part of our church's DNA. Each person brought passion and commitment to areas of ministry that, with their efforts, blossomed and bore wonderful fruit; their passion has become infectious.

Donations to Martha's Table

Experiences with two of NPC's newest urban partners provide good examples of our recent work. The first relates to Martha's Table. Claire Levy felt strongly about NPC's call to address hunger issues, particularly in Washington. She joined the Urban Team and was moved to learn of the efforts of the late Grace Clarke and of Mildred and Jerry Wheat, who gathered weekly offerings of food for Martha's Table.

Slowly and methodically, Claire organized various efforts over the course of the year; the first, "An Act of Grace," honored Grace Clarke for her work. That was followed by a long term weekly collection that ultimately led to the formation of a

Continued on page 2

...Now for Something Completely Different *NPC Youth Tackle Difficult, but Moving, Text for Production*

By Mitch Gore, NPC Director of Youth Ministry

For the last several years, NPC's Youth Ministry has chosen plays with a message imparted through music and laughter. This year, while looking for a new show, we came across the story of Corrie ten Boom, a young woman in Holland during the Second World War. This powerful drama, based on Corrie's book, "The Hiding Place," is a wonderful story of faith and love in grim circumstances.

Corrie and her family rescued many Jews from certain death at the hands of the Nazi SS during the Holocaust. Their rescue work can be compared to the efforts of Otto Schindler. Corrie's effort also helps us understand the story of Anne Frank, another young Dutch woman.

Narrated by Corrie's nephew Peter, the

story of Corrie ten Boom spans 32 years. The play begins in the ten Boom house in Holland, which is being used as a safe haven for Jews. Corrie's sister Betsie is concerned about the family's work with the underground, but they are deeply involved, and soon the house is raided by the Nazis — all are beaten and taken off to jail.

Corrie and Betsie end up in Ravensbrück Camp in Germany, which seems to be hell itself. Betsie dies there, but Corrie is eventually released and responds to the horror by carrying her inspiring story to the rest of the world. This show is an emotional drama with a powerful message of forgiveness, a witness that God is with

Continued on page 4

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DEADLINES

March/April: February 1

May/June: April 1

July/August: June 1

September/October: August 1

November/December: October 1

January/February: December 1

Editor: Kate Brinkley, 202.537.7574
or KBrinkley@NationalPres.org

Urban Missions

Continued from page 1

group of volunteers who gathered and transported food each Sunday to Martha's Table. At Thanksgiving, a special collection yielded an outpouring of donations. Due to the effort, inspiration, passion, and commitment of this faithful group, NPC has donated more than 3,500 items of food since May of this year, aiding and improving countless lives of those who would otherwise have gone hungry.

What has this involvement meant to Martha's Table and those they serve? Martha Katz, Development Coordinator recently wrote:

Our partnership with the National Presbyterian Church has had a tremendous impact on our programs, especially as the economy worsened over the course of the past year. Through dedicated giving, the church supported our McKenna's Wagon food program with canned goods, and helped Martha's Table meet the demand for our grocery day that was the largest in our history. The families in our children, youth, and family programs benefitted from the school supplies generously donated along with the non-perishable food. We are very grateful to be working hand in hand with our community toward mutual goals — helping people in need.

Everyone in NPC's Urban Missions leadership is grateful to those who worked to organize these efforts and to those who so generously responded.

Work with Habitat DC

Another Urban Team member, Linda Kim, felt strongly about NPC partnering with the DC affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. Her interest and passion began for this recent Syracuse grad while attending school and led to NPC starting up a new program for the D.C. Habitat affiliate

—A BrushWith Kindness. Partnering with Samaricorp, a Community Development Corporation established by New Samaritan Baptist Church in the Trinidad neighborhood of Washington, Linda and others from NPC participated in four week-end events to improve existing homes in areas where Habitat also is building.

Linda's passion led to our involvement, giving Habitat an opportunity to increase the faith-based community's participation in their projects. For three successive week-ends, NPC volunteers worked on the home of a young woman named Joy and her mother who provided us



with wonderful lunches. Likewise we met Pastor Truesdale, who is active in street ministry in the Deanwood neighborhood, when we put siding on his house. Many NPC volunteers expressed their gratitude for being able to build relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ from New Samaritan Baptist Church.

What has this meant to Habitat and those served? Dennis Smith, "A Brush With Kindness" Coordinator, says, "NPC has been an ideal partner for Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC's new A Brush with Kindness Program. They have come to each volunteer work day with the powerful combination of love in their hearts and determination in their actions. Equally impressive is the synergy resulting from their requested pairing with volunteers from the New Samaritan Baptist Church."

And Kent Adock, President of the local affiliate expressed his view of NPC's involvement over the last year

by adding, "Whether it is helping an elderly lady on a fixed income stay dry and warm from the elements, or repairing a broken porch board that may prevent a fall, NPC's support enables A Brush with Kindness workers to carry out the scriptural encouragement to make a difference to the 'least of these.'"

Mission Spreads across DC

There is far more to share than space would allow; descriptions of passion for service that is becoming evermore infectious: Clyde and Ginny Taylor's love for mission and local service leading to, among other things, stronger relationships with the Community Council for the Homeless and Friendship Place; and John Haltiwanger single-handedly converting your generous contributions to hams and turkeys and gifts to brighten Christmas at the Third Street Church of God's Christmas luncheon.

While passion drives many and inspires others, all described in this article already represent evidence of a spiritual DNA that comes from the great gift celebrated each December, the birth of Christ, our Lord and Savior. Each of us who receive the great gift of grace and salvation Christ provided then have the DNA of service care and compassion for the least and the lost within us. How will you act on that part of your identity this year? We invite you to explore the expanding opportunities for service here in Washington, D.C. As a body of brothers and sisters, NPC becomes ever known as a congregation with a DNA for service for his glory and in his name.

To learn more on how to get involved, please contact Megan Stuart, MStuart@NationalPres.org and request to be placed on a mailing list or to be given contact information of those who can inform you about spe-

Can Kids Worship?

by Jill Williams, Director of Children's Ministries

Before you answer that question, take a minute to think long and hard about what worship really is. Did you ask yourself the question, "Can kids sit still and stay quiet in church?" or did you ask yourself, "Can kids worship?" Robbie Castleman makes the difference clear in her book, *Parenting in the Pew: Guiding Children into the Joy of Worship*. The title suggests that there is much for children to discover in worship. In fact, there is much for parents to discover about worship in this book.

Trained to Worship

My theory is that one of the reasons many teenagers and twenty-somethings quit coming to church (You've all read the statistics!) is that they have never been "trained" to worship, as Robbie would say. They have been entertained in Sunday school, but as the entertainment wears off, so does their desire to come to church. Many may still find Jesus to be important in their lives but conclude that they can worship him on their own, without the church's help. Oh, have they missed it! Even those of us in church may be missing the "joy of worship," too.

Besides being the wife of a Presbyterian pastor and mother of two adult sons, Robbie has spent much of her professional life on staff with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship at Florida State University. She has also published several books and Bible study guides. Currently a professor of Biblical and Theological Studies

Parenting in the Pew

with Robbie Castleman

Chapel of the Presidents

Friday, January 8
from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

or **Saturday, January 9**
from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Breakfast from 9:30 to 10 a.m.

at John Brown University, Robbie is known not only for her wisdom but her practicality and sense of humor. Her theology will not fly over your head; rather, the realistic advice and true stories will grab you and stay with you.

You probably have questions about whether children belong in worship, what to do during the ser-

mon, what to do with the youngest children, why Sunday seems to be the craziest morning of the week, how to dress for worship, and what to say to children about prayer, tithing, or music. You may wonder where to sit, what to do about fidgety or giggly kids, what to do when you are the only parent with a handful of kids. The list goes on.

Join Robbie at National

The good news is that Robbie will be at NPC on January 8 and 9, prepared to share insight and ideas from her book in a way that connects specifically to NPC. She's looking forward to your questions and thoughts in a pragmatic conversation about worshiping with your kids.

Whether you have young children or teenagers who worship with you regularly, like the idea of bringing your kids to worship but don't see how it could work, have a newborn whom you would love to worship with someday, join us. Even if you have no children of your own at this church, but are interested in discussing and understanding more about kids and worship, you are welcome and invited to come.

A Well-Informed Understanding of Our Faith

by Rev. Eunice McGarraban, Associate Pastor for Christian Formation and Discipleship

One of the goals of NPC's Grow Ministries is to help members "grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). But this is a challenging task, even though NPC is part of a church tradition that highly values not only preaching, but the teaching of the Word of God. According to the Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington, "one of the hallmarks of Reformed Christianity has been an insistence that both clergy and laity need to have a well-informed understanding of the faith they profess." But, how do we make that happen in our congregation?

The Reformed Institute, of which NPC is a sponsoring congregation, will help us think about this at its 7th Annual Convocation to be held at National on Saturday, January 23, in Stone Hall. The convocation begins with a continental breakfast at 9 a.m. and continues until 1 p.m.

Two outstanding speakers help us think through some of these issues: Christian Smith, professor at Notre Dame and author of *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, will speak on "Passing on the Faith in an Unsettled Culture." Richard Osmer, professor Christian Education at Princeton Seminary and author of *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, will speak on "Passing on the Faith in the Reformed Tradition: Old Resources and New Strategies."

This convocation is for those who are interested in what and how we should be learning as disciples of Jesus Christ. It will be especially helpful for all those who are serving in the Grow Ministries of NPC (teachers, lay leaders, facilitators, etc.). The convocation is free of charge. Registration isn't required, but would be helpful. Contact Dianne Rodgers, DRodgers@NationalPres.org.

NPC History Snippets

Gathered by Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, NPC Elder

Winters in our parent congregations (First Presbyterian, Church of the Covenant, Covenant First, and the early National Presbyterian Church) were interesting times. We know that they worshipped as we do, that they had parallel faith and organizational struggles, but they reflected changing concerns of the city, the country, the world. This column's tiny sample of the hundreds of thousands of records in our own Culbertson Library and at the Library of Congress provide some surprising examples of differences through the years. Without whitewashing, apologizing, or explaining, here are some winter news clips: As for previous columns, it is a mistake to look for a theme.

March 2, 1817: Abstracts of Session Minutes First Presbyterian Church (on John Marshall Place/ 4 1/2 Street) M. B. suspended for absenting herself from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and not attending services; April 15, 1817: J.A. suspended from membership for working on the Lord's Day. (The full names are in the records.)

January 7, 1864: First Presbyterian Church at John Marshall Place. The Ladies of the Church requested the use of the new Audience Room for four lectures. The American Colonization

Society was to meet there on January 20. Two years later the ladies used the rooms for "a benefit for colored orphans." In March a resolution banned the use of the Audience Rooms, except for intellectual discussions. Records in the Culbertson Library.

January 12, 1880: The Washington Post local interest column, "City Talks and Chatter" records that Dr. Byron Sunderland (pastor of First Presbyterian Church) "addressed the Students of the National Deaf Mute College on human science."

January 25, 1883: The *Washington Post Letters* question: "Should the Library of Congress Galleries be Opened on Sunday." The Rev. Dr. Sunderland was one of three clergymen who said "yes," but, Dr. Sunderland added "beware of having the buildings become 'loafing places.'"

March 23, 1885: The *Washington Post*: Under the Page 1 headline "Where the President Will Worship," and the sub-head, "He Buys a Pew in Dr. Sunderland's Presbyterian Church" is this article: "The President [Grover Cleveland] did not attend church yesterday, but the ladies of the household...attended the First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Dr. Byron Sunderland...The question



which church the President will hereafter attend has been settled in favor of the church named, the President having bought and paid for a pew in it on Friday last. The statement that he would attend the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church was incorrect, as was stated by the *Post* a few days ago."

January 3, 1886: A full page, seven columns, on the marriage of President Cleveland to Frances Folsom in the White House features the happy couple, but an even bigger picture is that of the Rev. Byron Sunderland, who officiated at the service.

Corrie ten Boom

Continued from page 1

us even in the deepest pit. We recommend that children be at least nine years old to see the show.

The youth begin rehearsals in January. Preparation includes a visit to the Holocaust Museum, lessons from Rev. Eunice McGarrahan on the Holocaust, examining *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and a review of modern day heroes who took a stand for their faith.

We hope you will come and enjoy the show — supporting our youth and drawing inspiration for your own life from this amazing woman of faith.

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The National Presbyterian Church
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