

The Road to Redemption: The Church and Its Unity

By Pastor John

I never paid much attention to the sign. Many days I would drive by the Mary Ellen and Harvester Church of Christ (located at the corner of Mary Ellen and Harvester streets in Pampa, Texas) and see nothing but the name. One day however a member of my church, and a former member of that congregation, told me to look at what was written under the name. I looked and there were these words, “The Church of Christ meets here.” When I asked him why he wanted me to see those words his response was that it was his impression that the manner in which they were interpreted by his former congregation was that the only place where the Church of Christ met was at the corner of Mary Ellen and Harvester Streets. His impression was derived from the fact that in Pampa, a town of 18,000 persons, there were three Church of Christ congregations, each having emerged from the same mother church because of doctrinal disputes...and the members of one church would not speak with the members of the other churches because those “other” people did not believe the right things.

In many ways this has been the history of the Church. From the church in Corinth (46 CE) which was divided into factions, to the split between Roman (Western) and Orthodox (Eastern) churches in 1054 CE, to the Reformation (1500’s CE) in which Protestants split from the church in Rome, to the current move toward the creation of new Presbyterian denomination for conservative congregations the church has had this long history of dividing in order that one church could claim to be the only place where the Church of Christ meets. We have believed that by creating a new denomination or moving to a more “true” denomination we will no longer be associated with “those” lesser Christians. The joke on anyone who has ever broken away for those reasons is that the Mary Ellen and Harvester Church of Christ got it right...the Church of Christ does meet there...but it also meets in every other church where Christ is worshipped; which means we are all the church and are thus all related.

Hans Kung, in his book *The Church* (Sheed and Ward; New York: 1967; p. 85) puts it this way. “ Each individual ekklesia (each individual congregation, community or church) is not the ekklesia (the whole Church, community or congregation); but nonetheless fully represents it.” This means two things: Firstly: the local ekklesia is not a “section” or a “province” of the whole ekklesia. It is in no way seen as a sub-division of the real “Church”...no, the local Church does not merely belong to the Church, the local Church is the Church. Secondly, the “whole ekklesia” is not a “collection” or “association” of local Churches.” What Kung is trying to say is that the church exists wherever followers of Jesus Christ meet, whether as individual Churches or as the Church. This is so because every place where Jesus followers meet they receive the same Gospel, are given the same mission, receive the same grace and worship the same Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It matters not whether a church is liberal or conservative, Presbyterian or Pentecostal, speaks Spanish or Swahili; they are the church of Jesus Christ.

We at First Presbyterian attempt to affirm and live into this reality in many ways. First, we offer open communion. Anyone who has been baptized is invited to come and partake. It doesn’t matter if someone has been sprinkled by a priest or dunked in a river by a preacher; they are still part of the Church of Christ. Second, we work ecumenically. This Good Friday we will remember Christ’s death with our Methodist, Baptist, and Disciple neighbors. We understand once again that we are bound together by Christ, even if we belong to different denominations. Third, we work with Presbyterian churches which are more conservative than ourselves to do the work of Christ. This spring when many of our members travel to Mexico for a medical mission trip they will be teamed with members from the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio, which is a “Confessing Church”, meaning we disagree with them about who may be ordained. All of this is to say that we strive to live out the reality that we are linked with every community where “The Church of Christ Meets.”

The Road to Redemption – The Church and the Kingdom of God

Biblical Basics: Up on the Mountain – This image of going “up” is always an indication of movement toward God. This is true with Moses going up Sinai, Jesus going up the mountain to teach or to be transfigured. This is based on a cosmology in which up is toward heaven.

Next week: Mark 9:2-9 We will be looking at the transfiguration. This is one of the oddest parts of Mark’s story (as well as the other Gospels). It has mystic imagery and the return of Old Testament characters. As we will see it reminds us of a famous Exodus tale which will help us shed light on its meaning.

Mission

Needed: 2 Dressers For Foster Kids; 25 Binders

Have any of these items to help our foster kids, families and aging out youth? Thanks to those who have already contributed! Additional household items, clothing, cleaning supplies are always welcomed by our aging out foster youth who are starting up their own apartments and dorms. Contact Rev. Kate at 248-643-8373 to help.

Fostering Hope For Foster Kids

Have a minute? Then select a child’s name who is in foster care and currently hoping for a forever family. Just choose any one of these names and pray for him or her for a minute each day this month. You can see a picture and read about this child through the www.mare.org web site. Girls: Charlotte, Abbi, Alexis, Ashley, Becca, Amber, April, Elizabeth, Janelle, Melissa, or Shilo. Boys: Aaron, Anthony, Blaine, Bobby, Bradley, Brandon, Charles, Christian, Cody, Deshawn, Jacob, or Marquise. Your can choose from even more children on www.mare.org.

South Oakland Shelter (SOS)

February 26 through March 4

Again this year, First Presbyterian Church Birmingham partners with SOS in offering food, shelter and love to our homeless brothers and sisters. We will be hosting 30 to 35 guests during the week of February 26 through March 4. Our goal is having these new friends feel as one with us as we eat, relax and smile together. FPC volunteers can sign-up now in hallway across from Calvin Hall. Hearts will be warmed as we answer Christ's call to serve the least, the lost and the lonely. Last year FPC received high marks as a host church through guest surveys conducted by the SOS organization. There is a job for everybody. Let's continue our fine work as Everybody's Church.

Deacons’ Food Pantry

The Food Pantry Collection for the month of February will go to COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter) in Detroit, and they have requested any of the following: We can use any and all canned fruits, vegetables, dry beans, lentils, seasonings, cooking oil, coffee, tea, Kool-aid, condiments, cutlery items (plastic spoons, forks, knives), foam plates.

Supplies Needed for Medical Mission Team Trip

Our medical mission team travels to Mexico March 19-24, and we are collecting the following items to carry with us: children's and adult vitamins (no gummy vitamins, please), Tylenol (generic brands are fine), Advil/Ibuprofen, ointments including cortisone, Neosporin or similar, Desitin and other diaper rash treatments. Please place them in the basket in the main office.

Inclusion

We of the First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Michigan, strive to be a faithful, open and inclusive congregation. We welcome the participation of all people regardless of race, ethnic origin, worldly condition, or any other circumstance not related to the profession of faith.

Seeking Nominations for Elders and Deacons

Due February 28

During the month of February the Congregational Nominating Committee is soliciting suggestions for the six elders and ten deacons to be nominated for a three-year term that would begin in January 2013. Please nominate yourself or another member for these terms. For more information and to submit your suggestions please see the form in the green box on the counter in the main office.

Community

Lenten Booklets Available

Please pick up a copy of this year's Lenten Devotional Booklet sponsored by Presbyterian Women. It is available in the main office, Calvin Hall, and throughout the church until Easter.

Stop the Mealtime Madness!

Thursday, March 1, 9:30am, Fireside Room

Learn new strategies for eliminating the madness of meal planning and how to create a meal plan that fits your family's tastes and schedule. All without losing your mind! Polly Schlafhauser will lead this workshop.

March Madness

Wednesdays in March, 4:30-6pm, Fireside Room

Four weeks...just four weeks to learn to knit, learn to fix mistakes, learn a pattern, just knit together. Join us on Wednesdays in March. Questions: Sarah Krug 248.435.6588.

Dodge Ball Tournament,

Sunday, March 11, 2-5:30pm, Knox Auditorium

Middle School tournament 2-3:30pm; High School tournament 4-5:30pm

Come join in the fun. There will be teams of 5 people (same gender or mixed gender), \$2 per person if you register with a team, \$3 per person if you register solo (we will put you on a team). Prizes for 1st and 2nd place, as well as fun door prizes! Register at the sign-up table outside Calvin Hall or online on the church website.

Joyce Jones, Organist in Concert

Sunday, April 15, 3pm, Sanctuary

Tickets now on Sale, \$10.00 in advance, \$15.00 at the door. Available by contacting the church office 248.644.2040 ext. 137 or on our website at www.everybodyschurch.org.

Fitness Classes at the Church

One of your New Year's resolutions has just become that much easier to realize! Affordable fitness classes are now being offered at the church. Certified personal trainer, Pam Smith, will be teaching group fitness classes that cover general fitness and strength training. Classes are just \$15 per session. Avoid gym fees and the need for equipment! This is a great way to achieve your fitness goals. All ability levels are welcome! For more information, feel free to call Pam Smith at 248.632.2355.

Fun , Fitness and Fellowship

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10am, Youth Room

A Sam Freeman video stretching and strengthening exercise class to improve agility and balance. Work at your own pace. No cost involved, just come and join us.

Chancel Flowers

April 22 and April 29 are open dates for chancel flower donations. Please contact Sharon Evans, 248.433.0852, if you are interested in donating for either of these dates.

Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Center

Hand-In-Hand is a licensed learning center for children four months through five years. For more information, please contact the Director, Heidi Wilkinson, 248.644.2040 x-124.

Ongoing Community Groups

All are welcome to join these groups.

- **Stay & Play (Mondays)** 10am
Parent and young child play group. Contact Kim McGlynn, ext. 138
- **Shawl Ministry (Mondays)** Weekly 10am, Fireside Room
Contact Judy Gillow, 248.758.9569 or Sarah Krug, 248.435.6588
- **Tuesday Early Morning Bible Study** Weekly 7am in Room 141/142.
Current study: *First and Second Samuel*
- **Tuesday Morning Bible Study** Weekly 8:45am in the Library
Current study: *Second Samuel*
- **FPC Ringers Handbells**, Tuesdays, 7–8:30pm. No experience required, but some ability to read music is helpful.
- **Evening Book Club (second Tuesday)** 7pm in Fireside
Will not meet in February. March 13: *“The Social Animal”* by David Brooks
- **Morning Readers’ Circle (third Tuesday)** 10am in Fireside
February 21: *“Tiger’s Wife”* by Tea Obrecht
- **Fun, Fitness & Fellowship (Tuesday & Thursday)** 10am in Youth Room
A Sam Freeman video stretching and strengthening exercise class.
- **Presbyterian Women Bible Study (Third Wednesday)** 9:30am in Calvin
- **Men’s Bible & Brew (Third Thursday)** March 15, 5:45pm Bring your own brew, dinner provided. Call Hank Borchardt at 248.738.1607 for more information.

Wednesday Connect and Evening Worship

Wednesday night dinners are served 5:30–7pm in Knox Auditorium

This Week’s Ash Wednesday Menu: *Baked Cod & Salad or Salad Bar*

The offerings will be a full dinner for adults (\$9), a salad bar (\$9) and a children’s meal (\$4) There is a cap of \$25 per family. Reservations are required and can be made on the pew pads or in the church office, by phone 248.644.2040 and on the website by Tuesday noon. Look for “Wednesday Night Dinner Reservations” on the home page. Join us every Wed.!

First Things

Transfiguration of the Lord, Sunday, February 19, 2012

Vision Statement

As Everybody’s church we commit ourselves to serving Christ by cultivating mission, inclusion and community.

Join us for our all church study of Love Wins

Reading schedules can be found in the hallway by the South entrance.

This week (tomorrow) we begin our all church Lenten study of Love Wins, by Rob Bell. You can choose your small group this morning at the sign up place outside Calvin Hall. If you signed up last week we still encourage you to choose a group this morning so we can be prepared for you. If you asked for a book to be purchased they are available in the office for \$16.00. We do have some extras as well. If you choose not to be part of a small group we still encourage you to read the book.

For this week (February 20-26) please read Chapter 1.

Today’s Events

Youth and CrossWalks

All Abilities Inclusion Ministry
 Middle School Youth Room
 4th and 5th Grade Temple School
 2nd and 3rd Grade Noah’s Art
 Kindergarten and 1st Grade.....Oasis
 Worship Wonder for 3 year olds Room 218
 Worship Wonder for 4 year olds Room 217

Childcare available:
 Infant-Walkers Crib Room
 2 year olds.....Room 102

8:30am	Worship	Chapel
9:00	Wake Up to the Word	Zuma
10:00	Worship	Sanctuary
11:30	Learn the Bible in a Year	Fireside Room
3:00pm	Jeremy Tarrant Organ Concert	Sanctuary
5:00	Faith Conversations	Chapel

Youth Fellowship (FreeMe! and FOCUS) Will NOT Meet Feb. 19 and 26

We'll be on break for a couple of weeks, but the fun starts up again on March 4. Join us from 6-8pm on February 26 as we host and serve dinner for our SOS guests. Email Amy Morgan or sign up on the church website (under "Events") if you want to help!

Jeremy Tarrant, Organist, in Concert

Today, 3pm, Sanctuary

Jeremy Tarrant, Organist and Choir Master at the Cathedral Church of St Paul in Detroit, will present a concert today. The concert is free with a good will offering accepted.

Today’s 5pm Worship Service – Faith Conversations

Led by Rev. Hank Borchardt

Upcoming Events

Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday, February 22, Noon and 7pm

Ash Wednesday Soup Lunch & Wednesday Night Dinner

Luncheon, Wednesday, February 22, after Noon Worship Service

Dinner, Wednesday, 5:30 – 7pm before the 7pm Worship Service

Please come to Calvin Hall after the noon service and enjoy a lovely, simple lunch of homemade soups, or come for dinner before the 7pm service. Look for more info inside.

Rejoicing Spirits Sunday Evening Worship Service

Next Sunday, February 26, 5pm

Alma College Choir in Concert at FPC

Sunday, February 26, 7pm, Sanctuary

Come hear this talented 56-member choir from Alma College.

Helpful Information

Ask an Usher: (accessibility assistance)

See an usher for hearing aid devices, large-print bulletins, cushions and hymnals. There are rocking chairs in the lobby for restless infants, and child care is offered at each service.

Parking for Guests

On Sundays there are parking spaces marked in green paint for guests who are visiting our church. (It is open parking during the week.)

Staying Connected

We are happy to mail copies of *First Things* to anyone who needs a copy. Names and addresses should be given to Jan Peters.

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 5pm; Friday, 9am – 1pm
(Doors are locked at 1pm on Fridays)

Need to Contact Us?

First Presbyterian Church

1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, MI 48009, 248.644.2040

Website: www.everybodyschurch.org

Reservations at reservations@everybodyschurch.org

This Week’s Schedule

Monday, February 20, 2012			Wednesday, February 22, 2012, continued		
9:30am	Exercise with Pam Smith	Youth Rm 102	7:00pm	Ash Wednesday Service	Sanctuary
10:00	Stay and Play	102	7:30	Chancel Choir	Choir Rm
10:00	Shawl Ministry	Fireside Rm	8:00	MA 12 Step Program	Library (W)
10:00	Girl Scout Cookie Booth	Front Lawn			
7:00pm	Children’s/Family Ministries	Fireside	Thursday, February 23, 2012		
7:00	Property Care	137	9:30am	Exercise with Pam Smith	Parable Pl
7:00	Financial Planning Meeting	220	9:30	Covenant	Fireside Rm
7:00	Deacons	Calvin Hall	10:00	Girl Scout Cookie Booth	Front Lawn
7:30	Al-anon	216	10:00	Fun, Fitness and Fellowship	Youth Rm
8:30	AA Monday Nite Group	215/217/218	10:00	AA Women’s Group	137,141/142
			12:00pm	Newsletter mailing	141/142
			7:00	Troy Band Concert	Sanctuary
Tuesday, February 21, 2012			Friday, February 24, 2012		
7:00am	Bible Study	141/142	9:30am	Exercise with Pam Smith	Youth Rm
9:00	Bible Study	Library (E)	10:00	Girl Scout Cookie Booth	Front Lawn
9:30	Exercise with Pam Smith	Parable Pl			
10:00	Morning Readers' Circle	Fireside Rm	Saturday, February 25, 2012		
10:00	Girl Scout Cookie Booth	Front Lawn	8:30am	Presbytery Mission Training	Knox
10:00	Fun, Fitness and Fellowship	Youth Rm			
6:30pm	Great Lakes Beadworkers	Calvin Hall	Sunday, February 26, 2012		
7:00	Wider Church Outreach	144	8:30am	Worship	Chapel
7:00	FPC Ringers	Bell Room	9:00	Wake Up to the Word	Zuma
7:00	Esther Circle	Fireside Rm	9:30	Girl Scout Cookie Sales	Calvin Hall
			10:00	Worship	Sanctuary
			11:15	2nd Grade Sacraments Class	Martha’s Tbl
			11:15	Mexico Mission Meeting	Youth Room
			12:00pm	Girl Scout Cookie Booth	Front Lawn
			3:00	FreeMe/FOCUS	The Cave
			3:00	FreeMe/FOCUS	Youth Room
			5:00	South Oakland Shelter Week	Calvin Hall
			5:00	Alma College Dinner	Knox
			5:00	Sunday Evening Worship	Sanctuary
			7:00	Alma Choir Concert	Sanctuary

Wednesday, February 22, 2012		
9:30am	Exercise with Pam Smith	Youth Rm
9:30	PW CT Meeting	141/142
12:00pm	Ash Wednesday Service	Chapel
1:00	Ash Wed. Soup Lunch	Calvin Hall
4:30	Carol Choir	New Song
4:30	Music Makers	Youth Rm
5:00	Chapel Choir	New Song
5:30	Wed. Connect Dinner	Knox
5:45	Intergenerational Handbell	Bell Room
6:15	Youth Choir	Choir Rm

For Children: Wednesdays begin with Children’s Choirs led by Sue Kohns. The **Carol Choir, K – 2nd Grade**, meets from 4:30 – 5pm and the **Chapel Choir, 3rd – 5th Grade** meets from 5 – 5:45pm. These choirs teach the fundamentals of singing and introduces Orff Instrument playing. Contact director, Sue Kohns, kohns1228@yahoo.com. **Music Makers for 3 & 4 year olds** meets from 4:30 – 5pm. This singing group will start your child in the fun of music. Contact director, Sam Lyttle, sjlmusic13@gmail.com.

For Youth: Scola Cantorum (Auditioned Youth Vocal Ensemble), 6th-12th Grades, Wednesdays 6:15 – 7:15pm. Please see Kevin Calloway about this ensemble.

For Adults: Chancel Choir, college age and above, Wednesdays 7:30 – 9:30pm. This SATB group’s primary focus is to prepare weekly anthem and help lead worship.

Dr. Judson is leading a class “Learn the Bible in a Year,” Wednesdays from 5 – 6pm, Thursdays from 7 – 8pm, & Sundays 11:30am – 12:30pm.

Trombone Choir, Thursdays, 7 – 8:30pm. Contact Kyle Jones, kmhjones@wowway.com.

Worship on Wednesday: Dr. Ernest Krug leads a midweek 7pm worship which will allow you to be re-energized for the remainder of the week.

Community-Wide Events

Girl Scout Cookies for Sale to Support Troops 45046, 43751 & 40320

Today after worship services, Calvin Hall

In celebration of 100 years of Girl Scouting, please support the Girl Scout Troops of the church by purchasing Girl Scout Cookies! We have a nice selection again this year with all your favorites, along with a new cookie, Lemon Savannah Smiles. They are a lemon shortbread covered in powdered sugar. Cookies are \$3.50 per box. The entire collection is for sale. Thank you in advance for your support “Spring Forward On a Girl’s Day Out!”

Community Candlelight Memorial

Sunday, February 26, 7pm, First United Methodist Church

A body of local churches has come together to remember God’s children who have lost their life to AIDS and to support their loved ones. Please join us for a memorial service followed by a special time of fellowship. During this time you will have a unique opportunity to honor loved ones at the AIDS Memorial tree and to view panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. For more information, contact Susan Anderson Dale at 248.646.6407 x 3160

World Day of Prayer Sponsored by Church Women United, is celebrated worldwide in March.

Friday, March 2, 10am Coffee and conversation, 10:45am Service,

This years’ service has been written by the Church Women United of Malaysia.

To be celebrated at the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, located at 512 Pearsall Ave., Pontiac MI, 248-335-2298. We hope you will attend.

Life After Loss: A Journey Through Grief

Tuesdays: March 6 – April 10, 1:30-3pm, First United Methodist Church

Learn the stages of grief; Explore techniques of dealing with grief; Find a support group. To register contact Elise Norwood, Caring Ministries, at enorwood@fumcbirmingham.org, or 248.646.3127 x 3127. Register by February 28. \$15 materials fee.

A Journey Through Divorce

Tuesdays, March 6 – April 10, 7-8:30pm, First United Methodist Church

Are you experiencing the pain of Separation or Divorce? Trying to heal alone is difficult.

Listening and sharing with others on the same path helps you to discover that the emotions you might be feeling are a normal part of the recovery process. To register contact Elise Norwood, Caring Ministries, at enorwood@fumcbirmingham.org, or 248.646.3127 x 3127. Register by February 28. \$15 materials fee.

Spring Forward On a Girl’s Day Out! Living a Balanced Life

Saturday, April 14, 1-4pm, FPC, Cost \$5.00

8th grade girl scouts from Troy are earning their Silver Award. They will host a gathering for all girls in our community in grades 1-5. Join us for three hours of yoga, theater, creative writing, healthy eating and learning how to accept others. Register by March 24 by emailing Jean Crane at cranej@wowway.com or call 248.267.1185.

Babysitting Services

Saturday, March 17, 9:15am – 1:30pm, Room 102 (Whale Room)

Cost: \$5.00 per hour/\$1.50 per each additional sibling. Middle and High School Girls Scouts of Birmingham would love to baby-sit your child. Please reserve your child’s space and time by Thursday before the Saturday of babysitting. Please sign up on the bulletin board across from the Whale room or contact: Shirleigh Vinson, 248.647.0675, email: shirleigh@getmarbled.com