

FALL 2011

NEWSLETTER

THE GRAPEVINE

News from Reformed Presbyterian Church of West Chester

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of America



Fresh & Good!

WELCOME BACK, GRAPEVINE!

The RPC Newsletter, The Grapevine, has been on hiatus for almost 2 years and people have missed the articles with news about the church and its events as well as news from our RPC family members.

For local and world news, we can read The Inquirer, The Daily Local, listen to the radio news or watch the news on television. However, the news which stirs our hearts often is the news about our own RPC family members. And, we are spiritually encouraged as we are reminded of events and activities right here at RPC and as we read the column our Pastor writes to instruct and uplift us. Readers may want to keep all their copies of the newsletters as a history of our church and its people. Some day the little ones written about and pictured in our nursery or CE Hour classes may be writing the articles for the newsletter...

The current plan is for the newsletter to come out about once a quarter, with the next issue in late January or early February. Be thinking about news you might share, things you might like to read about, columns you might write, photos you'd like to see or share and let one of the staff know. Announcements of dates for materials or ideas to be submitted will come out in the Sunday Bulletin.

We want to serve you:

Terese Judkins, Editor
Lori Johnston, Photographer
Livi Verrillo, Layout and Design



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Christian, Don't Settle.

By Pastor Stan Gale

May 25, 2012. I just found out that is the release date for my booklet, *What is Prayer?*, as part of P&R's "Basics of the Faith" (BOF) series.

You've seen some of the BOF booklets in our narthex. They cover topics like justification by faith, hell, spiritual gifts and infant baptism. These booklets are intended to provide a clear, concise treatment from a Reformed perspective on a variety of topics. Most are only 32 pages.

I have long been prodding the editors at P&R to produce a booklet on the topic of prayer. It didn't have to come from me. I just thought it should be represented among the offerings. Why? —because I believe that Reformed theology has much to contribute to an understanding and practice of prayer.

I've discovered that prayer can be an enigma among Reformed-minded people. They find it hard to see how prayer can play any sort of significant role when God has already planned all that comes to pass. Wouldn't what happened have happened anyway since God had it on the books? (I might mention we have the same sort of thoughts when it comes to evangelism. After all, Jesus said He would not lose any the Father had given Him, right?)

Actually, God does speak to address this and all sorts of other questions we might have about prayer. In the booklet, I try to explore His answers. I look at things like: what prayer is, the relationship of prayer and faith, praying in the Spirit, how our time-

based prayer fits into God's eternal plan, where the power of prayer resides and other aspects that, I hope, bring a biblically-grounded perspective to bear.

I also develop the topic of corporate prayer and God's design for that. Especially in view here is what it means for the church to be a "house of prayer" for the nations, something dear to our Lord's heart.

I close with a section on the practice of prayer, laying out ways and means given us by God to enliven and engage us, His people, in prayer.

I am sure there are others far better qualified to write on the subject of prayer than I. But I stepped up because I didn't see anyone else and I thought the subject needed to be included. I am of the opinion that a Reformed understanding of prayer makes prayer more substantive and more urgent than what is typically a broadly evangelical approach. I thank God for the opportunity and pray that the booklet will be of use to His church.

But here is the reason I am telling you all this. You know how when you prepare to teach something, you learn more than those you are teaching? I did learn more about prayer as I was forced to deal with a variety of issues. But what humbled me was the acute awareness of my own inadequacy in prayer.

The Spirit of God opened my eyes to what He accomplishes through my prayers and the prayers of His people. He showed me His wisdom in gathering with fellow believers for the work of prayer. He impressed

upon me what could be, and how immature and ineffective individual believers and the church are without prayer.

Evidently, we are content to live spiritually impoverished lives, either oblivious or indifferent to what God has for us. That ill-placed contentment is directly correlated to the vitality of our prayer lives, personally and corporately.

So I guess I'm sharing this because God has deeply convicted me of settling for less than what He wants of me, as a person and a pastor. But it's not just about me. It's about each of us who bears the name of Jesus. It's about never settling because we want to know Him more. It's about never settling for the church just to make the budget or have programs for kids, when the power of the risen Christ is at work in and through the church for the sake of His kingdom.

May the Spirit of the risen Christ work in us a deep unsettledness that drives us to prayer.



Trellis

By Sarah Brown

Grapes need to have a trellis as a good foundation for growth. Each issue will feature one of the CE Hour teachers who teach, pray for and encourage our little ones, youth and adults to grow so that they will be fruitful! Please meet our first teacher:

Hi, I'm Sarah Brown, I have been attending RPC for about 22 years, I have gotten married here and my husband, Joe, and two children, Isaac and Kaylie, also attend RPC. I have been lucky enough to teach the 4-6yr old Sunday school class for the past 2 years. The children in this class include **Lily and Stephen McCaffery**, **Nora and Bianca Comanda**, **Elena Price**, and **Lucinda and Valentine Sauer**.



Typically, a day in our class includes an opening activity such as a game or role playing, then we move right on to Bible Story time where the kids gather around on pillows on the floor, next we move over to our creative table where we get to color, make crafts, or play a game relating to the story just told. Before any of this gets started though, we actually get to have singing time with the 2-3yr olds with *Mrs. Lindsay Gale* playing the guitar!

This year, we are learning about the exciting story of God's creation. We have a memory verse every week and we are currently working on the shorter catechism, which the kids are doing great at, thanks to *Mary Culler* and *Kim Rekito* who have lead a class in this before!

It seems as though each child enjoys different parts of the class. **Bianca** and **Stephen** love the opening activity where they can get out their energy, **Nora** loves the Bible time (she is especially good at answering all the questions), **Lucinda** and **Valentine** are pros at reciting their memory verses and catechism, and **Lily** and **Elena** have tons of fun during the creative time, both working not only on the project at hand, but also making all the kids laugh with the silly songs they enjoying making up! All in all, our class has been tons of fun thanks to our great kids. They are committed to doing their homework and memorizing which makes my job a lot easier!

This is the age of starting some great friendships--please be praying for all the kids to continue being excited about class and to build each other up and encourage one another.



4-6 Year Old Class: (from left to right) Lily McCaffrey, Bianca Comanda, Teacher: Mrs. Sarah Brown, Elena Price, Nora Comanda, Stephen McCaffrey. [Not Pictured: Lucinda and Valentine Sauer]



Heard It Through The Grapevine

By Valerie McCaffrey

It's been a long while since our last edition, so there is a lot of news to catch up on...

WEDDING BELLS

Stan has really been working overtime — what a blessing!

Congrats to:

-- newlyweds **Aaron and Tia Mingle**, who were married on October 15, 2011 at Narberth Presbyterian. **Lorna Jansen**, bridesmaid, reports that the wedding was "lovely and God-centered." The bride and groom enjoyed a restful honeymoon and are settling into their new home in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Our prayers and best wishes go with them

-- **Joe and Sian Myshko** who were married at RPC on August 14, 2011. **Lucy Sumner** and **Kiki Myshko** were bridesmaids and **George Myshko** was the best man. The couple recently celebrated their first anniversary with a 7-course, French gourmet meal at Gilmore's in West Chester. Joyeux anniversaire!

--Caught up with **Bob and Gabriella Boyd** at this year's RPC Hayride (they met on the RPC hayride four years ago, thanks to **Shawn and Meg Carafa**). They celebrated their second anniversary on October 3 with a romantic dinner at home. Blessings to you!

ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations also to the couples at RPC who celebrated milestone anniversaries this year:

--**Mark and Val McCaffrey** celebrated their 10th anniversary (July 14, 2001) with a trip to Bedford Springs Resort and Falling Waters in Western PA. Thanks **Dave** and **Lorna Jansen** for the relaxing and romantic recommendation -- and of course, a BIG thank you to **Bill and Terese Judkins** for babysitting **Lily, Stephen, and Will!**

--**Rodney and Mary Jennings** celebrated their 10th anniversary on September 15, 2001. Here is what they had to say, "What an exciting and wonderful 10th Anniversary it was for us! Our daughter and son-in-law (**Mary & Phil Culler**) called the night before and wanted to meet us for breakfast at Gram's Diner before they left on their trip to Ohio. They had just learned that

The Candy Lady Speaks!

We all need to build up the tender young grapes in the congregation. Many help with this process but recently the RPC CANDY LADY, Phyllis Powell, has stepped forward with some new and very sweet encouragement. Please read her message for RPC parents and children:

RPC is encouraging children to take



notes on the sermon in our morning service. This helps them to be attentive and to learn to know God's word. After the

worship service, the children will bring their papers to me and tell me about the pictures and get a treat--a small piece of candy for a reward. This stimulates them to grasp what the church service is all about.

Parents, I am hoping you will be part of this effort. I will be waiting for your child every week. I sit about halfway back in the church.

I am very encouraged by the children's notes so far. Won't you come and take part in this new adventure?



Phyllis Powell, the RPC Candy Lady.

everything was looking good for their adoption of a brand new baby girl! We met for breakfast, received one of the most beautiful cards ever, exchanged well wishes and gave them 4 new pacifiers and a Winnie the Pooh blanket (which Rodney had given our daughter **Mary** for Christmas a few years earlier--Pooh Bear being a known favorite). We thought these would be comforting and helpful for them to have along when they met their little daughter (and our granddaughter!) and while they went through the necessary stay and process in Ohio.

It was a special and memorable Anniversary and we are so thankful to our God who as we said in our Wedding Program "Gives us more than we could ask for or imagine". **Mary** says: "Rodney is the love of my life and I'm so blessed and appreciate his goodness and his faith so much". **Rodney** says: "that he loves **Mary** as his wife and is happy to have had 10 years with her so far and hopes to grow old together".

BABIES

In the last 2 years, RPC has welcomed many little ones to our church family.

--**Joe and Sarah Brown** welcomed their daughter, **Kaylie Micah**, on September 30, 2009, at 4:02 pm. She weighed 6 lbs, 11 ounces and measured 20 inches. Big brother **Isaac** and proud parents, **Joe and Sarah**, also report that there is another

little one on the way, due March 2012. Hooray!

--**Luke and Lindsay Gale** welcomed their son, **Jasper David**, into their family on September 13, 2010 at 5:04 pm. Big Sister **Ruby** and Big Brother **Weston** are happy to report he weighed in at 8 lbs, 6 ounces and measured 21 inches long.

And, you might enjoy hearing about **Jasper and Kaylie's** joint birthday party. **Lindsay and Sarah** teamed up to plan a Ladybug Party for them with lots of red and black balloons and streamers and a ladybug cake. We all join with the growing Gale clan **Stan, Linda, Nathan, Luke, Lindsay, Ruby, Weston, Joe, Sarah, and Isaac** in praising the Lord for these two happy, healthy little ones!

--**Tim and Mandy Gold** were blessed by the birth of **Gabriel and Russ** and **Kathleen Cardwell** welcomed baby, **Jack!** These little ones have now moved on to church nurseries in OH and NJ. We miss them so much and hope they will visit soon.

--**Shawn and Meg Carafa** have had TWO arrivals (a double blessing) since our last Grapevine issue -- a son, **Colton Phoenix**, on August 23, 2009 at 5:01 am (weighing 8 lbs, 6 ounces and a whopping 22 inches long) AND a daughter, **Summer Hazel**, on May 13, 2011 at 8:35 am (weighing 9 lbs, 1 ounce and 21 inches long).

Continued on page 6

Meet The RPC Mercy Ministry Team.

By Mark McCaffrey, Chairman

The Mercy Ministry team had their first meeting in June with members **Cait Cliggett**, **Lorna Jansen**, **Mark McCaffrey** and **Autumn Rishty**. The goal of our committee is to help meet the needs of our Church members as well as our community through service and fellowship.

Cait has continued her very sacrificial role in setting up fellowship dinners as well as coordinating the refreshment schedule for the fellowship hour every Sunday at 10:30.

Lorna has done an excellent job making sure all of the sick in our congregation feel that they are being thought of and letting them know that we are there to help them if they need us. Lorna also has started "Compassion Sunday" which works with the Christian organization, Compassion International. Our RPC members can sign up to sponsor a

child's education in a place where each child will learn about Christ. **Autumn** is always on top of making sure our new mothers and others not in a position to cook either due to sickness or injury have meals sent to their home.

The committee also is coordinating our quarterly fellowship dinners, the annual picnic (unfortunately cancelled due to bad weather), and the annual RPC hayride.

We want to let the congregation know that we all feel a strong calling to help anyone in need, so if you feel like you may need any kind of assistance or fellowship please don't hesitate to contact any of us!



The RPC Men's Retreat

By Luke Gale

Reformed Presbyterian Church just concluded another successful men's retreat, which ran from October 21-23, and was held at Harvey Cedars Bible Conference on Long Beach Island, NJ. Although the group in attendance was surprisingly small, the Lord's hand was evident throughout the weekend.

The most obvious blessing was great weather. Each of the past two years that the retreat has been held at HCBC, rain and chilliness put a damper on the weekends. Not this time! The Lord provided bright sunny skies and temperatures in the high 60s. The men were able to enjoy walks to the beach, outdoor sporting activities, and treks to the Barnegat Light lighthouse. The clear skies and lack of humidity allowed for spectacular views.

Joe Myshko organized a group activity that involved plugging coordinates into a smartphone navigation app to locate hidden treasures around the Bible Conference grounds. The activity proved to be challenging, leading **Sean Cliggett** to joke that his kids must have hated Easter egg hunts growing up.

The theme of the weekend's study was "Teaching Men to Apologize." Although that sounds like the men learned about recognizing when we're wrong and seeking forgiveness, the sessions actually focused on apologetics. That is, defending our Christian faith. The overarching verse was from 1 Peter 3:15 - "In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense

to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."

The group watched a six-part DVD series called *The Reason for God*. In the video, Dr. Tim Keller sat with a panel of six non-Christians, each with a different background and perspective. Dr. Keller used the time to discuss topics that non-believers bring up to refute Christianity. Examples were: if God is all loving and all powerful, then why is there suffering in the world? or why do good people go to hell? In each of the six sessions, Dr. Keller brought up a controversial topic and sought input, questions and opinions from the panel. After watching each part, our group shared viewpoints on the topic, the opinions expressed in the video, and the tactics Dr. Keller used to address the issues.

As Christians, we are called to be a witness for the Lord, spreading the gospel for the sake of Christ's kingdom. During our time on the men's retreat, we learned that effective witnessing can simply be conversations for Christ. We must be honest with our faith and be open to opportunities to share it. Listening to non-believers and asking thoughtful questions can be much more engaging and inviting than messages of fire and brimstone.

Overall, the weekend was a relaxing time of fellowship and growth. Each one of us was challenged, not only by Joe Myshko's group activity, but also by God's call for us to be witnesses to those in each sphere of our daily lives.

Holiday Happenings

November 20

CE Hour Thanksgiving Party for the Children's Sunday School classes and during the worship hour families will be given an Advent Card by Pastor Stan. There will also be an evening Thanksgiving Service at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

December 3 & 4

*RPC Christmas Puppet Show
7pm in the sanctuary*

December 18

CE Hour Christmas Party for the Children's Sunday School classes and Advent Wreath Lighting Service at 6 pm in the conference room.

December 24

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
7pm in the sanctuary*

December 25

Pastor Stan will give a children's message before the sermon and a special gift for each child.



Heard it...(continued)

--**Jeremy and Livi Verrillo** were blessed on January 14, 2011 with their son, **Micah Benjamin**. He arrived at 6:32 am and weighed in at 8 lbs, 6.5 ounces and was 19.5 inches long. Much joy and congratulations go out to Micah's grandparents as well, **Sonny and Eileen Lake!**

--**Lenny and Erin Wood**, welcomed their daughter, **Olivia Jayne** on September 12, 2011, at 5:04 pm. She weighed 6 lbs, 7 ounces and was 20 inches long. Many blessings to their family!

--**Phil and Mary Culler** are excited to announce the arrival of their daughter **Morgana Mary Gwladys Culler** on 9/13/2011. She weighed 7 lbs.6 oz and was 19.5 inches long. We are so happy for Morgana's grandparents too, **Rodney and Mary Jennings!**

-- and, with great joy, we all anticipate the arrival of **Jake and Becky Sauer's** fourth little one this December!

Special thanks go out to **Livi Verrillo, Autumn Rishty, Sian Myshko**, and the ladies of RPC for the three recent, beautiful baby showers!

FUN FACTS

Lori Johnston, travelled to England and Ireland for two weeks this September. Have you been following her journey on Facebook and seen the many beautiful photos she took—Wow!! She saw Bristol, England, Bath with its Jane Austen Centre, Roman Baths and beautiful abbey. She also went to Ireland, kissed the blarney stone (ask her about the exciting adventure there), went to Kinsale, Ireland, then went to Liverpool, England to see The Beatles Story (museum). Her Beatles experience was enhanced by a ride on the Magical Mystery Tour, lunch at the Hard Days Nite Hotel and a stay at the John Lennon Airport Hampton Inn. The last day was in London where Lori went into Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London

and Buckingham Palace and took a cruise down the Thames! Lori can be my tour guide anytime!

Way to go Warren! -- Substituting his antique shoes with metal spikes for modern ones, **Warren Ball** rediscovered his "track legs." Warren's track and field competition began in 1972 at Shippensburg Senior Games, winning silver and bronze medals in 100 meter race. The last ten years he competed in Penn Relays Senior Division and won the bronze medal several times. More important is being on the



*Warren Ball
~with Bill Cosby
at the Penn.
Relays.*

right track of life and pursuing the prize of the high calling of GOD in Jesus Christ. (*Thank you to Gwen Ball for passing on this write-up.*)

Kudos to Lindsay... In addition to her career in photography and her recent travels to Haiti, **Lindsay Musser**, has been busy reaching another important goal... In January, she will be inducted into the Cutco Hall of Fame, as one of the top salespeople in the country. Congrats, Lindsay!

If you have any news to share for a future "Heard It Through the Grapevine," please contact Val McCaffrey.

NEWSLETTER COORDINATION TEAM



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