

Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church

of Sylva, North Carolina

January 2012

David Grachek, Pastor

Grace Reed, Editor

PASTOR'S CORNER

Visualizing Scripture – I'm thinking I read slower than most, because I have to spend time visualizing what I am reading in order to better internalize the text. I imagine when I speak, teach or preach. I need to visualize the story in order that the audience can better place themselves in the Scripture being exposed to them. I can't imagine a better way to understand what God is saying to you in Scripture than to visualize yourself in the text.

Preachers aren't meant to spit out facts regarding a passage, but rather take someone by the hand and escort them to a place where God can speak to them through the Living Bible. Escort almost gives the feeling of being a tour guide by revealing what is being seen throughout the tour of the scripture rather than sharing the teacher's own opinions of what is being seen.

Perhaps preachers should be called "Holy Tour Guides." I have this mental picture of the tour guide at Disney World describing what lies ahead and to the side of the boat of the Jungle Cruise. It's the tour along the Amazon or Nile that tells the story, but it's the tour guide that draws your attention to the part of the river that further unveils the story of why you are on the cruise.

Teaching is about sharing mental pictures. I have heard of a preacher being described as a projector. A projector at a movie theatre doesn't make the film it is showing, but it does make it possible for me to watch the film and understand the story being told. So far, preachers are tour guides and projectors. The visualizing suggested in the text is working wonders for me.

We are all teaching what the Bible means to us by the way we carry ourselves. You can see the impact someone has in their life by the understanding they have of the gospel and their relationship

with Jesus. The Presbyterian Church believes in the priesthood of all believers. Given this fact, we should all see ourselves as preachers and teachers in sharing the gospel with a troubled world by the way we walk in it with the Lord.

Do your actions paint an accurate picture of the gospel? Can people see a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ in you? Does the love of Christ pour out of you when you share your story? I ask myself these questions regularly. At times, I don't like the answers, but it gives me a base point to see where I am with my walk. When I don't answer the questions so positively, I step back and spend alone time in scripture. I spend more focused time in quiet alone prayer. I also seek out other friends in Christ and ask to spend time studying scripture and praying with them.

Spring is coming. God has a beautiful masterpiece planned for us in greening up the mountains in expressing His love for us. Let the love of Christ show us all as we share God's story through our lives to others as well.

Living to know Christ and make Him known,
David Grachek
Pastor

FAMILY LIFE DIRECTOR

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Hebrews 10:23-25

I know that God speaks to us in the stillness of solitude and as followers of Christ we need to seek His kingdom often in quiet, but not long ago the importance of this verse was brought to my attention. When I become anxious and that anxiety frays the edges of my patience, I tend to quickly move in towards an isolating bitterness that doesn't want to mingle. I may first draw inward mentally, and emotionally, but it's not long after that I withdraw physically from others. Jesus' historical ministry shows that he often went off by himself, but not to be alone (as I may selfishly

seek) but to be with His Father. I'm convicted that one of the Holy wonders of our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit— is their perpetual relationship, which must show us the hope of Perfect Love. I don't get the impression they ever neglect meeting together.

Our pastor recently revealed to me the importance of gathering together. I had been in an anxious stew about the stuff of life and had consequently become easily angered, as my wife and children can verify. Not long after this episode, I needed to go to a regularly scheduled staff meeting. David Grachek shared a devotion, a passage that God had been stirring in him, and that passage was uncomfortably convicting. David didn't know of my previous attitude, but God certainly did, and through David's attention to the Holy Spirit, I was convicted; convicted so I could be freed. I share this publicly, because it is so good to be freed. It is so good to be encouraged, to be reminded of who our Lord is and our Lord chooses to speak through relationship. There are some great opportunities to meet together this month listed in this newsletter. Whether you are the one stirring others or the one who might need to be stirred (like me), "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." Thank God, He really is. Christ's Peace,
David Cathcart

MISSION NEWS

From **Scot and Carol Musser** serving in Camarma, Spain with RCE:

Dearest Friends,

- ❖ **Scot and Carol** – their final year at ECA, soon to be empty-nesters, then transitioning into a new ministry in Spain – that of **working to help establish Christian schooling for Spaniards.**
- ❖ **Aaron** – Finishing up his two year commitment of teaching in Turkey, and returning to the USA to seek employment and possibly the choice of a life mate!

- ❖ **Lynette** – College graduate with a degree in communications, coming to help us close up our time at ECA and seeking the Lord's will for the next steps in life.
- ❖ **David** – a sophomore at Asbury University in Kentucky and a member of the Air Force ROTC, majoring in Mechanical Engineering.
- ❖ **Emily** – a senior here at ECA, applying to colleges and considering options for gap year in France.

In spite of some challenges, 2011 has been another wonderful year of blessing and thanksgiving, and we give the Lord Jesus all the praise and glory. He is the King and it all belongs to him!☺

January – started out with the dreaded phone call that my dad was being admitted to Hospice for terminal care. Mixed with the sadness of the loss, we were richly blessed by the outpouring of friends and family that came to encourage us as we truly celebrated the life of a Kingdom servant. We do miss him here but we know that he is thriving in life There too!

May – Scot was blessed to go on the senior trip with 13 seniors (he was a class sponsor). A Mediterranean cruise? Sounds great! And it would have been had we not missed the boat! Yes, the time on our tickets was printed incorrectly, so as we pulled up to the dock, the ship pulled away – talk about disappointment! One senior tried to encourage the rest by saying, “Cheer up guys, we are all in the same boat.” After lots of SOS phone calls to the travel agency and adjustments to Plan B, we finally caught up with the boat two days later and enjoyed the rest of our trip.

July – We returned to KY to help my mom get settled into a new home and get a new car. Then we enjoyed a trip to Colorado with Carol's parents, to have some family vacation in the Rocky Mountain National Park, and visit Lynette who was in Colorado Springs doing an internship with Focus on the Family. We had a wonderful time enjoying the beauty of God's creation and driving across the park at an altitude of 14,000 feet (the highest paved road in the USA).

August – the return to Spain and the BUSY start of another school year at ECA! We thank the Lord for Jay Smalley, the new

principal at ECA, and for 22 new students this year! As a family we have had two boarding students living with us this fall, and it has added lots of fun and laughter to our home.

November – the Camarma church continues to grow, and we are blessed to be a part of what the Lord is doing here in the town! The church now has over 100 attending on Sunday mornings and we have expanded to 5 different Sunday School classes. The church is involved in helping provide food and clothing for 24 Spanish families in the town, working closely with the social worker from City Hall. Carol was in charge of planning for our annual Thanksgiving service outreach event, where 160 attended and we shared the history and story of Thanksgiving. What a great way to direct our thanksgiving and praise to Jesus!

December – We celebrate with our daughter Lynnette, and her graduation from Bryan College! Lord willing, she will be joining us in Spain for a few months this winter in order to help us wind up our time at ECA and develop some resources to help us launch our new ministry of working to help establish Christian schooling for Spaniards. We also plan to visit Aaron in Turkey, and meet Miss Katie!

ECA will be facing some major staffing needs next fall. As you think of us, please pray for the Lord's supply. ***If you know of ANY teachers that might be willing to consider serving in Spain, please let us know!***

We are ever so thankful for your love, prayers and gifts of support this year! Our ministry in Spain depends, in part, on the faithfulness of God's people. Thank you very much.

May your New Year be filled with the joy of drawing closer to Jesus, Emanuel, God with us.

In Christ,
Scot and Carol Musser

To our church in particular: We want to thank you for your generous support again this year. Your faithful partnership is a blessing to us and we thank God for you all. May God continue to bless you as you strive to abide in Christ's love and contend for the faith with us in the coming year!

UPCOMING EVENTS

..Saturday, February 4, 2:00 until 4:00 pm, in the fellowship hall. Mary Gelbaugh is being honored by the ladies of the church with a shower to celebrate her recent marriage to Adam Gelbaugh. Adam and Mary are diligently making improvements to their house and would really appreciate Lowe's cards. However, other gifts will also be appreciated.

..Sunday, February 5, – Our church will honor Grace Reed with a reception during coffee fellowship to celebrate her years of dedicated service to First Presbyterian.

..Sunday, February 5 – The evening service will be held at the home of Roger Moore. We will start at 4:30 PM to be followed by a meal and snacks with a Mexican theme. Then watch the Super Bowl at about 6:30 PM. Please bring a main dish or side dish of your choice along with a drink. If you have questions, please contact Roger at 828-226-6188. Carpooling from the church can also be arranged.

..Thursday, February 9, 7:30 am – Men's Group. All men in the church are invited to attend this group led by Michael Collings.

..Sunday, February 12, 11:00 am – Presbyterian Celebrate Women Service. Rev. Bobbi White will be preaching at our Morning Worship Service. There will be a soup and salad lunch after the service with contributions being given to the Helping Hands Fund. The fund is for assistance to church members for safety in their homes. This fund is directed by the Session.

..Sunday, February 12 – The Deacons will meet after coffee fellowship for a work session. The meeting will be in the Mary Jay Patten Center. Remember to bring a bag lunch.

..Sunday, February 19, 3:00 to 5:00 pm – “The Bryson City Presbyterian Church would like to invite you to a Mardi Gras Celebration in the fellowship hall of the Bryson City Presbyterian Church. Our own “Cajun Joe” from Louisiana will be fixing the jambalaya, gumbo, and the king cake. Waynesville's pastor John Lindsay will be blessing us with a little jazz from his saxophone. Please gather a crowd and join us. RSVP to the [Bryson City]

church office at 488-2480 so that we will know how much food to fix.”

..Sunday, February 26, 3:00 to 5:00 pm – New Member Class to be held at the church.

OUR PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

..Laura Lindsay had an experience of a lifetime traveling to Europe to play volleyball in Slovenia and Austria as part of a youth team. She also visited Italy and Germany.

..Paige Lindsay, the Student Government Association vice president at Cottey College in Nevada, MO, was selected to attend the annual National Conference on Ethics in America at West Point, NY.

..Elizabeth Beck has resigned from the Jackson County Library but will be teaching Multiple Intelligence at Southwestern Community College this spring and continue to coordinate the literacy program Loving Readers.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: March 14

FINANCIAL REPORT YEAR-TO-DATE

As of the end of December

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Income to Regular Budget	257,182	257,110
Expenses from Regular Budget	264,848	262,277

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Our treasurer wants you to know that we have been able to repay \$5,000 of our “self loan” that we borrowed from the Pastor’s Housing Fund last year.

ARE YOU MINISTERING IN FEBRUARY?

Coffee Fellowship:

5 David & Jenny Porter
12 Jim & Sylvia Smythe
19 Greg & Dianne Scott
26 Bob & Ruth Porter

Kid’s Club:

No Kid’s Club
Sara Beth Foti
Kelly Doppke
Jessica Morgan

Flowers:

Tom & Melanie Tabor
Beverly Sparling
Greg & Dianne Scott
Bob & Ruth Porter

Family Night Supper – February 1
Bob & Ruth Porter, David & Jenny Porter

Ushers & Greeters: Jim & Sylvia Smythe

Deacon of the Month: Dianne Scott,
506-5665, Jessica Morgan, 507-1683
(alternate)

Communion: February 5
Preparers: Judy Henderson, David Noland
Servers: Judy Henderson, David Noland, Doug Reed, Betty Foti, Jessica Morgan, Will Murajda

“Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof.”
–Kahlil Gibran

PACK WELL

During Lent, as we focus on Christ’s journey to the cross, let’s also examine the journey of our lives. The first task when leaving on any adventure is packing. What have you placed in your bag? Are you weighed down with temptations, self-doubt, money worries, relationship troubles? Have you overlooked any important items? Maybe your bag feels too empty for the challenges ahead. Remember to pack mercy, grace and forgiveness.

Thanks to Easter, we know that our journey in Christ continues, even when the road becomes difficult. So as you prepare for Lent, carry with you the hope made possible by Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf.

–Based on the “Journey to Hope” sermon series,
www.rethinkchurch.org/lent