

News of the Saints

The Newsletter of All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church

FEBRUARY 2008

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Many of our readers remember our good friend and former RE Bob Drews who served the congregation of All Saints for many years. Bob and his wife Sharon have been living in the Tidewater area since Bob felt the Lord's calling to serve in the Officers' Christian Fellowship there. He has graciously offered us an insight into that ministry with this month's article entitled "Why OCF?". Thanks Bob!

DEAR SAINTS,

Sharon and I were blessed to worship with you twice over the last couple of months, and we were reminded of how much we love you and how blessed we were during the six years we were part of All Saints Church. It has been three years now, since we left you, and Fred

invited me to write this month's Newsletter lead article. We are delighted to be able to share with you what God has been doing with us during these three years. For those of you who are new to All Saints since we left, we (Bob & Sharon Drews) arrived at All Saints in 1998 and worshiped with you until October 2004. I had the privilege of serving on the Session for about four years. We loved being part of the All Saints family, learned and grew while there, and still have great affection for you. So why did we leave? Well, God called us to serve the military community in Hampton Roads, through an organization called Officers' Christian Fellowship. Why would we leave a good job, a warm supportive community, and dear friends to work with this organization? The answer, I think, is both God's call on our own lives, but also following the New Testament example of how God grows His church. It might surprise you to know that evangelizing the military community was part of God's strategy from the first century onward, and still provides a significant way to bring Christ to the world. Paul's letter to the Philippians can be viewed as a "missionary letter". We see that in Chapter 4:10-18 where Paul thanks the Philippians for their support. But in chapter one, Paul is anxious to let them know how his work is progressing. The Philippians had heard that Paul was in prison in Rome. How could he continue the mission work while chained to a Roman guard? "I want you to know brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has be-



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ALL SAINTS REFORMED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3000 GROVE AVENUE
RICHMOND, VA 23221
(804) 353-7321

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
WWW.ALLSAINTSPRES.ORG

The Youth Page

“Growing Up With God”

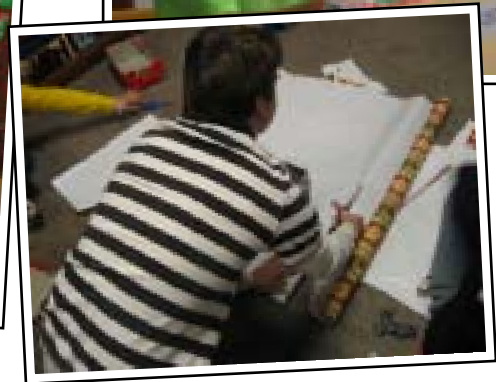
NEWS AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST BY, FOR AND ABOUT THE YOUTH OF ALL SAINTS LYNN-ELLIN ZEIGLER, EDITOR

HE WHO GUARDS HIS MOUTH AND HIS TONGUE KEEPS HIMSELF FROM CALAMITY....PROVERBS 21:23

A lot of vicious rumors spread around high schools everyday. But it doesn't matter whether the person “deserves” to be talked about or not; no one should be the center of harsh words. God tells us that not only are we doing the right thing when we block the flow of gossip, we're also bringing peace into our lives. Still, as a teenager, it is hard to stay away from harmful chit-chat. So, pray to God and ask him to help you guard your tongue. The rewards will be countless.



OperationChristmasChild was a success! In all, All Saints collected 19 boxes! Last year, OCC received over 1.24 million boxes from around the world. I can't wait to see how many more were sent this year! Keep OCC in your prayers.



Would you like to see something published on the Youth Page?
Send any writing, artwork, photos, true stories, prayer/thanksgiving requests,
or whatever else you might have to
Lynn-Ellin Zeigler at giftedandgoofy@mindspring.com

“Why OCF?” continued from page 1...

come known throughout the whole imperial (Praetorian) guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.” Later, in chapter 4, Paul includes greetings from “those of Caesar’s household”, so we can see how the gospel was penetrating through Roman society, despite his, or perhaps, because of, his imprisonment. Similarly, from Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem in Acts 21:31 through the end of Acts, Paul is imprisoned or accompanied by Roman soldiers and sailors. Paul never ceased proclaiming the gospel, and his path from Jerusalem to Caesarea to Rome can be characterized as a “fourth missionary journey”. Today, building on that pattern, OCF brings this vision: a spiritually transformed military with ambassadors for Christ in uniform, empowered by the Holy Spirit and living with a passion for God and compassion for the entire military society. In many ways, the military society replicates that of a “people group”. It has its unique cultural language, behaviors, clothing, rituals, and traditions. It is a closed society in the sense that members work and often live in a restricted facility. Facing a unique lifestyle of extended deployments with family separation and often danger, the military society is frequently cut off from the support of the church, *per se*. The services have recognized the need for spiritual support, and provide some of that through military chaplains, but chaplains are only available for larger units and are often viewed with suspicion, especially in elite units such as Special Ops forces, and are burdened with administrative, ritual tasks, and legal restrictions which limit their ability to evangelize and disciple. In contrast, regular officers have unlimited access and professional cred-



ibility to develop personal relationships which can lead to growth in faith. Military Christians frequently deploy and transfer, giving them opportunities to share the gospel among many people and in many places, including otherwise closed countries. They can truly serve as “ambassadors for Christ in uniform”. Our role with OCF in Hampton Roads is to disciple and train OCF members, encouraging and equipping them to be ambassadors for Christ. Many OCF members, including me, can give testimonies about how their lives were transformed through the influence of peers serving in that capacity. While the military is a very large organization, and OCF is relatively small, it has had a faithful and influential testimony in armed forces around the world for over 60 years. What does that have to do with All Saints Church? Living in Richmond, far from any military bases and largely removed from the effects of the war, it may be hard to relate to this, or other, missionary endeavors. But you, like the Philippian church, are a sending and supporting church. Recently your missions committee has added us to the missionaries you support. In addition, I’ve noted from your prayer calendar that several “sons of the church” are serving in the Armed Forces. It should be an encouragement to know that OCF, among other organizations, is seeking to bring the hope of the gospel and all its attendant blessings to those in uniform and their families. Sharon and I, through leading Bible Studies, discipling individuals, offering hospitality, and our prayers, seek to be a blessing and encouragement here in Hampton Roads. We give thanks to you for your prayers and your “participation in the gospel’.

Bob & Sharon Drews

O GOD,

I bless thee for the happy moment
when I first saw thy law fulfilled in Christ,
wrath appeased, death destroyed, sin forgiven, my soul saved.

Ever since, thou hast been faithful to me:
daily have I proved the power of Jesus' blood,
daily have I known the strength of the Spirit,
my teacher, director, sanctifier.

I want no other rock to build upon than that I have,
desire no other hope than that of gospel truth,
need no other look than that which gazes on the cross.

Forgive me if I have tried to add anything
to the one foundation,

if I have unconsciously relied upon my knowledge,
experience, deeds, and not seen them as filthy rags,
if I have attempted to complete what is perfect in Christ;
May my cry be always, Only Jesus! only Jesus!

In him is freedom from condemnation,
fullness in his righteousness,
eternal vitality in his given life,
indissoluble union in fellowship with him;

In him I have all that I can hold; enlarge me to take in more.
If I backslide, let me like Peter weep bitterly and return to him;

If I am tempted, and have no wit,
give me strength enough to trust in him;

If I am weak, may I faint upon his bosom of eternal love;

If in extremity, let me feel that he can deliver me;

If driven to the verge of hope and to the pit of despair,
grant me grace to fall into his arms.

O God, hear me, do for me more than I ask, think, or dream.

The following article was written by our former pastor, Howard Griffith, and presented in the Winter 2007 issue of Reformed Quarterly magazine. Thanks to Plum Yancey for submitting it for our benefit and enjoyment!

Wonderful Counselor

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH, ANNOUNCES
THE CERTAIN FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

Before a crescendo in Handel's Messiah, tension builds while the choir sings, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Christ resolves the tension.

Isaiah spoke to disobedient Israel about the sins that would carry them out of God's land (chapters 1-9). What was it like for the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to watch the Assyrian army carry off their kin? Isaiah says it was like living under a "death shadow" (9:2). The tension builds, but the prophet includes promises of new life — promises so certain that they are written in the past tense. They are wonderful beyond belief, because God Himself will save.

Verses 4-7 in chapter 9 tell how God will bless them. A child will be born who will take off the yoke of bondage and put it on His own shoulders. He will save them, like he saved His people from the yoke of the Egyptians and the Midianites. Gideon was an unlikely savior, without an army. This one will be as well — not impressive, but mighty to save.

In fact, His rule will be so great that He will not save just Zebulun and Naphtali from the Assyrians; He will save the Assyrians too! As Isaiah 9:6,7 says, "The government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."

The difference between Israel and us is that God has fulfilled these promises. Christmas is a time to rejoice that the Lord has come! Jesus Christ is the child born of David. He is the Son that God has given.

Matthew tells us Jesus went to live in Capernaum "so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.'" From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"™ (4:14-17).

He summarizes Jesus' ministry: "He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So His fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought Him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics and paralytics, and He healed them. And great crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan" (4:23-25).

Jesus brought in God's kingdom, providing freedom from sin and Satan, and restoring God's blessing on the creation. He spent most of His ministry in Galilee, where both Gentiles and Jews believed the gospel. Ever since, He has drawn in people from every nation. Jesus called for a response: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." That is where we are; we must repent because the King has come.

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Who is Jesus? What is repentance? Isaiah answers by giving Jesus’ names:

JESUS IS THE WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Since the other three names in Isaiah 9:6 are word pairs, Isaiah likely pairs “wonderful” and “counselor.” “Wonderful” means like God. King Ahaz’ cunning but foolish decisions had ruined Judah. Solomon was divinely wise, but used his wisdom to serve himself. But in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He comes speaking words given Him from the Father: *“The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).*

Our time is confused. How do we interpret reality? Is it true, as prize-winning author Philip Roth maintains, that life has been given to all “randomly, fortuitously, and but once, and for no known or knowable reason?” Words have become cheap and random. Only one has the words of eternal life: the Lord Jesus. Only He exhaustively understands all things, for only He is God.

Here is the beginning of repentance: becoming humble enough to receive God’s teaching in Christ. Are you a person who can take counsel? Do you want to know God and what He wants before anything else, or are you confident in your own thinking? We need to repent by submitting our thoughts to the counsel of Jesus.

It is easy to live a solitary life, linked to the Internet with headphones on. We do not learn Jesus’ wisdom like that. When the King rules in your heart, you begin to see how foolish your own thinking is apart from God. Grace and forgiveness lead us to stop talking and begin listening to the godly wisdom of others: *“Wisdom is found in those who take advice” (Proverbs 13:10).* The Wonderful Counselor has come. Listen to Him!

JESUS IS THE MIGHTY GOD

Here in Washington, D.C., many people seem to be-

lieve we have the resources to solve our worst problems. We can do things here! But our enemies are much too strong for us — sin, guilt, Satan and all the chaos they have brought. The Lord who came is God in the flesh (John 1:14). No one else can deal with sin, change our hearts or rule nations.

JESUS IS THE EVERLASTING FATHER

Though the Trinity was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, even Isaiah did not confuse the eternal Father with the eternal Son. “Everlasting Father” describes the kingly rule of God the Son. God is a father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5). Israel’s kings did not care much for the needy. But Jesus went throughout all Galilee healing the people of every disease and sickness. He brought life to the dying. For most of us, family is the great joy of the Christmas holidays. I can’t wait for the laughter! We belong to a Lord who cares for us, so we should show it by sharing our joy with the “orphans” around us.



JESUS IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

In Scripture, peace is the wholeness and bounty God gives. In *The Doctrine of God*, John Frame writes, “God is completely at peace with Himself. We often experience struggles between contradictory impulses within us. God, on the contrary, is completely at harmony with Himself. His three persons glorify and serve one another willingly and cheerfully. He is whole, well, prosperous— blessed and happy.”

My wife, Jackie, and I have lived in the nation’s capital only a few months. We have noticed many busy people anxious with concern for security and prosperity. It is a bracing place to live; we love it. Can we find healing, integrity, security and wellbeing? Yes, when heaven takes over Planet Earth. Jesus is the one Man who knows absolute integrity and the full blessing of his Father. His kingdom brings us these gifts. The Prince has come.

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“Wonderful Counselor” continued from page6...

Christ speaks peace through the blood of His own sacrifice for us on the cross. God creates peace with you by removing His anger against you. Will you submit to that message brought by the Prince of Peace? What about relationships — do you need to make peace with someone because you belong to this King? To humble oneself and offer forgiveness and love to an enemy is the power of the Prince.

GOD IS BRINGING JESUS’ KINGDOM TO THIS WORLD.

Isaiah 9:7 says, *“The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”* The child will reign on David’s throne forever, establishing an everlasting kingdom of justice and righteousness. God satisfied the demands of his moral rule in Christ’s death. Now the Father has exalted Jesus to His right hand. Whatever our inadequacies, and they are many, we should take heart! Isaiah says God’s zeal is for the rule of his Son. Zeal is God’s burning desire. His kingdom cannot fail.

This, too, calls for repentance. We tend to think the church depends on our gifts, our service and our integrity. It does not. It depends on the grace of Christ. His kingdom cannot fail because it is God’s heart.

Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Adore Him in the wonder of His divine Person, and in joy that His kingdom has come!

Howard Griffith, Ph.D., is assistant professor of systematic theology at RTS-Washington, D.C. He was pastor of All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church for 23 years.

Newsletter Submissions

Articles in the News of the Saints express the opinions of the author(s). The views of the Session and Diaconate are available in the minutes of those bodies. For more information, please speak to any elder or deacon of the church.

Submissions of articles, announcements, photos, etc. for this newsletter should go to:

Fred Hedgecoth
(richmondscribe@verizon.net).



You may also mail them to the church (address on front page) or there is also a mailbox in the church office where submissions may be left.

Deadline for March issue of News of the Saints:
Sunday, Feb. 17th, 2007