



Steeplelight

First Presbyterian
Church

Steeplelight
October 2011

Small Groups—A Vision for Our Church

I have had a vision for this Church for over a year and I believe that now is the time to launch a new way of “doing” church for adults. As you know, last year a new program for children was introduced, “Think Orange,” which combines the light of the church and the warm hearts of parents to influence the next generation of Christians, our children. And it is all based on building effective relationships in small groups.

Small groups. I sense a spirit within our church, not top down but at a grassroots level beginning to grow with a yearning to grow in Christ.

Small groups are how Christianity started. People meeting in their homes, sharing the Good News about Jesus Christ, transforming lives. What does a Small Group look like?

Once a month, a small group of people meet at a host home for a lay led discussion for 90 minutes. It is available to all members and seekers in this church.

Small groups are *not* to be Bible study. Neither are they simply a coffee klatch. It is twofold:

- About learning and growing in Christ and about being a Christian
- Fellowship and loving one another, caring

Group sessions will be constructed around a user-friendly list of questions simply based on the sermon from the previous Sunday – how do I apply God’s Word to my life?

We are committed to a vision which is deeply inclusive and, therefore, every member of this church would be invited to a particular small group. Obviously, no one *must* go. And in time, folk may want to migrate to other groups or start a new one which is how our church will grow. So look for more information and opportunities to be involved at coffee hours on October 16th and 23rd.

If you have a desire to be considered as a small group leader or host for one of these gatherings, please email me. Training is provided. The main qualification is to care about people. —EFD

Inside this issue:

<i>Stop and Shop cards</i>	2
<i>ACO concert</i>	3
<i>Summer Mission trips</i>	4
<i>Baptism Class</i>	5
<i>New books in Reading Room</i>	5
<i>What IS Yellow?</i>	6
<i>Reformation Sunday</i>	7
<i>Read Aloud Day</i>	8

Special points of interest:

- Youth mission trips announced
- Information for new parents
- Volunteer for Read Aloud Day
- Help cook: Operation Hope
- Think Orange

*Congratulations
to our Third
Grade
children who
received their
Bibles on
Sunday,
September 25.*



An Easy Way to Support our Youth

Stop and Shop gift cards can be used for anything Stop and Shop sells, including pharmacy, gas, Peapod and even to purchase other gift cards.

If you would like to support the Mission trips and buy cards, please contact Kim-Louise Spinosa at klspinosa@optonline.net or 203-367-6488.

Stop and Shop sells to non-profit organizations preloaded gift cards at a 5% discount. We buy them in quantities and sell those cards to our families and friends at face value and the youth group keeps the 5% discount as money to underwrite their summer mission trips.

For Impact and Varsity families who purchase cards,

those profits from the cards go directly to a trip account for their student. This money can then be applied towards the fall Retreat or Summer Mission Trip. For example, for every \$100 in cards you purchase \$5 will be credited to your child's trip account. To date, Stop and Shop has helped us raise over \$3,600! Even if you

do not have a student in the Youth Group, we depend heavily on profits realized from non-youth group families buying Stop and Shop cards.

All checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church. Cards are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Thank you!



American Chamber Orchestra

The American Chamber Orchestra, under music director, Christopher Hisey, will present its fall concert in the sanctuary of our church on October 29 at 8:00 p.m. To celebrate the 200th anniversary

of the birth of Franz Liszt, the orchestra will play his tone poem 'Les Preludes' and the Piano Concerto #1. Assaf Weissman will be the soloist. Also on the program will be 'Night

on Bald Mountain' by Mussorgsky and the 'Italian Symphony' (#4) of Felix Mendelssohn. Tickets are \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for students. A portion of the proceeds from this concert goes to

support music for our church through the Pollitt Fund. For any questions, please call Ray Weber at [203-255-7661](tel:203-255-7661) or visit the orchestra website: www.americanchamberorchestra.org.

Chefs Needed!

The Missions Committee is looking for a few good chefs to help cook the monthly meal we provide to Operation Hope. We

meet in the church kitchen, the second Saturday of every month at 8:30 am. Aprons, gloves and other tools provided. Questions? Incli-

nation to be part of a great team! Please call Duke Louis at (203) 673-6424 or dukelouis1@hotmail.com or MaryEllen Evanich at (203) 874-6670 or at: meevanich@yahoo.com.



A TAG SALE THANK YOU!

On Saturday, September 24, Impact and Varsity students sponsored their first Tag Sale to raise funds for their summer mission trips.

The day was a total success. Thanks be to God for a rain-free day, for the many people donating items and baked goods, lots of 'traffic' throughout the day and plenty of sales.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, talents and treasures.



Building. Repairing. Relating...

Oak Hill, WV
 median income for
 a family is
 \$33,183,
 per capita income
 is \$14,347 and
 17% of families are
 below the poverty
 line.

York, PA
 median income for
 a family is
 \$30,762, per capi-
 ta income is
 \$13,439 and
 20% of families are
 below the poverty
 line.

Fairfield, CT
 median income for
 a family is
 \$121,749,
 per capita income
 is \$43,670 and
 1.8% of families
 are below the
 poverty line.

2012 summer mission trips announced

Varsity will be traveling to Oak Hill, West Virginia the week of July 22- 28 and Impact will go to York, PA the week of June 24-29. The Senior High students have been asking for a more challenging work/service experience so this summer, they will go to Oak Hill, WV for a Group Workcamp. Oak Hill is in the southern coalfield region at the base of the Appalachian mountains.

For six days, they'll join 400 other youth to repair sagging porches, rebuild unsafe steps and wheelchair ramps, and paint homes.

Impact students will be traveling to York, PA for a Week of Hope. This is a week of Community Service especially designed for Middle school youth. Week of Hope is the affordable one-week mission camp where middle school students will grow closer to each other and God while immersed in a community of ongoing service...morning, noon and night.

For five days, they will join 100 other youth to repair homes, do yard work, work at a food pantry or summer church school. First Presbyterian youth have been

attending Group Work and Week of Hope Camps for over 15 years. The experience can be life-changing!

The approximate cost for the Workcamp Varsity trip is \$400 and the Week of Hope Impact this trip is \$290. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is due by October 15. We have reserved a limited amount of spots so please get your deposit in soon. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church.

New Baptism Class—November 5

**SAVE THE
DATE**
November 5
from 4:00-5:30

Families will fill and send shoe box gifts to *children* in areas of poverty and crisis around the world and share in the joy of packing gifts for children who have never received a Christmas gift.

Families with children of all ages and any members of our church family are invited to pack a box and join us for our family experience.

One of the greatest joys in the Christian community is the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Baptism for infants and young children. We are delighted to offer an opportunity for instruction, fellowship and prayerful reflection for new parents in preparation for

their child's baptism.

The Book of Order requires that the pastor and elders instruct parents in the meaning of baptism and the manner in which the sacrament is administered in our worship service.

On Saturday, November 5 from

10:30 – noon, we are offering a seminar for parents to gather together for the purpose of fulfilling this requirement, learn the meaning of baptism and enjoy some fellowship time.

If you are interested in attending, call the church office to sign up.

Now Available in the Reading Room

This month The Reading Room will display books celebrating the joy of God.

Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humor by Baptist minister Rev. Susan Sparks seeks to help believers reclaim the spiritual power of humor. Eat the Cookie...Buy the Shoes: Giving Yourself Per-

mission to Lighten Up by well known writer Joyce Meyer also wants Christians "to lighten up" and to find in their lives the God given gifts of joy and pleasure.

Presbyterian minister Rev. Dr. Albert N. Wells continues this theme of God and laughter and applies it to the study of science and religion. In his book Enough To Make

God Laugh Dr. Wells finds no incompatibility between science and religion but only cause to celebrate the achievements of science and the awe and wonder of religion. God delights with us as we discover his magnificent gifts and make use of them. Do stop in and see these as well as the other new books now available.

What *IS* Yellow?

In our Orange strategy, red (parents – the heart of the family) and yellow (the church – God's light to the world) combine to make Orange, a strategy to demonstrate the message of God's story in order to influence our children's growing faith. So what does it mean to be *yellow*? Yellow, the church, represents light - God's light - and the church exists to show the world who Jesus Christ is. Thinking yellow is understanding the role of the church in children's lives and their families.

Light is inherently inviting. It communicates comfort, warmth and healing and gives direction and hope so we can see better and understand more fully. Most people are looking for light.

In the first century, the church communicated the good news of Jesus throughout their world without fancy programs or elaborate equipment. These early Christians lived their faith and taught their neighbors, friends and children, and the church saw rapid growth. All they had to give people was Jesus. We can do the same. All we need is the willingness and the voice to share with others the "reason for the hope that [we] have . . . with gentleness and respect" (1 Pet. 3:15). If we look for opportunities to introduce our community, our children, and the world to Jesus and his life-giving message, we will find them.



Elaine Brown and Eleanor Fitz running the Bake Sale at the Youth Tag Sale

Did you know that:

- 75% of our Vacation Bible School volunteers were *not* parents of children
- Nearly \$1,000 was raised through Stop and Shop cards from families who do *not* have someone in the Youth Groups
- All of the Impact and Varsity leaders do *not* have a youth in the program
- Many, many of the donations for our recent Tag Sale and Bake Sale to support Impact and Varsity summer 2012 mission trips came from older members of the church

This is what it means to be Yellow! How will you shine your light?

Reformation Sunday

On the last Sunday of the month, October 30, our church observes *Reformation Sunday* -- to remind us of the central contributions to our faith of the Protestant Reformation. Personally, the day always brings me back to the first trip I made into a region of Germany once known as the "German Democratic Republic" (East Germany) -- which happened to comprise some of the principal Reformation sites -- such as Wittenberg, where Martin Luther nailed 95 theses on the door of the "Castle Church" -- a manifesto for reformation.

Some of the principal ideas of the Reformation include the five "solas" --

- *sola scriptura* -- the conviction, taught by Scripture itself, that the books of the Old and New Testament are the inspired and authoritative Word of God
- *sola fidei* -- our "justification" (our "being put right with God") comes about by faith alone
- *sola gratia* -- our salvation is by divine grace only, and not by human merit, or work
- *solo Christo* -- "through Christ alone" -- the *sufficiency* of the cross of Christ alone for salvation
- *solus Deo Gloria* -- our work and our lives are to be lived for an audience of "one" -- all, to the glory of God alone

Many of our worshippers may wear *red* on Reformation Sunday -- the liturgical color for the day. Whatever you wear, let us ponder, and prepare our hearts for the worship that truly glorifies God in scripture, by faith, through grace, and Christ alone.

Edward F. Duffy



First Presbyterian Church

2475 Easton Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06825

Phone: 203-374-6176
Fax: 203-374-1643
Prayer line: 203-374-0846

Steeplelight deadline is the 15th of each month.

Submit articles to
First-Presbyterian@sbcglobal.net

What will you leave behind?
Please remember First
Presbyterian in your will.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Bridgeport, CT
Permit No. 518

**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER
BY October 3**

Read Aloud Day—October 20

We are encouraging all our members who are able and willing to participate to join us in reaching out to the Bridgeport School System in this year's Read Aloud Day, October 20 from 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. Read Aloud Day is a wonderful event which promotes

literacy and the joy of reading. Our involvement on October 20 hopefully will provide the School Volunteer Association of Bridgeport the opportunity to recruit ongoing volunteers who will be readers, tutors and mentors during the academic year. To learn more

about this program or to sign up to participate on October 20, please talk to Herb Smith and watch for more details on Sundays during coffee hour.

*Sign up for
Read Aloud
Day on
October 20.*

*Spend an hour
to read to an
elementary
school class
and make a
difference.*