



GOOD TIDINGS

A Monthly Newsletter of The Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains

April 2011

Special points of interest:

- Continued prayers for the **Pastor Nominating Committee** who are busy searching for the pastor God is calling to lead PCMP into the future.
- Holy Week Schedule 7 AM—8 PM, Monday, thru Wednesday. Prayer Stations in the Sanctuary**
- Wednesday Evening All evening activities are postponed as we prepare for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday**
- Maundy Thursday—Worship at 7 PM with Communion**
- Good Friday—Worship led by the Chancel Choir**
- Easter Celebration! Worship at 9 AM with the Chancel Choir and at 11 AM with the Praise Team**

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Notes from the Pastor...

Vacation Ventures Steering Team Volunteers Needed

Specifically, I am in need of people to:

1. Be in charge of Registration Forms
2. **Organize** the daily snacks
3. **Recruit** teachers for the following:
 - a. games
 - b. crafts
 - c. science
 - d. story
 - e. group leaders – 3 people
4. recruit lunch helpers



Last year we had 24 wonderful young people participate in this program – **It runs July 11-22 from 9-11**

Vacation Ventures runs alongside of Joyful Noise's two week summer program and many of our young people are siblings from Joyful Noise.



Last year we had young people in rising grades 1-4 – the younger children participated with Joyful Noise.

Some of our volunteers could only help out for one week – which worked out fine –

MEN! The Hometown Nazareth program in Week 1 would GREATLY BENEFIT from having a few men involved!

Please contact me if you are available to serve on the steering team or are willing to help teach.

Peace and Blessings,

[Carie](#)

"The Stone Has Been Rolled Away"

Holy week is just around the corner and soon Easter will be upon us. On that first Easter Sunday, the women are on their way to the place where Jesus' body has been laid. They are bringing their spices to anoint his body, and they are worried about who will move the stone from in front of the tomb. Who will move the stone? How will they get to the body and anoint him for a proper burial? They begin this wondrous morning by fretting and worrying over an obstacle that stands in their way.

Who will roll away the stone? Who will allow us to anoint the body of our teacher? When we come to our faith, to our God, to our practice of worship, what are the stones that need to be rolled away? What is keeping us from discovering that the good news that the stone had been rolled away and our Savior has risen?

Is it being in an interim time, of wondering who will our new pastor be? Maybe life is presenting us with too much change and we fret with concern for the future? Or maybe you are struggling with guilt over something, or are grieving and feeling loss in your life? Is it anger or frustration at something going on in your life or the world?

During this Lenten season, as we prepare for Easter Sunday, God wants us to identify those stones, and God wants to move them away so that we can truly see and believe that the tomb is empty and that there is Good News to infuse our lives. We are an Easter people, even in our pain, suffering, loss, and confusion, we are an Easter people. The stone has been rolled away and God calls us to come and worship and rejoice in Risen Christ. Christ has risen, Christ has risen indeed. Amen.



Holy Week Prayer Stations

During Holy Week: April 18, 19, and 20th – the sanctuary will be open during the day for a time of prayer and reflection. There will be several prayer stations available as a resource to focus on Holy Week and the upcoming Easter Celebration. Or, just come and spend some time in silence and reflection in the sanctuary.

Ways to Serve

Wanted: Friendly people called to welcome new members
Gather the new members in a casual setting to connect each family (or member) with a friend and written guidelines to encourage integration for themselves and their families into the life of their new church. Over the year we follow-up 3 times to inquire how implementing the written guide is working for them, among other things.

Time Commitment: One hour class, 3 follow-up contacts .

Wanted: Facilitators, Trainers, Teachers who feel called to re-vitalize our congregation through leadership development and skill building.

Session has approved the concept of Leadership Development for leaders and congregants. Be available to provide facilitation /training for Elders (short duration retreat style), other leaders and the congregation in general, other instruction may be identified by the Pastor and Ministry.

Time Commitment: Twice a year, prepare and offer classes on Leadership Development, Mentoring, and

other content and process experiences.

Contact: Nancy Hults-Rubin at 973-539-9527

"God calls the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains to be a shining example to the world of God's love and grace."

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES NEED YOUR HELP AS WELL AS SEVERAL WE HAVE NOT

LISTED HERE.

What talents has God given you?

Serving God by Serving Each Other

Please Chose Where to Serve

Current openings for service:

Crib Room – 11:00 worship
Toddlers – 11:00 worship

Christian Ed Ministry Team
Kid's Own Worship
- setting up and cleaning up
- Worship Leadership
Parish Life Ministry Team
Coffee Hour

Deliver Sunday Flowers to a church member after worship

Nurture Ministry Team
new ministry to be developed on
Pastoral Care to the congregation

Family Fun Day Steering Team

There are many ways you can help within our church community. Where will you serve?

Students

Youth Groups

We would love to see you actively involved in youth group throughout the year. Bring a friend or two! We know your schedules are busy and homework loads can be heavy. Join us when you can!!!!

Youth Group—Grades 8-12

Make new friends, explore your faith & have fun! [See the schedule online](http://www.mppresby.org) at www.mppresby.org and join **"Morris Plains PYC" on Facebook** to get all the latest news and schedules.

Club Fifty6

Youth Group for **Grades 5—7** meets during the school year on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 8:30 PM in The Attic. The [Club Fifty6 schedule](#) can be found on the church website!

The 2011 Teen Mission Team and youth from Club 56 & PYC **Wish To THANK YOU**

For Supporting The SPAGHETTI DINNER

We hope you had a great time and a great meal.

Sunday School

Sunday School Schedule

April 3: Kid's Own Worship 9:00 downstairs in fellowship hall
Grades 3 and up come upstairs for communion
Scripture: Luke 10:25-37
Theme: Jesus Tells about the Good Samaritan

April 10: Children begin upstairs in worship
Scripture: John 11:1-45
Theme: Jesus Raises Lazarus from the dead

April 17: Palm Sunday – Children are asked to process in with palms –more info to come
Scripture: Psalm 118 and Matthew 21:1-11
Theme: Crowds welcome Jesus to Jerusalem

April 24: Easter – no Sunday School

LEADERS are needed for our 2011 VBS program: Vacation Ventures! Contact Pastor Carie or Becca Swope TODAY to get on board!

Joyful Noise PreSchool

With the promise of spring in the air we all look forward to being outside. Visions of digging in the sandbox, climbing and sliding, riding trikes, and drawing with chalk on the pavement fill our heads! At the same time, we will continue to encourage literacy with our *Rollin' into Reading* program.

To date, Joyful Noise families have read 4,455 books to their preschoolers at home. Now through the end of the year, parents will also be visiting our classrooms to read to all of the children.

As always, we thank you for your prayers and support! 973-539-9514

Jane Whitehead, *Dir. Of Joyful Noise*

REGISTER NOW for our summer VBS program, Vacation Ventures!

Week 1 is "Hometown Nazareth!"
Week 2 is "Shake It Up Cafe!"

office@mppresby.org
973-539-3481

Easter Food Baskets

Items are Needed for the Easter Basket Distribution to those in Need

canned green vegetables	canned corn
canned sweet potatoes	soup
meal-in-a-can	cereal
mashed potatoes	tuna
rice	canned fruit
peanut butter	jelly
coffee (reg. & decaf.)	juice
tea (reg. & decaf.)	
hot chocolate	mayonnaise
pasta sauce	pasta
pancake mix, syrup	mac n cheese
cake mix/frosting	brownie mix
jello/pudding	muffin mix

5 lb. Canned Ham-Put in refrigerator downstairs

Place items in bins in the Narthex by April 14. **THANK YOU!!!**

Collection for Homeless Solutions

Recently we collected cereal and the Mission Ministry is very happy to report that many of you brought in boxes of cereal for our local homeless shelter on Hanover Avenue. **THANK YOU!**

Now we are collecting antibacterial hand soap in individual containers and also larger refill bottles. Drop off your donated items to the bin in the Narthex.

What/Where is the NARTHEX? It's the front hallway where you walk into the Sanctuary. :)

Celebrations



Frazzano, Daniella	APR 2
Cancilla, Amanda	APR 3
Rodino, Steven	APR 3
Sempier, Joshua	APR 3
Rider, Lynne	APR 4
Hartle, Ava	APR 7
Hutchinson, Melanie	APR 7
Huhn, Erich	APR 8
Baloche, Clayton	APR 9
Hartle, Andrea	APR 10
Jain, Alec (AJ)	APR 10
Van Eeuwen, Trevor	APR 10
Olson, James	APR 11
Granade, Mark	APR 14
Haas, Terry	APR 14
Smith, Marianne	APR 14
Wilson, Christopher*	APR 19
Caccavale, Tom	APR 20
Carpenter, Audrey	APR 20
Studer, Kim	APR 20
Annuik, Maxwell	APR 22
Cate, Susan	APR 22
Foley, Fiona	APR 22
Cate, John	APR 23
Glass, Patricia	APR 23
Smith, Alan*	APR 23

Spicer, Fran	APR 23
Britcher, Caity	APR 24
Stabbert, Aimee	APR 24
Fisher, Ginny	APR 26
Hartle, Josh	APR 26
Hill, Sarah	APR 26
Klepper, Janet	APR 27
Roos, Ed	APR 27
Engel, Max	APR 28
Fretwell, Grace W.	APR 28
Minor, Michael	APR 28
Bushong, Cathy	APR 29
McManus, Caitlin	APR 30

Please let us know your birthday and anniversary dates so we can update our church family database. Thank you!

Congratulations Abound!

If you'd like to know the secret to a successful marriage, just ask any of these couples!

Happy Anniversary to:

George & Pat Olson	50 Years on April 15
Bill & Sally Rushmore	63 Years on April 17
Stephen & Katy Ratti	4 Years on April 21
Bill & Caral Harrison	58 Years on April 25

Mission Trip News

On A Youth Mission Trip...

It's amazing what a little hard work with new friends can do in the lives of youth. It's a faith-building adventure they never forget. Teens learn valuable skills doing home repair-basic carpentry, roof repair, painting, and drywall. All they really need is a willing heart...the rest can be learned.

There's something very powerful about serving others in need. When teens develop a relationship with someone in need-**they change**. They see people in need as real people-rather than just "the poor or needy." They develop friendships. And with a little guidance from the camp program -teens take great leaps of faith and character.

It's amazing what happens when students encounter new places, cultures, and different ways of life. They develop closer relationships with each other, and best of all, with God. As a result they come home with a new sense of unity, understanding, and respect for each other.

Teens enjoy the evening programs...a series of high-impact nightly programs featuring great music, top-quality videos, games, worship experiences, and chal-



lenging presentations-all designed to help kids take the next step in their Christian faith.

The goal of every Group Workcamp is to connect teens and the residents they serve to Jesus. From Bible studies to interdenominational evening programs to devotions and service projects, everything is directed toward changing lives.

27 people are signed up for the mission week in Auburn, NY this July. We continue to fundraise so that each team member only has to pay \$300 to go on our mission trips.

Will you help us meet our budget by purchasing a "Piece of the Road?"

With thanks for your support you are invited to a Celebratory Report-Back Party on Sunday, August 14th after Worship.

We'll supply the ice cream and other goodies as well as the stories of our experiences in Auburn. Please come and help us celebrate being the hands and feet of Jesus in Auburn, NY.

Thank You for Your Prayers!

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

TURN IN YOUR ARTICLES EARLY!

RE M I N D E R :

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES IS APRIL 21

office@mppresby.org

Where Are You Connected?

Calling All Softball Players and Fans:

Our Church will again be participating in the North Jersey Christian Softball League.



We are looking for players (16 or older) and FANS (of all ages).

The season starts the week of April 18th and ends by mid July during which we play a 12 game semi-competitive schedule usually 1 night per week.

Home games are played at Morris Plains Borough School on Thursday nights starting at 6:30.

At the end of the regular season, there are playoffs and an Annual Charity Softball Tournament. This past year league participants made donations of \$800 to the Morris County Food Pantry and \$800 to the Morris County Habitat for Humanity.

Additional information about the league can be found at the league website: www.njcsl.org.

If you're interested in participating or have questions please contact either Mark Ruiz (201 602-9583), Rob Hill (201 874-4239) or Eric Huff (917 902-4300).

We'll see you at the ball game!

Community Soup Kitchen Thanks



A big thank you from the Mission Ministry to Anne Arp, Kelly Caccavale, Bob Lipka and Taylor Silvestri who donated their time on Wednesday, March 23rd to help serve food at the Community Soup Kitchen in Morristown. We are currently trying to line up additional serve dates during the year. Stay tuned for more information!

Copy Cats

Copy Cats Luncheon will meet on Tuesday, April 19 at Bensi's at the Shoppes at Union Hill in Denville at 12 noon. For reservations contact Audrey Carpenter at 973-267-6312.

Men's Ministry

Our next breakfast will be Saturday, April 9 at 8:30 AM. Our meetings are held the first and third Mondays at 8:00 PM. **All men are welcome!**

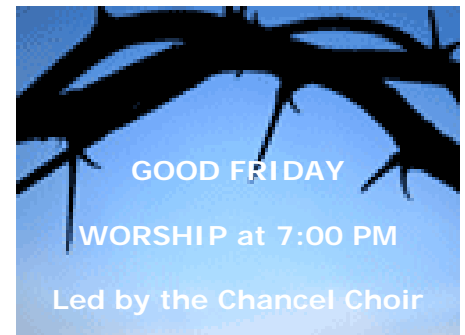
Nursery Child Care for the Summer

Are you able to provide child care in the AIR CONDITIONED Nursery during the 10 AM worship this summer—even for one week? If you'd enjoy rocking a little one while listening to worship through the Nursery Room speaker, please contact Becca Swope at swopes@att.net

Book Club Welcomes You

BOOK CLUB will meet on Monday, April 25 at 7:30 PM to discuss Brooklyn by Colm Toibin, an Irish author. Hauntingly beautiful and heartbreaking, Colm Toibin's novel is set in Brooklyn and Ireland in the early 1950s, when one young woman crosses the ocean to make a new life for herself. Eilis Lacey has come of age in small-town Ireland in the years following World War Two. Though skilled at bookkeeping, she cannot find a job in the miserable Irish economy. When an Irish priest from Brooklyn offers to sponsor Eilis in America--to live and work in a Brooklyn neighborhood "just like Ireland"--she decides she must go, leaving her fragile mother her charismatic sister behind.

Join us to discuss the novel.



Upcoming Events

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN PLAN OCEAN GROVE GETAWAY

September 17 & 18

Share in creating joyful memories at our Ocean Retreat this Fall.



REGISTER NOW...

for PW's "Getaway Retreat" at the Grove Hall Retreat Center – just an hour away at the Jersey Shore.

We begin with lunch at 1:00 pm on Saturday, Sept. 17 and conclude with attendance at church service in Ocean Grove on Sept. 18. Please join us for a time of **renewal and fellowship (and fun!)** in the beauty of God's creation of the Ocean Grove shores.

Registration forms are available on the PW bulletin board and in the Church of office.

Deadline is April 5. Questions? Call Laurie Fu at 973-605-8602.

Dominican Republic News

BENEFIT DINNER!

SAVE THE DATE...



Saturday

April 16

7:00 p.m.

Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains
An Evening of Dominican Culture, Music, and Cuisine
Mirella Castillo Diaz, pastor from San Cristobal, D.R. will be here to cook a variety of typical Dominican dishes. Please join us at a buffet dinner with Dominican music by local Christian singer José Benitez.

Tickets for the event can be purchased in the church office:

\$30.00/person \$50.00/couple

\$15.00/children under 12

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT DOMINICAN SERVICE PROJECTS

Please call Karen Rodino if you have any questions: 973-476-4447



Easter Lillies

On Easter the sanctuary will be decorated with lilies.

If you would like to remember or honor your loved ones by donating a lily, please sign up in the church office no later than Sunday, March 17. The cost for a lily is \$14.

Please indicate if you would like to take your lily after the 11 a.m. service on Easter. All remaining lilies will be delivered to shut-ins. The names of those being remembered will be listed in the bulletin on Easter.

The Walsh Memorial Bell Choir Program will present its annual

APPRECIATION CONCERT

on Sunday, May 1 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary

The concert, featuring the Cadet, Mezza, Grazio and Walsh Memorial Bell Choirs, is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served following the concert. This is an outstanding musical event for the whole family. Plan to come!!

Register NOW for Hometown Nazareth and Shake It Up Cafe!

Vacation Ventures:

For Grades Rising 1st to 4th

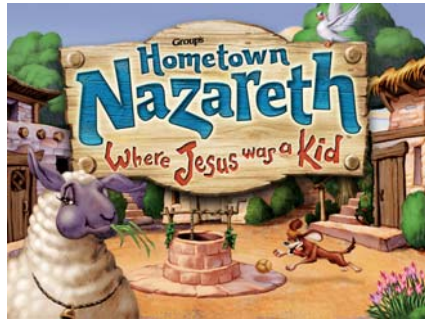
Join us this summer for Vacation Ventures. This year, we will be offering two different programs for the two weeks. **Join us for one week or join us for both.** 5th Grade+ contact Pastor Carie if interested.



Adult and teen volunteers are needed to help out too. We can use people all week or for just one day.



Please contact Pastor Carie if you are available! Thanks –



Week One:

Hometown Nazareth: Where Jesus was a Kid

July 11 – 15 from 9-1
Registration cost \$50

- Day 1: Jesus had a family
- Day 2: Jesus had a name
- Day 3: Jesus had a home
- Day 4: Jesus went to church (or temple)
- Day 5: Jesus served others

Week Two: Shake it Up Café

July 18-22 from 9-1
Registration cost \$50

In this kid-friendly café full of chef's hats and aprons, pots and pans, checkered tablecloths, and chalkboard menus, kids explore the Bible as a cookbook filled with recipes for living out God's word. Through interactive lessons, that are easy for kids to apply to their lives today, boys and girls will celebrate biblical festivals that reveal ingredients for being a follower of God.

- Day 1: be ready for God
- Day 2: Give happily to God
- Day 3: Believe fully in Jesus
- Day 4: Remember Jesus often
- Day 5: Celebrate God forever

Looking Ahead...

Club Fifty6 our middle school youth group will be participating in the Par-sippany **RELAY FOR LIFE** for the American Cancer Society. This walk-athon fundraiser begins on Sat., May 14 at 2 PM and people take turns walking laps throughout the night into the morning. Club 56 has joined Virginia Lanza's team. If you'd like to participate in any way, contact Kim Smith or the Lanza family.

Summer Worship Hour Begins, Pentecost, Confirmation and the Church Picnic....

What do these all have in common? They all happen at 10 AM on Sunday, June 12th. Mark your calendars now!

Help & Thanks

Old Groups! New Groups! Any Groups!

Are you looking for your next study topic? Wondering which study guides are worth your time and effort?

Not only do we already have a great library of group study books and DVDs, we also have an **available team of advisors**, Joan and David Lioi, who can help you select an engaging and meaningful study. Joan and David have some years of experience in choosing curricula and may be able to suggest strategies for formulating good questions which can stimulate effective group discussion.

Just give them a call at **973.627.9210** or send them an email at joda62869@verizon.net to confer about selecting a study suitable for your group.



PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW For Easter Lilies

CONTACT The Church Office

Letter from Fran

Dear Church Family,

As I leave this church to start a new life in PA, I want to thank you—all of you, for helping me along my faith journey.

You have supported and cheered me on as I went on Mission Trips. I can't tell you how much they meant to me. It is always said that you go forth to help others, but the joy you receive is double. I was blessed to share time with our young people and got to be "Mema" to some of them. That is a special joy to me.

God led me to facilitate Horizon Bible Study and the women have been supportive and faithful to that ministry. Hildy Benjamin will take over the Evening Study, I appreciate her willingness to continue this important study for women. The Prayer Shawl Ministry will continue with Anne Nelson as moderator for that group. That ministry is very special for the feeling of God's presence when a shawl is given. All these ministries will continue and grow. THANK GOD.

I have been a member of the church for over 40 years. As I sit in the choir and look over the congregation, I see people I had in Sunday School with their young families. I will miss that sense of connection. I know God supports this move. We have our signals, but I'll never forget you. Thank you for all the friendship and joy you have given me.

Fran Spicer
1226 Kirkland Village Circle
Bethlehem, PA 18017
Cell: 973-525-0070



Yes, thank you to all that sent birthday cards to me for my 90th birthday.

I celebrated all week and had a wonderful time. Again all the cards meant so much.

With Joy, Betty Lou Mitchell

Take Time to Enjoy Our Local Christian Camp



Come visit camp this spring! Here are some upcoming events at Camp Johnsonburg:

Open House, April 9 and May 14, 10AM-3PM: Come see our beautiful site and meet our staff. This is a great opportunity to learn more about our program if you've never been here before, or to introduce a friend to the camp you already love!

Spruce Up Day, May 7, 9AM-4PM: Come help us for a day of work and fellowship as we prepare the site for the summer. There are projects for all skill levels. Free lunch is included. So we can plan accordingly, please let our executive director Kurt Oelschlager know if you can make it (kurt@campjburg.org or 908-852-2349).

Camp J-burg Alumni Reunion, May 27-30: We welcome back all former campers and employees for a weekend of catching up with old friends and making new ones. Lodging is available. Please RSVP on our website or by calling our office by May 1.

There is also still time to register for our **summer camp program! The deadline for the \$25 early registration discount is April 15.** Please see our website or contact our office for more details about event availability and other program information.

See you soon!
Johnsonburg Presbyterian Center (an active part of Newton Presbytery!)
www.campjburg.org
info@campjburg.org
 908-8852-2349

Retreat for Grades 6 thru 8 At Camp Johnsonburg May 20-22, Cost \$99
 The Power of Prayer is the theme for the weekend. Join us for some fun at Camp J-burg as well as for prayer. These retreats fill us FAST so please register now. K.smith@mppresby.org

Retreat for Grades 4 & 5 At Camp Johnsonburg June 3-4, Cost \$58
 Event: I Thought You Were My Friend For Whom: 4th and 5th Graders
 Friendships can be complicated and this retreat will give us the opportunity to look at what it means to be a friend and what to do when our friends don't act like friends.
Begins on Friday evening at 8 pm and runs until 4 pm Saturday afternoon. Register with Kim Smith now at k.smith@mppresby.org
 Parents are always welcome to join us.

Lenten Simple Suppers

Simple Suppers on Wednesdays Let us break bread together...
 Everyone is cordially invited to attend Simple Suppers during Lent on Wednesdays at 6:15 PM, **until April 13.**



If you are able, bring soup or bread to share. If you are too busy or not able to bring something, PLEASE join us anyway! There is always plenty for every-

one.
 Soup and Bread are enjoyed for dinner in Westminster Hall at 6:15 pm followed by Communion in the Sanctuary at 7 pm.

A half hour worship is held consisting of 4 songs, Communion, prayer and a very brief message.

Schedules can be hectic but Lent is the perfect time to slow down—at least on Wednesday evenings—and take time to listen to God and prepare your hearts for the message of Easter.



Invite to the Movies



A Semi-Private Screening of the New Movie Release, "Soul Surfer"

We have 50 tickets! We can get more!
 Bring your friends and families to see this inspiring movie.
www.soulsurferthemovie.com

Sunday, April 10 at 5:00 PM
 Parsippany Clearview Cinema

Tickets are ONLY \$5
 RSVP by April 5 to Kim Smith

Affordable Groceries
 Every family can use a break on the cost of groceries. The Market Street Mission now participates in a national grocery program called Angel Food Ministries.

Everyone is welcome to participate and place an order.

Visit the Angel Food website at www.angelfoodministries.com for info.

Gift Card Program

Magic Pennies—Scrip Program

Did you know that if each family bought only one \$100 grocery store gift card each month that it would bring in over \$4000 in 2011?

If all of our grocery shopping was done using these gift cards, just imagine how the dollars would add up! How easy is that?

Easter Basket Ideas!
iTunes and Gap/Old Navy cards are perfect items to hide in a young person's Easter Basket! Both companies are giving back a larger percentage this month too!

Gift cards are available each week during Coffee Hour for gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants, American Express, hotels, stores and even online stores such as Amazon.com + more.

A percentage of your purchase supplements the church budget. Everybody benefits!

Stop by the Magic Pennies table in Westminster Hall to **see just how easy and convenient** this program is and how it can benefit **your church!**

Contact Susan Weismantel for info at psaweismantel@optonline.net or visit the www.glscrip.com website for full

Prayer Request from fellow Presbyterians

Read a letter from a mission co-worker in Egypt

Feb. 17, 2010

Editor's note: We have withheld the name for security reasons

Not surprisingly, Egyptian Christians love to read Isaiah 19:25 when the Lord of hosts proclaims, "Blessed be my people Egypt." The verse has a larger context and demands careful interpretation. Nevertheless, these words of promise from the mouth of God encourage and strengthen Egyptian Christians in a remarkable way. In Arabic, the verse reads phonetically, "Mubarak shaaby Masr" or to try and translate the pun, "Mubaarak is my people Egypt." There is deep irony in the fact that President Mubarak's name means "blessed."

One of our former students who is currently a wonderful leader in a church standing approximately 200 meters from Tahrir Square suggested a new translation for the verse: "Freely elected representative government is my people Egypt"! The removal of Mubarak and the hopes of a newer, freer future reflect the blessing that most Egyptians deeply desire today. We pray for Egypt to experience God's blessings in every way, but we are happy to join the rest of the country in praying that God would bless this nation with a more democratic and just government in the months ahead.

The past three weeks have been incredibly challenging. Things have settled down enough that we felt comfortable reuniting our family here in Cairo. This was a wonderful answer to the prayers of many. We are all safe, together, and hopeful for the future. Anyone who has not been here would be struck by the rows of tanks and barbed wire along the road from the airport. Even after just two weeks, my experiences have warped my perspective to the point of actually thinking the reduced number of tanks was rather hopeful. But the reality is that even half the tanks are too many.

The experience of the last three decades under President Mubarak has had a similar effect on Christians in Egypt. Many see the relative stability of an oppressive dictator to be more comforting than the specter of an Islamicist regime like Iran. Today, many are starting to believe that the choice between dictator and theocracy does not exhaust the options. The Facebook revolutionaries in Tahrir Square have inspired many—both inside and outside the Church—to believe that freedom and democracy can be achieved and lived here in Egypt. Please pray for Egyptian Christians to recover the influential role they once had in the civic sphere. Six decades of living under military rulers has created a false dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical; the theological and the political. Pray that Egyptian Christians would regain their voice in social, political, and economic affairs, to fully participate in building Egypt's future and cooperating with neighbors.

Last Friday night, the newly appointed vice-president of Egypt delivered a 50-word announcement that sent at least 50 million Egyptians into ecstasy: President Hosni Mubarak was stepping down. For weeks, we had been abiding by the government curfew and even choosing to stay off the streets during the day. The whole country, but especially Cairo, prepared for the worst. Then, with that short, austere announcement the people flooded into the streets.

I went out with **a young friend from our seminary to join in the celebrations, a 17-year-old Presbyterian who deeply loves his country.** He is a wonderful example of the young people that give me and so many others hope about Egypt's future. His talent, character, and energy will bring great blessings to so many, if he (and many others) is only given the chance. Please pray for the young people of Egypt as they seek to build a new Egypt. By God's grace, Christian and Muslim young people can make this country a source of blessing for its people and the region as a whole.

The first glimpse I had of Tahrir Square came from the 6th of October Bridge. We stood behind a crowd of people looking down at another crowd of people who were waiting for another crowd of people to let them into Tahrir. Trying to find a space to take some pictures at the rail, I noticed a man holding his baby boy. Then I noticed the tears starting to flow down his face. After a brief and emotional conversation, it became clear that the tears were tears of hope and joy for the baby boy in his arms. He, like so many other Egyptian parents, disregarded the army's curfew and bedtimes, because he wanted his son to be there for the start of a new day in Egypt. Inspired by the youth of Tahrir Square, this man believed that tomorrow would be better for Egypt, Egyptians, and especially his son. Moreover, he wanted me to be there too. He made room for me at the rail and made certain that I took those pictures.

The demographics of the crowds were remarkable. Certainly, we encountered many Muslims throughout the crowds. As Muslims make up nearly 90% of Egypt's population, they were well- represented. But these were not radicals crying out for theocracy or sharia law. People like that may have been in the crowds, but we did not see them. We saw Egyptian Muslims celebrating freedom, hope, and the end of a military regime. The Muslims that we saw were there primarily for greater freedom, less corruption, and a brighter future for their children. Every Egyptian Christian I know fully supports these hopes. Please pray that Christians and Muslims would have the wisdom and integrity to overcome distrust of one another and seek common goals together.

We also encountered Christians celebrating Egypt's revolution. Young people like my friend from seminary were inspired by the way that the protesters kept countering violent attacks by the authorities with a resolute decision to carry on their protests peacefully. Not surprisingly, this resonated with Jesus' teachings about turning the other cheek.

There is a long, long road ahead for Egypt. There are many challenges and dangers on this road. Nevertheless, the events of the past three weeks have brought inspiration and hope to many people here (including each of us). Please continue to pray that the Prince of Peace would continue to work in and through Egyptians so that we would join in the affirmation, "Blessed be God's people Egypt."

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Everyone is Welcome to Worship the Lord



HOLY WEEK

WORSHIP SCHEDULE April 17–24

Palm Sunday

Worship at 9 AM with the Chancel Choir and at 11 AM with the Praise Team

Prayer Stations

7 AM–8 PM, Monday, thru Wednesday. **Prayer Stations** in the Sanctuary

Wednesday Evening

All evening activities are postponed as we prepare for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday

Maundy Thursday

Worship at 7 PM with Communion

Good Friday

Musical Worship led by the Chancel Choir

Easter Celebration!

Worship at 9 AM with the Chancel Choir and at 11 AM with the Praise Team



*Alleluia!
He is risen indeed!*

**Everyone is
Welcome Here!**

Worship Schedule

**Wednesdays
7 to 7:30 PM**
With the Praise Team
(Pot Luck Dinner 6:15)

**Sundays
9 AM
11 AM**

2nd Saturdays
WILL BE HELD
JANUARY 8
8:30 to 9:30 AM
At the MEN'S
BREAKFAST & PRAISE
(Except August)



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TO:

EVERYONE is welcome here to worship the Lord!

Sundays at 9 & 11 AM Wednesdays at 7 PM