



The Link

Summer 2014

The Quarterly Newsletter of Little Falls Presbyterian Church

We
joyfully
PROCLAIM
the love
of God in
Jesus Christ,
GROW
in His truth,
and
SHARE
His Gospel
with our
neighbors.

AWE
combined
with
INTIMACY
is the essence
of Christian
worship.

– J.D. Greear

Summer Reading List

Dr. Matt Merrill, Pastor

Looking for something to sink your teeth and soul into this summer? Here is a list of books that will help grow your faith. Read one and I will be happy to buy you lunch and discuss the book with you.

Proof

Daniel Montgomery and Paul Timothy Jones

This is the best book about God's grace I have read in several years. A winsome and succinct treatment on how God's work changes our lives.

The Historical Reliability of the Gospels

Craig Blomberg

This makes the case that the Biblical account of Jesus is not legend but historically trustworthy. Blomberg incorporates insights from Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, an important work but much longer and more difficult to read.

In My Place Condemned He Stood

J.I. Packer and Mark Dever

This volume assembles several older essays by J.I. Packer. They are classics and will help in understanding the significance of Jesus' death.

The Cross of Christ

John Stott

This book, along with the Packer book, will give you a complete and Biblically rich understanding of the cross.

Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You

John Ortberg

I have not read this book yet, but this is a subject Ortberg often writes about in a very helpful manner. He is the Pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian.

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Culture-Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling

Andy Crouch

One of the best books yet on how Christians can integrate faith and work.

Subverting Global Myths: Theology and the Public Issues Shaping Our World

Vinoth Ramachandra

This Sri Lankan author sees our world through a distinctly non-Western lens. His writings will challenge your thoughts about the world and help the reader reconsider how our theology integrates into our world.

*... for ALL that is in the heavens and
in the earth is Yours.
– 1 Chronicles 29:11*

Shred for Bread

Eric Yoder

The annual “Shred for Bread” event in April to benefit the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) was our most successful yet. People lined up well before the starting time and we had a steady flow of donors the entire time. The shredding truck once again was filled, and donations filled two vans with more than 1,000 pounds of canned goods, cereal and other non-perishable food. In addition, we collected more than \$2,500 in the other form of “bread” for AFAC.

Thanks to all who donated and special thanks to ProShred, which generously donated use of its shredding truck and the time of two employees; the scout troops who distributed flyers; and AFAC itself, which also helped with publicity and provided volunteers to handle the donated food.

ProShred has committed to doing it again next year, so save up those papers that should be shredded rather than put them in the recycling or trash.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Baptisms

Mia Kim – April 6

Ethan Frady – May 4

Births

James Batzli – March 18,
to Cindy & Jonathan

Karis Lugo – March 20, to Chris & Katie

Ava West – April 9, to Paul & Lori

James Gies – April 15, to Aaron & Katie

Orion Farrell – June 10, to Joe & Anne

Promoted to Glory

Gerry Spadetti - April 21

New Members

Rachel Baker

Bo Bloomer & Deb Schueren

Joe & Anne Farrell

Adam & Jennifer Jefferis

Neal Lawson

Surprise! Welcoming Baby James!

Aaron & Katie Gies

On March 27, 2014, we were having an average week: work, gym, class, church commitments. We were looking forward to two weeks in Europe in June and Aaron's sister's wedding in July. Then we got a phone call. Eight days later, the trip to Prague was off and we had new summer plans: parenting a newborn.

The call came from Katie's sister Betsy, who told us that a distant family member was seven-and-a-half months pregnant with a child whom she could not care for. At the last minute, she had decided to consider adoption, and wondered if Betsy would be interested. Betsy, already parenting the mother's first child, a daughter, now five years old, did not feel she and her husband could handle her new baby brother. Betsy asked about the mother's siblings and extended family. For various reasons, no one was able to take him. But Betsy had an idea which frankly would never have occurred to us—we would be perfect for the job!

We had been married nearly ten years, living a busy, happy life together and making plans that were open to, but did not specifically include, children. Adoption was not something we had ever seriously considered. But this was different: a child whose sister we adore, whose family we are connected to, who needed someone. In fact, there was no one else. He needed us.

How much would you be willing to change your life six weeks from now? That is the question we had to answer as we considered what we would say. We took a day and talked to a trusted friend. Katie, shocking many of those who know her best, was immediately on board. Aaron, worried about the enormous risks involved, reread the story of Gideon from Judges 6. Gideon was a coward who demanded the impossible of God in order to make him lift a finger to help people in need. Not only did God deliver, but he raised the stakes, making things more difficult for Himself! When the rescue plan was at its most improbable and ridiculous, He came through. Expecting crazy roadblocks and hoping for rescue, we said we were willing.

Within a week, we had learned that adoption is very involved and expensive, even when your child is a family member. There were frantic days filled with lawyers and social workers prying into every detail of our lives, of last-minute visits to FedEx and whirlwind trips to North Carolina. The birth mom entered inactive labor three weeks before her due date. Two weeks after finding out we might be parents, we were getting texts about contractions and false-alarm hospitalizations! Beneath it all lurked the fear that the birth mother's 'yes,' which could not be binding for weeks, would evaporate when she held him. James was born April 15th, eleven days after the birth mom made her adoption plan with us. To our immense relief, we were welcomed to join him on his second day in the world, and have been with him ever since.

We were completely unprepared. Our small townhome is full of pets and crystal. The theme of our nursery was "office/library." Our savings and retirement were ready to be consumed by the bureaucracy of adoption (two lawyers, two social workers, expenses of the birth mother, missed

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work, travel, etc.). But our hearts were set on our son and our faith was in God. Scrambling to put the money together in our tiny time window, we asked Pastor Matt if the church might be able to give us a loan. Instead, certain members got together and paid the adoption expenses in full. We asked our small group and Sunday school group for advice. They gave us advice, but they also turned our office into a nursery and our basement into an office, and helped us fill our new nursery with the essentials. We asked the birth family to support the adoption. They gave us treasured heirlooms and invited us into their homes. Aaron's mom and dad opened their home for almost five weeks while the three of us waited for court dates and paperwork to allow us to return home. Five incredible people took care of our pets and our house during our long absence (pet owners will understand what a relief this was). The insane roadblocks yielded to an even more ridiculous rescue.

On Thursday, March 27th, we got an unexpected phone call. On April 15th, James Elliott Gies was born in Concord, NC. On Tuesday, May 13th, final consent made him our son. Finally, on Monday, May 19th, he came home to Northern Virginia. He is a beautiful, sweet-tempered person and none of our altered plans now seem worth worrying over, even at 2:00 in the morning.

In *Wild At Heart*, John Eldredge writes, "[God] rigged the world in such a way that it only works when we embrace *risk* as the theme of our lives, which is to say, only when we live by faith." We took the risk. Many of you took it with us, and God came through for James.



*Your eyes saw my unformed
substance;
in your book were written,
every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.*

– Psalm 139:16

Nursery Makeover

Amy Frady

I have been a member of Little Falls Presbyterian Church for almost seven years. When I first joined the church, I was dating my future husband and we were looking for a place for great fellowship and worship. I never considered the nursery and children's worship opportunities because I did not have any children. Later, when I was expecting our first child, I realized I did not even know where the nursery was located! Now that I have two children, the nursery and children's worship opportunities have become front and center in our world.

Recently LFPC took the opportunity to improve the nursery rooms and learning environment to create a more welcoming place for children. Over the past few months, the nursery has been transformed into a beautiful, vibrant place for children to learn and grow under God's love. We bought new toys that encourage the children to interact with each other. We also painted the walls and added a beautiful mural to the outside hallway. We now have three separate rooms for clearly defined ages and stages: Babies (0-12 months), Crawlers (1-2 years), and Walkers (2-3 years). This new design is safer and will allow children to interact with their peers. Some additional changes include: new carpeting, lighting and windows, a new sink, storage and furniture (tables and chairs, cribs, rocking chairs, bouncy seats, etc.).

If you haven't seen the changes yet or you just want to introduce yourself (and your little ones) to the staff, please come visit the nursery on the second floor anytime on a Sunday morning.

We hope this newly designed space will provide a wonderful environment for the children in our care to be introduced to the love of Jesus and feel at home in His house while their parents worship in the sanctuary. If you have any suggestions, questions or comments regarding the nursery please feel free to contact me at afrady13@gmail.com.



Twist, Turns, and Curveballs

Anne Farrell

Now that we are many months into 2014, I feel the freedom to be honest about how much I dislike New Year's Resolutions – I actually don't care for them one bit.

I understand why they can be a useful tool for reorienting or reorganizing your life, but since change and disruption had been regular companions to family life for the past 18 months, my husband and I were desperately craving a boring and predictable 2014. Seriously – just a plain ol' year would be delightful. We didn't want any more career changes, job searches, or cross-country moves. No need to find another new school/ neighbors/ church home, no unexpected pregnancies, and we certainly didn't want any more new diagnoses. I started the year confident that the birth of a healthy newborn and continued growth in new friendships would keep me content for 2014 and I wasn't interested in New Year's Resolutions to remind me that I just want boring and predictable.

I remember lamenting to my husband Joe how dumb New Year's Resolutions felt to me this year. What's the point of making grandiose plans if things just go haywire? Why would I want to make any resolutions when all life seems to give me is a bunch of curveballs?

Whether it was his eagerness for the Red Sox to start spring training or some inspired divine wisdom, his response was poignant...

"Well, I guess you need to learn to hit a curveball."

Apparently, (at least according to Joe's infomercial/ history lesson on baseball that filled the next several minutes of our discussion) in order to be a truly great baseball player, you need to learn how to hit a curveball. Curveballs will always be a part of the game – players cannot prepare to hit only certain kinds of pitches. The athlete needs to be prepared to take a swing at whatever gets thrown at them.

One of the major curveballs that was thrown at our family last fall was the diagnosis of Type One Diabetes for our 5-year-old son, Ford. In the past six months we have learned an enormous amount about managing this life-long disease, but it certainly has not been easy. Many nights are interrupted because we can't get Ford's blood sugar up high enough for him to go to bed. This means that we are on a cycle of giving him a "carb snack" and testing his sugar levels with a finger prick every 15 minutes until his numbers are high enough to make it through the night. If he gets too low he could have a seizure, go into a coma, or not wake up – not thoughts that make anyone feel at ease. I certainly don't embrace the unpredictability of this curveball that has been thrown at us (especially at Ford) and frequently wish it would just go away.

As Joe and I continued our discussion on curveballs, we started talking about how does a Christian handle life's curveballs? Joe mentioned this verse:

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“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

My reaction to that verse was not lovely. There might have been an eye-rolling with a big “Whatever!” That verse seemed like a ridiculous thing to say. My initial reaction was to be just fine with not being mature or complete in order to avoid additional trials. Tuck my head into my turtle shell and let life forget about me for a while. In my cynicism I retorted, “So tell me, Mr. Super Christian, what is so joyful about trials?”

His response?

“The joy isn’t in the trial, but in the outcome.”

God does not revel in throwing us curveballs to get a kick out of our miserable attempts to swing and miss. The joy in the life of a Christ follower is **not** to put on a happy-sappy-Christian-face and be thankful for the things gone wrong in our lives because it is what a good Christian is “supposed” to do. Some things we endure are just plain awful. And they may continue to be awful for a very long time. The joy comes not from avoiding the pain, but from a growing and deepening faith in the Creator of the universe. Not because of what can be provided or alleviated here on earth, but in the outcome of eternity.

“In this world you will have trouble, but take heart; I have overcome this world.” John 16:33

I want to have a vice grip on controlling things in my world. But my hope is not in white-knuckling it through this life, but to live in the hope that all these curveballs are serving a greater purpose. I can choose to sit on the bench or I can play ball.



Pictured:
The Farrell
family at the
LFPC Easter
Egg Hunt
this spring.

Youth Lock-In

Chris Lugo, Youth Director

What is it?

Our lock-in is a mixture of celebration and opportunity. It is a celebration of the fact that school is almost done and kids can taste it. I remember driving every single teacher I had crazy, as I knew when June came school was almost done. It is also an opportunity to meet with kids, both old and new and get to know them in an open and relaxed atmosphere.

What do you do?

Our lock-in has several team and individual games where kids get to be kids. Our volunteers run a variety of games and we also give them time to hang out and talk. We hold a raffle for prizes and end the night with a couple of ministry-approved movies.

Is there a message?

Yes, in the middle of the night as we transition from one game to another, we have everyone meet in the chapel. While there, we do a song or two to get kids settled and then we have a gospel presentation. Usually it entails a person's testimony with the gospel or simply preaching the gospel clearly. I have done this presentation several times (as this is my sixth lock-in) and I have had former youth group teens speak as well (as in last year). It is a really neat time and kids have asked some pretty cool questions during this talk.

Who Attends?

All sorts of kids show up: kids who don't know Christ and kids who do, youth group kids and friends of youth group kids. We love having a variety of kids show up.

Why Do It?

Why not? If you interviewed several youth pastors and asked them the event they would cut out of their schedule they would gladly say lock-ins. They are tiring and require lots of time and energy and take you away from your family. So why do I do it? This event brings somewhere between 30-45 kids and is a great outreach because they get close contact with great Christian volunteers, they get to hear the gospel preached, they get to know other kids and build community all while they have fun in a safe environment.

God not only
LOVES me
as I am,
but also KNOWS
me as I am.
Because of this,
I don't need
to apply spiritual
cosmetics
to make myself
presentable
to Him.
I can accept
ownership of my
poverty and
powerlessness
and neediness.

– Brennan
Manning

Celebrating 70 Years

Ashley Templer

Dick and Kay Wilson married on June 10, 1944. We joined them as they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary and all that God has done in their lives together!

The Wilsons have been members of LFPC since 1959. They are from Findley, Ohio, where they grew up in the same neighborhood and were in grade school together. Their courtship began their junior year of high school. Dick started

college at Ohio Wesleyan University, while Kay attended Findley College. Dick transferred to the United States Naval Academy and proposed to Kay during June week of his junior year. They were married a year later, three days after he was commissioned as an officer in the Navy. After their honeymoon on Lake Michigan, they headed to Jacksonville, FL for a month before they drove cross-country to San Francisco and Seattle. Dick was then deployed for one year aboard the battleship USS New Mexico. Kay returned home to Ohio and worked in the courthouse. They were reunited when he returned to Boston in 1945. During the next 14 years, Dick's Naval career took them to Norfolk; back to Boston for graduate school at MIT, where their son, Barry, was born; Washington, DC, where their daughter, Nancy, was born; Chicago, Los Alamos, Pensacola, Corpus Cristi, Atlantic City and San Diego, where their son, David, was born.

In 1959, The Wilson family returned to Washington DC and bought their first Arlington home on



Harrison and 36th Streets. They started attending Little Falls after founding pastor, Frank Erwin, knocked on their door to invite them to church. They both ran the high school and middle school dances in the 1960s. Dick became an elder and a trustee and Kay coordinated church flowers for many years.

Today they are most thankful for and proud of their three children, five grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. The whole

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family gets together each summer at their place at Lake of the Woods, VA. Dick and Kay have stayed in touch with many friends through the years and continue to play bridge and enjoy a monthly luncheon with Dick's classmates and their wives in Annapolis.

They say that the key to their happy 70 years together is constant love and affection and the belief in the leadership of God in marriage.

*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast;
it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice at wrongdoing,
but rejoices with the truth.
Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,
endures all things.
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

Little Falls Presbyterian Church



www.littlefallschurch.org
6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA 22207
703.538.5230

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