



Vienna Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

The Vienna Press

A Disciple-Making Church

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As I
See It



Photo: Kim Jackson

by Pastor Pete James

I have a theory about why our area becomes giddy over impending snowstorms which amount to little more than a dusting of snow: Snowfall is an excuse for Washingtonians to slow down from our self-imposed busyness.

Busyness has become our new status symbol. Listen carefully to our daily conversations and you will detect how much we outdo each other in our frenetic schedules, as though busyness adds importance to our lives.

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Congregational Care Ministries: A Look at What's New, Available

A Call and Care Ministry Is On the Drawing Board

Jesus said, *Love your neighbor* (Luke 10:27) and *Feed my sheep* (John 21:16). These commands have motivated some concerned church members to ask, "How can we take better care of one other? In what ways might we connect more personally with the folks in our church community?"

In seeking answers to these questions, we are exploring the possibilities of a new Call and Care Ministry. For example, we'll identify callers from the congregation who will connect by phone or email with everyone in the VPC community. These callers can become points of contact—extending friendship, answering questions and providing access to needed support.

As part of the process of developing this Call and Care Ministry, we decided to use a business tool known as a focus group. A focus group helps clarify customer needs and preferences regarding a proposed product or service. The reactions and responses shared by the VPC participants generated a wealth of information as to how our congregation would respond to a new Call and Care Ministry.

For now, we continue to pray over these plans on our drawing board. We're still exploring answers to our questions. What is your response? We would be pleased to hear from you!

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Deadline for February issue:

January 10

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As I See It

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We treat time as a commodity to be spent rather than a gift to be enjoyed. We read books and attend seminars to gain mastery over our hurried lives. Multi-tasking is the surest evidence yet of our incessant need to control time.

The Bible teaches that time is a gift to be appreciated rather than a commodity to be utilized. God creates time and redeems time. Indeed, time is one of God's most gracious gifts.

God calls us to live in ways that express gratitude for the time we are given. "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain for ourselves a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12).

We would do well in this New Year to reconsider our attitude and approach to time. Stephen Covey asks whether we are governed by a compass or a clock. Clock time determines schedules and appointments, while a compass charts direction and vision.

We need God's direction to inform our moral compass about how to enjoy and expend time. If time is a gift, our goal is to respond to this Giver in ways that express our gratitude. What difference does it make how busy we are if our busyness ignores what matters most?

May God help us this year to discover those things that truly matter!

**February issue deadline:
Jan. 10**

House of Prayer: God Dwells in the Prayers of His People

by Paul & Judy Chelson, Susan Christ and Leslie Vereide

For VPC, 2005 has been a year of sweeping changes: pastoral calls have been dissolved, resignations have been received and accepted, and an organizational restructuring is in motion.

All this has left some of us bracing ourselves for what lies around the corner. We don't know whether Satan is attacking us with vengeance or if God is making all things new to position us for great Kingdom-building work.

Are we seeking to know God's will for VPC's future?

In the wake of the above, peoples' lives have been turned upside-down, some are suffering, and families are left wounded, while huge new possibilities lie in front of us to be part of God's work in redeeming, restoring and transforming this world.

Could it be that through the turmoil, God is prompting His people at VPC to call out His name? "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

Before there were churches, Bibles, ministers or worship teams, the men and women of God distinguished themselves from their ungodly neighbors by "crying out to the Lord." Then there were temples and churches and God said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Jim Cymbala, Brooklyn Tabernacle pastor, recently wrote, "Preaching, music, the reading of the Word—these things are fine; I believe in and practice all of them. But they must never override prayer as the defining mark of God's dwelling."

God is giving us a heart for prayer to cry out for a fresh filling of the Spirit. If you have been given a heart for prayer, if you and your ministry are in need of prayer, or if you just want to sit and listen to prayers of the people for our church, please join us in the chapel, 9:00–9:30 am, on Sundays.

In December, specific prayers were lifted up for search committees and new pastors, as well as for the congregation. Below is our schedule through early March. If you have specific prayer requests for the life of the church, please send them to susanchrist@cox.net. See you in the chapel!

Date:	We Will Pray Especially For:
Jan. 1	Lay Leadership
Jan. 8	Trustees
Jan. 15	Student Ministries
Jan. 22	Deacons
Jan. 29	Music
Feb. 5	VPC Operations Center
Feb. 12	Outreach/Missions (domestic & international)
Feb. 19	Women's Ministry
Feb. 26	Men's Ministry
Mar. 5	Children's Ministries



Dedication Service: Jan. 22

The VPC community is cordially invited to an open house and Dedication Service for our Ministry Center on Jan. 22.

Morning worship will be held at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 am before the program begins around 12:15 pm.

Many hands are needed for this event, both on Jan. 22 and during the days leading up to it. Information is available in Sunday bulletins as well as at www.viennapres.org.

You can also volunteer by contacting the church office at 703.938.9050.

Book Club's New Year Picks

VPC's Book Club continues its monthly meetings in the parlor every third Wednesday at 7:30 pm. Selections and dates for the first part of 2006 include: *Under the Banner of Heaven* by Jon Krakauer (Jan. 18); *Light on Snow* by Anita Shreve (Feb. 15); *The Kitchen Boy* by Robert Alexander (Mar. 15); *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson (Apr. 19); *The Ladies Auxiliary* by Tova Mirvis (May 17); and *The Lincoln Lawyer* by Michael Connelly (June 21). For information, contact Ronniejean Irvin at 703.273.4113 or rbirvin@cox.net.

Baptisms in 2006

Anyone planning on having a child baptized during 2006 needs to attend a baptism class offered at VPC. Registration for this class is required only once per family; you do not need to attend a class for each child.

Four classes will be offered this year, all at 11:00 am: Jan. 22, Apr. 23, June 4 and Sept. 24.

The actual baptisms will occur during worship on the following dates:

Jan. 8	July 9
Feb. 12	Aug. 13
Mar. 12	Sept. 10
Apr. NONE	Oct. 8
May 14	Nov. 26
June 11	Dec. 31

To attend a class and/or to request a baptism, please call Lee Taylor at ext. 121.

“Church Without Walls” Offers New Lenten Study

by Scott Slocum

Many of you will recall the small groups we formed to study “A Church Without Walls: Seven Weeks Toward Spiritual Growth.”

That effort took form as we were literally tearing down the old sanctuary and the adjacent administration building in the fall of 2004. That churchwide Bible study in members' homes affirmed our commitment to be a disciple-making church and reminded us that it is we, and not our buildings, who define our community of faith.

This year, we are going to conduct another churchwide Bible study to coincide with Lent. It will not conflict with the CenterPoint curriculum.

Starting on Ash Wednesday (Mar. 1, 2006), and ending on Palm Sunday (Apr. 9), we will be studying the vision we have for Vienna Presbyterian Church.

We will engage the scriptures as a community of believers in small groups. The material will be simple and based on the Biblical texts used for the sermons.

Pastor Junior McGarrahan will be developing the six lessons. She will introduce us to a centuries-old way of engaging God's Word that will help both groups and individuals sense that they can engage scripture without the help of experts.

I have several requests to make. First, please do mark your calendars. We are not necessarily looking for groups of 10 or 12;

the lessons can be supported by two or three gathered together.

For those of you in established small groups, I hope that you will be able to schedule the Lenten Series as part of your study plans.

Very soon we will be calling for volunteers to lead or host these small groups, and we will be registering those who wish simply to participate.

This offers a rich opportunity for fellowship, study and service, an opportunity to deepen our faith, build our community and affirm our commitment to be a disciple-making church. The Church Without Walls Committee will soon have more details as we approach the Holiest season of the Christian year.



From the Stewardship Ministry

“P New Year Renewal to Discipleship

by Thomas Zigoris, with Barbara Jones

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship... be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God....

)) Romans 12:1-2

The beginning of a new year is a natural opportunity for reflection and renewal. For a Christ-centered community, it can be a time to review our discipleship practices of the past year and to renew our spiritual disciplines for the New Year. How have we been committed to carry out God’s work at VPC? At what level have we been willing to contribute our spiritual gifts to Him? And, going forward, how do we choose where and how to participate? How do we stay energized? Charged with the spirit? How can we be changed or transformed?

We need only to reflect on our discipleship covenants for guidance: *Pray daily. Worship continually. Study diligently. Live faithfully. Serve creatively. Give generously. Witness boldly.*

PRAY DAILY. In this hectic season, are you unable to be still long enough to hear the Lord’s gentle whisper? (see 1 Kings 19:11–12)! Remember, the Lord was not in the powerful wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; he came in a gentle whisper. We can go to him in prayer for his guidance. He will answer!

WORSHIP CONTINUALLY. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says “Come to me.” Regardless of where you are on your spiritual walk, your first steps should be to come to Jesus. Coming to worship each Sunday provides the framework for a weekly discipline.

STUDY DILIGENTLY. Take a Sunday School or a Centerpoint class. Join a Bible study group. Seek to know His will for your life. If you haven’t done so already, consider making Sunday morning a two-hour commitment—one for worship and one for Bible study.

LIVE FAITHFULLY. Live life faithfully, knowing that He has uniquely gifted you and that He wants to use you where you are to further His Kingdom.

SERVE CREATIVELY. In *Half Time—Changing Your Game Plan From Success to Significance*, author Bob Buford gives his personal observations on changing from a success-driven life to a life of significance. A success-driven life has more to do with getting and gaining, learning and earning, or chasing the prizes of life. A life of significance is more risky because it involves investing our gifts in service to others. You must make these choices, wrestle with who you are and what you profess to believe.

GIVE GENEROUSLY. Beyond financial giving is the question, “How can I use the first fruits of my TIME and TALENTS at VPC?” We are a community that is greatly blessed with intellect, training, skill and heart. This abundance, gifted to us by God, should be returned in service to others for His glory. Ask yourself where you fit in this community of believers; what gifts do you have to offer?

WITNESS BOLDLY. Pastor Pete has often quoted St. Francis of Assisi: “Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary, use words.” Your service to others, your commitment to return your gifts to God’s glory through VPC programs and ministries and in your life, is a bold witness to a Christ-centered life.

Vital Personal Commitment



Mission Work: Coalition for Christian Outreach A Look Into the Local College Campus Mission Field

by Kayla Gray, Director of Campus Ministry

In August, I arrived here from Michigan, not knowing what the future would hold with college ministry at George Mason University in Virginia.

The past four months have been a joy and a challenge to discern where God is leading me in this outreach. I have had the opportunity to meet with all the campus ministers at Mason and with some local church leaders to access the needs on campus. It has been encouraging to see the excitement in the students I have already met, their vision for unity between Christian organizations and their passion to lead their peers to a relationship with Christ!

This semester, I have also had the opportunity to meet many Mason staff, faculty and Christian leaders and, through attending a mid-week Bible Study, build relationships with a core group of Christian students. With the help of Ellie and Dan Cammer, I organized a Thanksgiving dinner for over a dozen college students at the Cammers' home. This was a great time for students to connect over a delicious home-cooked meal. Also in November, 15 Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers from George Mason served with members of First Baptist Church of Vienna at a local house for Hurricane Katrina victims. Several of these students also aided a church member in moving furniture from his home of 30 years.

Through much prayer and discernment, I have decided to pursue avenues of ministry through commuter students. Next semester I will focus on creating and maintaining student-led Small Group Bible Studies and opportunities for service. The commuter student population is one that is searching for community; however, they are not easily reached by traditional campus ministries. I will need to organize a team of student leaders and, with their help, get creative to do ministry!

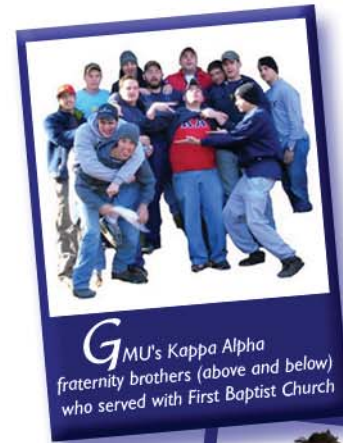
Since my call to college ministry with Coalition for Christian Outreach in partnership with VPC, it is evident that God has been faithful in preparing a place for my ministry at Mason. It is exciting to see how He has moved and will continue to move through me to transform college students to transform the world.

Please continue to pray for ministry opportunities at Mason and for our VPC college students' Winter Mission Project to Gautier, Mississippi. I am excited to work with students who are in the midst of making many important decisions. I dream of starting a ministry at GMU that will create community for students to grow in Biblical understanding, share stories of joy and struggle, and to continue to reach out to those in need through service and love.

Thank you all for your love and support as I continue in this Mission for Mason!

To reach Kayla at VPC, call ext. 114 on Wednesdays, 9:30–11:30 am. Otherwise she may be reached at 419.345.6902 or kayla.gray@gmail.com.

Please pray for this ministry, which VPC supports, and visit www.ccojubilee.org for information on the Coalition for Christian Outreach.



GMU's Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers (above and below) who served with First Baptist Church



Photos: Kayla Gray



Thanksgiving dinner hosted by the Cammers



Kayla



Congregational Care

Access Ministry: Enabling All to Participate in the Life of Our Church

by Elaine Wright

The mission of the Access Ministry is to affirm that all people are created in the image of God. Our goal is to support and advocate the gifts of people with disabilities in the life of the church. We also strive to assist the church in embracing people with disabilities and their gifts.

The Access Ministry is also committed to ensuring accessibility so that all may participate in the life of our church. We have worked with Trustees to make our facilities accessible and comfortable for people in wheelchairs, walkers and crutches. We have advocated for more handicapped and special needs parking. We have large-print Bibles and hymnals and will soon have large-print bulletins for those with low vision. Assistive listening devices are available at each worship service, and a sign language interpreter is present at our 11:00 worship. We also provide



“shepherds” for children with developmental disabilities that require one-on-one support in Sunday School classrooms.

VPC also offers a Sunday School class for adults with disabilities: The Friendship Class and Choir Chimes (see photo above). The class is designed specifically for adults with special needs to provide learning, fellowship and a musical experience on Sunday mornings, 9:00–10:30 am. The choir rings in worship four times a year.

Prayer Ministry: VPC’s Best-Kept Secret

by Paula Lohrmann

For many years, the Presbyterian Women of VPC have sponsored the Women’s Prayer Ministry. Recently, however, it became adopted by our Congregational Care Ministry.

So what is the “new” Congregational Care Prayer Ministry about, and why is it VPC’s best-kept secret?

Well, did you know that individual pray-ers of our congregation pray for the spiritual growth of 10–20 VPC families on a regular basis?

The intercessory praying is done anonymously for a period of one year, and its purpose is

to cover each family (be it one, two, three, etc.) in prayer to help each member grow closer to the Lord in his or her spiritual walk.

The “new” prayer ministry welcomes men, women, families, college students and teens in order to meet our goal of covering every member and regular visitor of our VPC community in prayer and support.

Another arm of this prayer ministry is a special prayer team dedicated to pray for one month for the needs, concerns and praises written on the prayer cards that are collected in the offering plates during worship or

placed in the Prayer Request Box located on the Welcome Table in the narthex.

So, now that you know about VPC’s best kept secret, here’s how you can be involved. JOIN our prayer ministry and pray for a list of families for one year and/or join our special “prayer card” team. There are no meetings involved—all that’s required is a heart for blessing others through prayer with our Lord.

If you would like to participate, please contact Paula Lohrmann at 703.281.7640 or newallover@aol.com.

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Congregational Care

With Helping Hands, Serving Creatively is Easy

VPC's Helping Hands team is comprised of volunteers who assist members and friends of the VPC family with yard work, light carpentry and/or household repairs. For various reasons, these homeowners are unable to perform such tasks themselves.

Serving creatively is easy through this great opportunity

to share with your children the importance of helping others and returning to God the offering of your time and talents.

To join us, contact Ruth Klug (rmklug@verizon.net, 703.391.9395) or Mary Pella (pellamj@cox.net, 703.319.2059). The Helping Hands will be notified as projects arise and

will be informed of what tasks are involved and when help is needed. If it is a good fit with your interests and schedule, then you can RSVP. Upcoming work projects will also be posted at www.viennapres.org.

Also, those interested in receiving help are encouraged to contact Ruth or Mary.

Stephen Ministry: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Ministry

When was the last time you felt as though someone really listened to you?

Far too many of us go through life with an inadequate personal support system. We can't always share openly and honestly with our families or our friends.

The office is a great place to talk about sports or the latest Hollywood gossip but a lousy place to share our feelings. And when was the last time you actually had a confidential conversation with someone (without paying \$100 per hour)? This reality is why Stephen Ministry exists.

Stephen Ministry trains ordinary people to provide extraordinary Christian care. Stephen Ministers are not counselors or social workers. Rather, they are well-trained Christian caregivers committed to providing non-judgmental and confidential support to others.

The program is not unique to Vienna, Virginia. Across North America, Stephen Ministry has 100 denominations, 8,000 congregations, 40,000 Stephen Leaders and 300,000 Stephen Ministers.

VPC will be conducting a new training class beginning in early 2006 (exact date TBD as of press deadline). Applications are available from the church office, 703.938.9050.

Why would anyone want to go through 50 hours of training and then five hours of supervision per month? Because Christ calls us. The dedication of Stephen Ministers is commendable.



"I have found Stephen Ministry a way to be of service to God, the VPC congregation and the community," says VPC member Lois Poland, who was commissioned as a Stephen Ministry leader in Fall 2002. "But Christian caring, support, love and kindness are not limited to just those areas that touch

or are touched by VPC; the training and the spirit of the program can be applied to co-workers, extended family or the stranger in the grocery store who is having a bad day.

"It's about developing relationships, seeing what God can do for and with care-receivers (God, not the Stephen Minister, is the healer) and seeing your care-receiver grow with God through a difficult time. It's about being there for someone."

There are several more Congregational Care ministries at VPC—including Christian Cancer Companions, HopeKeepers, and Passages—which we were not able to feature in this issue. To learn about them, please call the church office at 703.938.9050.