



Vienna Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

The Vienna Press

A Disciple-Making Church

February 2006 (Vol. 47, No. 2)

As I See It



Photo: Kim Jackson

by Pastor Pete James

I hear the same complaint from charitable as well as civic organizations. People don't volunteer like they used to. The number of people active in political parties and charitable organizations has plummeted. The rate of volunteers in schools and hospitals has dramatically decreased. More people balk at jury duty.

We are witnessing a marked decline in public life. Sociologists have a name for this phenomenon. It's called cocooning. Americans spend increased amounts of time in front of our home entertainment systems.

Our church intends to buck this alarming trend. Our commitment to the common

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Church Without Walls Lenten Bible Study Begins Mar. 5

by Scott Slocum

In January's edition of this newsletter, we announced that Vienna Presbyterian Church would be conducting a six-week, church-wide Bible study over the Lenten period. This will be a reprise of the earlier Church Without Walls small groups assembled in our homes when the old sanctuary and administration buildings were being demolished. This Lenten Bible study, as the earlier one did, affirms our commitment to be a disciple-making church and reminds us that it is we, and not our buildings, who define our community of faith.

Lent begins on Mar. 1, Ash Wednesday, when we will kick off this season with a worship service that includes communion. Interim Associate Pastor, Junior McGarrahan, is preparing study materials based on the sermon series which, in turn, will be focused on VPC's vision statement: We are a joyful, contagious, Christ-centered community devoted to loving and serving God and neighbors.

The lessons will introduce a very traditional and reflective approach to engaging scripture. No one in the group needs any prior knowledge of scripture in order to participate. The approach is simple: the text is read slowly to the group in response to a prepared question. Each listener replies with a word or phrase motivated by what she or he has heard. The text is read aloud again, and this time each listener replies with a word or phrase to answer the question, "What is Christ saying to you?" A third reading is offered to elicit replies to the question, "What is the Lord calling you to do or be?"

Small groups can consist of as few as three people. We encourage everyone to participate, and the Church Without Walls Committee will help assemble groups as needed. Established fellowship groups, whether Bible study groups or not, are encouraged to set aside their agendas to participate in the Lenten series.

Some of you will form new groups on your own. For those of you who desire our coordination, please call Anna Whiston-Donaldson (703.242.6253) or Kate Lund (703.255.7244) to register. We will need your name, telephone number and preferences (time of day and day of the week) to match you with others. We are also seeking volunteers to host these groups, either at home or at a location of your choosing. Hosts will be asked to lead the group by posing the first prepared question and offering the first reading of the selected scripture.

Study materials will be available two weeks before the sermon series starts.

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Deadline for March issue:

February 10



As I See It

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life seems downright counter-cultural these days. I meet more and more people yearning for authentic community. People are looking for communities that truly care and support one another.

VPC is a community of believers bound together in our loyalty to Jesus Christ. We resist the temptation to look upon faith as merely private and personal. At its core, we believe the Christian life is deeply communal.

Some things God reveals to people only in community. God dwells among people. Discerning God's will is very often a collective enterprise.

We are currently engaged in a series of sermons on "One Anothering." There are more than 20 New Testament passages that direct us to love, forgive, confess, encourage, be kind, serve, admonish and pray for one another. The operative verse in this series originates in Paul's letter to the Romans, "We are members one of another" (12:5).

In this Lenten season, we will offer expanded opportunities for one another groups at VPC. We encourage you to intentionally identify and cultivate one or two spiritual friends who can support and hold each other accountable. The Biblical warrant for these one another groups originate in Jesus' promise, "Wherever two or three people are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

May God bless our "One Anothering!"

Staff News

Three additions to staff have occurred since last month's newsletter:

Belarmino Diaz has returned to VPC as full-time Assistant Facilities Manager. He shares extension 131.

Dick Eagan was named Executive Director (See Page 4). His extension is 117.

Christin French has been serving as part-time Bookstore Manager. Her extension is 135.



Pictured above, from left to right: Belarmino, Dick and Christen.

Also, several staff members have new phone extensions. At press deadline, they were as listed below (please refer to our web site, www.viennapres.org, for updates).

Pastoral & Program Staff:

Peter James, 118
Robert Griffin, 116
Caroline Braskamp, 115
"Junior" McGarrahan, 114
Ginni Richards, 123
Sheila Breuer, 113
Bonnie Grouge, 139

Children's Ministries:

Ellie Cammer, 127
Daryl Wright, 126
Danielle Talamantes, 125
Childcare/Jennifer McAndrew, 351
Bonnie Downs, 134

Student Ministries:

Becca Shick, 128
Kayla Gray, 130
Chris Wimmer, 129

Music Ministries:

Lance Vining, 132
Kerry Wilkerson, 133

Operations Support Center:

Bill George, 101
Kamal Rahal, 119
Suzie Martin, 120
Betty Little, 121
Jaime Tapia, 131
Mark L'Italien, 124
Barb Jones, 111
Lee Taylor, 103
Lynn Taylor, 122
Linda Kemple, 100
Molly Quackenbush, 107
Jeanne Bingham, 104
Tricia Stevely, 108
Julie Kim, 105

Most offices are located on the Ministry Center's 2nd Floor, except for Student Ministries and Music Ministries (in the Condo on Park Street between Maple Ave. and Church Street), the Facilities office and Preschool Director (1st Floor), and ESOL and Children's Ministries (3rd Floor). For room numbers and other information, please call the church office at 703.938.9050.



Open the Doors and Meet All the People!

by Jenny Harrop

Now that the new Ministry Center is operational, we are kicking off 2006 as the Year of the Open House and we need your help!

We all know about the great things that happen here at VPC. Now it's time to share them with others. Everyone is curious about the new building they'd like to see inside; this is the perfect opportunity not only to showcase the building but meet the wonderful people and ministries that make VPC special.

The first events are already planned—here is the schedule and lead coordinator(s) for each open house. If you'd like to help with these programs, please contact the coordinator(s).

• **Feb. 19: Student Ministries – Becca Schick, ext. 128**

• **Mar. 19: Children's Ministries – Ellie Cammer, ext. 127**

• **Apr. 23: Mission/ESOL – Sheila Breuer, ext. 113, and Bonnie Grouge, ext. 139**



Here are some ideas.

• What if SWATT (Seniors With Available Time and Talents) hosted a dinner dance in the Great Hall?

• Or PITS (Parents of Infants and Toddlers) held a carnival or a big play date on a school

holiday?

• How about a career night for college kids?
• Or someone who would host a fund raiser for the victims of Hurricane Katrina?

• What about an art show that showcases local artists?

• The book club could invite an author to speak; how about a musician? (Pastor Bob is friends with a fabulous folk singer, David Bailey, who would do a great concert.)

• What if the Helping Hands ministry offered a "Home How-to Night" for people who wanted to learn about home building and home repair?

Think big—what kind of event would make you want to visit VPC? Remember, the idea is a program for the community outside of current VPC members that showcases your ministry group. You can invite your friends and colleagues and promote the activity throughout the neighborhood. We can do PR and advertise it in the newspapers as well.

We'd like to have every group at VPC host an event in 2006. To help, we have pulled together a tool kit that contains all the information you'll need. The key support staff from the church can help you host a successful event. The first step is to decide on your program and get it on the master calendar. Ginni Richards is the key contact for that—give her a call at ext. 123.

Thanks for your help in making 2006 the year we "Open the Doors and Meet all the People!"

For those of you who participate in ministries that are not listed above, it's time to put on your thinking caps. What kind of event could you host that will invite members of the broader community to experience God's love in the VPC community?



VPC Welcomes Executive Director

The following is the first column by Dick Eagan as the permanent Executive Director of VPC. The Executive Director will report directly to Rev. Pete James and oversee both the program and business functions of the church. His appointment to this position was announced in a letter sent to the VPC community by the Executive Pastor/Director Nominating Committee on Jan. 9.

The Vienna Press has asked Dick to share some thoughts in this issue. They appear below, and constitute the first installment of a monthly column as a vehicle for communication between the church staff and VPC community.

When I came back to town last March after working for two years in Charlottesville, I stopped by the church office to let Pastor Pete and my church family know I was going to be looking for my next work opportunity locally. Little did I know what God had in store.

I found out that VPC was looking for an Interim Executive Director and thought, “that’s what I have been doing professionally for the past 10 years.” Every day, it became clearer that God was “calling” me to serve my church using the organizational management talents and experience that had been developed over 30 years.

What an exhilarating, although sometimes painful, six months it has been. We are a church community in transition. The church leadership had a very clear and discerned assignment for this new Interim Executive Director position to begin the organizational realignment of staff and resources to the Call, Equip and Send activities to fulfill the disciple-making Mission of VPC. A Pastoral Nominating Committee began the search for the permanent Executive Pastor/Director and I went to work.

I feel God continued to affirm my efforts at VPC through many of you who kept encouraging the change

and continued to step up and support the organizational remodeling of the church. For more detail of all that was accomplished together, please take the time to read VPC's 2005 Annual Report.

What an honor and genuinely humbling experience to now be selected to this key Executive Director leadership role at VPC after a national search. We are on the threshold of exciting new ministry and missions opportunities. Although there is still plenty of support operations change ahead of us as we settle into our new Ministry Center, we are a renewed church: Renewed with new ministry and service center office space, renewed as a staff (many who have new assignments), renewed with new volunteerism by congregation members who are stepping up to give back to VPC a portion of the time and talents God has given them.

This position is a new beginning for me, and I thank each and everyone one of you for your love and support as we work together to remold VPC into the joyful, contagious church community that God is calling us to be.

VPC has a clear mission to become a disciple-making church. As a joyful Christ-centered community, we all have a role to play in caring and serving one another

and reaching out to invite the friends, colleagues and neighbors in our lives to come share the love and joy of Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your patience and caring support as we continue our transition. Your input and feedback are critical so keep them coming. God has entrusted us with the Stewardship of VPC. Let us all continue to pray for awareness of the opportunities God is presenting to us and the empowerment to act on them.



Local Mission Work: CROP Walk Vienna Fund Raiser Benefits CHO, Hurricane Victims

by Betty Rahal



On Nov. 13 of last year, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, over 200 people from 16 churches gathered at VPC to participate in a CROP Walk to raise money for the victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Their donations totaled almost \$22,000, of which 25% went to the local community ministry, the Committee for Helping Others (CHO). The 5K walk took them through neighborhoods on the south side of Vienna, stopping at three churches along the way for water and snacks.

CROP Walks are major fund raisers for Church World Service (CWS), an organization of 36 denominations (including Presbyterian Church (USA)) with staff in over 80 countries throughout the world. CWS defines itself simply as "Christians working together with partners to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world."

The event began in the VPC sanctuary with songs from Work in Progress and brief talks by Kathleen Klassen, the Regional Director of Church World Service, and 11th District Congressman Frank Wolf, a VPC church member and an advocate for disadvantaged and oppressed people throughout the world. Door prizes from local businesses were drawn and given out to 18 lucky walkers.

VPC had the largest contingent of walkers for the event and raised over \$10,000 through their donations from friends and family.

The next CROP Walk is scheduled for Oct. 24, 2006. Mark your calendars now to participate in this family event and do your part to help alleviate suffering in the world.

Carolyn Mysel, one VPC's CHO liaisons, responds: "A big 'thanks' to all who walked in the CROP walk. Because of you, CHO was able to spend \$3,500 at Christmas to provide some of the grocery store certificates for the 675 people we helped. We are looking at a winter with high utility bills and some of the money will be used to help clients keep their heat and electricity on. We will also be purchasing food for those with special needs to be stocked in our new Food Closet located in the VPC Condo."



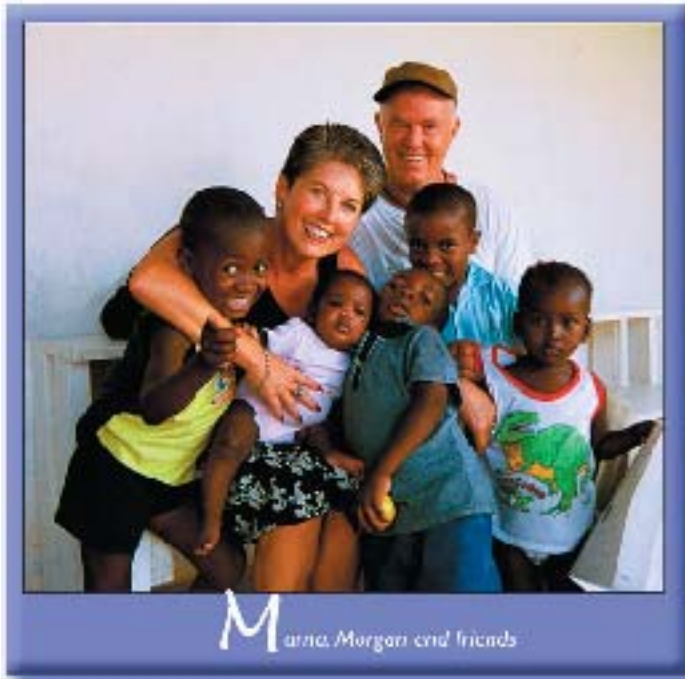
Photos: Kim Jackson



International Mission Work: Haiti The Power of One

Reprinted, with updates, from an article by Corine Stoepker, *The Vienna Press*, Dec. 2004

The Community Coalition for Haiti (CCH) has two upcoming mission trips to Haiti, Apr. 4-10 & Apr. 18-24, which will focus on agricultural/farm work, construction on the new VPC Vocational School, and medical missions in Orthopedics, General Surgery and Physical Therapy. Join the informational meeting at VPC on Jan. 29 at 5 pm, and/or the trip orientation on Feb. 26 at 5 pm. Contact Karen Carr, 703.880.4160, or John Morgan, 703.620.9074, for more information.



When two groups of VPC volunteers leave for Pignon, Haiti, in April 2006, it will mark the ninth year in which VPC and some other area churches have sent members to the missionary hospital in Pignon.

This year's mission coordinator, Karen Carr, has been involved in overseas mission work since college, but will participate for the second time in the Haiti project. She volunteered because she "just fell in love with" the idea of working in Haiti after learning more about it.

Karen says the 2006 mission program includes focusing on agricultural/farm work, construction on the new VPC Vocational School, and medical missions in Orthopedics, General Surgery and Physical Therapy. Eventually, she says, plans call

for using space satellite transmission of medical information and medical classes from INOVA Fairfax hospital to the hospital in Pignon.

One VPC volunteer on last year's mission to Haiti, Knox Singleton, says mission volunteers go back year after year because "You get hooked." He compares the trips with a family reunion, "like going home to visit relatives."

He notes that "The people there are very warm and welcoming. They value what you do for them, the support you give them. They understand the value of education, medical care and contributions of food and clothing."

Another VPC member who made the Haiti trip last year is LoAnn Trask, whose husband, Dr. Art Trask, initiated VPC's involvement in this project in 1997.

Before Art and LoAnn's recent move to Missouri, LoAnn was always asked, why go to Haiti? Why not some other needy country? Her answer is always the same: "Once you go there and get involved with the people, you see their tremendous need and you feel you have to return. These good people love their church and the Lord. You feel you have to go back to help them accomplish their goals to make Pignon a better place for themselves and their children. We've already seen a great deal of progress."

She started out in Pignon by using her nursing skills to help her husband in the operating room, but the last few times she was there, Haitians were able to assist. Now she helps wherever needed, working with schools and coordinating and connecting missionaries with jobs that need to be done. She has also taught English-as-a-Second Language.

Former volunteer Gerri Webb says, "The Haitian experience changes your life because it makes you realize where you are in comparison to where they are—so underprivileged, living in poverty in small huts without electricity on a main street that is

“You are the body of Christ. Everybody's talent is needed; God makes the team.”**”**

Marna Morgan

(continued next page)



nothing more than a dirt road. Yet they have a strong faith—you can see it in their faces. And they treat you special. It's most rewarding to find that they remember you from the year before and even call you by your name."

Marna Morgan feels that going to Haiti helps you with life at home, because "...it gives you a broader perspective. It makes you appreciate your life more. Doing international mission work is like getting God's perspective. You're looking down at the whole picture. You bond with the people you go with, and everyone's heart is in it. You are the body of Christ. Everybody's talent is needed; God makes the team."

Gerri recalls a touching moment: "During my first visit to Pignon, I observed a plastic surgeon operate on a young man in his late teens who had a bilateral cleft palate. He was so badly deformed that he could hardly eat or talk, and he was made fun of because of his appearance." LoAnn calls it a "miracle," and Gerri says it was an awesome experience for her to see "...how this young patient would have his whole life changed and would be more accepted in the community."

Marna, who with her husband, John, was active in mission work for 15 years before joining VPC's Haiti project, calls the mission to Pignon most gratifying. "People are kind and nice and appreciative. They sing songs about how they must give thanks to the Lord for what they have, and yet they have so little." Marna and John taught Bible school every morning in the church-oriented schools and English-as-a-Second Language to the hospital staff in the afternoons.

"You would expect these people to be sad and gloomy," says LoAnn, "but they are not. They are happy! One example of this is the three women who cook for all the missionary guests. They start about 6 a.m. and cook all day, providing meals three times a day, seven days a week. Yet they are always singing and laughing and they smile as

they pass you in the hall."

The children, who come to school very clean and neatly dressed in uniforms, are eager to learn and are very respectful of their teachers. Gerri and Marna recall the disappointment felt by the students one day when it was time to pick up the crayons that had been brought to them. Some of the children hadn't finished coloring, and they cried. They had pride in their work, and they really wanted to finish. The problem was resolved when our volunteers returned to the school and told the children, "We will leave crayons with your teacher so you can finish your pictures."

No matter who they are or how they've helped the Haitian people, those who have been to Pignon come back with memories that have deeply affected them. Former Pastor Mary Swierenga said she was most impressed by "the power of one"—how one person can change things for the better. The person she was referring to is Dr. Guy Theodore, surgeon and founder of the mission hospital in Pignon. The son of a lay Baptist minister, Dr. Theodore was born in Pignon. While growing up there, he observed the poverty, sickness and suffering of the Haitians. At age 12, he prayed that he could become a doctor in order to help them. His prayers were answered, and after surgical training and serving in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as a colonel, he returned home to keep his promise to God that he would serve his people.

At the mission hospital he built in Pignon, women who can't read are taught, through songs, how to nurse their babies, how to boil water and how to keep medical items clean. Mothers' Clubs have been formed where women learn about preventive health care and how to earn money for their families. Each is lent enough capital to begin a small business.

Today there is much progress in Pignon as the result of what was started by one person with vision, determination and trust in God. A promise made good through the power of one.



Photos courtesy of Matt Ries and Dr. Art Trask