



Vienna Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

The Vienna Press

A Disciple-Making Church

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As I See It



Photo: Kim Jackson

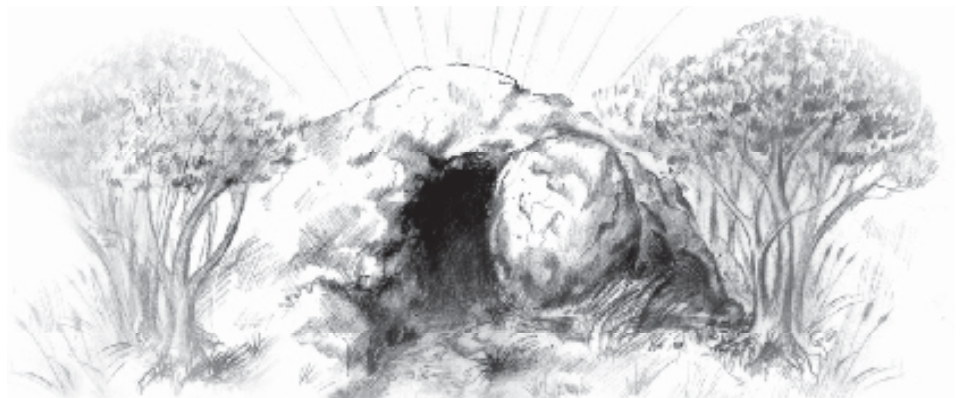
by Pastor Pete James

Boris Kornfield was imprisoned in a Russian labor camp during WWII. No one is quite sure what crime he committed; most likely it was something inconsequential—perhaps a derogatory word against Stalin.

As a doctor, Kornfield was treated better than most prisoners, since he served as a physician for guards and fellow prisoners. Dr. Kornfield's background was Jewish, but the concentration camp stripped him of everything, including his faith. He came in contact with a devoted Christian who spoke of a Messiah who had come to fulfill the promise God made to Israel. Kornfield

(continued on page 2)

Holy Week Worship Schedule



by Pastor Caroline Braskamp

Holy Week is the most important week in the life of the church. It is when we remember the final week of Jesus' life. Our temptation is to fast-forward to Easter, but Jesus invites us to journey with him day by day: from the excitement of Palm Sunday, to the poignancy of Maundy Thursday, to the utter despair of Good Friday, to the emptiness of Holy Saturday, and to the joy of Easter.

Worship events are listed below. See also Page 2 for Lenten events at VPC.

Palm Sunday

April 9
8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am

Maundy Thursday

April 13
7:30 pm *

Good Friday

April 14 at First Baptist Church, 450 Orchard St., NW
7:30 pm
The Rev. Peter James, preaching

Easter

April 16
8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 am

* Please make childcare reservations ASAP, but no later than April 10.

INSIDE:

News.....	2
Executive Director's Update	3
Dedication to God's Service	4
Guest Essay.....	5
Grapevine Books.....	6
Mission Work: ESOL.....	7

Deadline for April issue:

March 10



As I See It

(continued from page 1)

came to believe in this Messiah. He was unwilling any longer to sign bogus forms to verify prisoners were healthy enough to endure the punishment block. Kornfield had placed his life in jeopardy. He was now a marked man.

Dr. Kornfield wanted to tell someone about his new-found faith before his death, so he told a young patient what had happened to him. He talked about his conversion to Christ and his newly discovered faith and freedom.

Kornfield was brutally murdered the next day, having only spoken to one man about his conversion. But the patient pondered the doctor's last words and became a Christian. This prisoner survived the prison camp and told the world what had happened. The patient's name was Alexander Solzhenitzyn, a Nobel Prize recipient and an international voice for freedom.

Consider Kornfield's contribution, not merely in terms of his own life but the people Solzhenitzyn has influenced during his lifetime.

Suppose you influence two people to become Christians. If they influence two people to become Christians and the pattern continues for 10 generations, 1000 people will become believers.

Never underestimate the power of an individual Christian and a single church. What would happen if everyone in our church influenced two people to follow Christ? Let's find out!

Lenten Events

Shrove Tuesday Breakfast Supper

Come one, come all to VPC's annual Shrove Tuesday Breakfast Supper on Feb. 28 for French toast, eggs, hash browns, sausage, bacon and drinks.

The word "shrove" is the past tense form of the English term "to shrive," which means both "to confess" and "to forgive." Pre-lenten feasts in many countries of the world often include pancakes or rich fried pastries made from the butter, cream and eggs that would be forbidden during the next six weeks of Lent. The name "Shrove Tuesday" is derived from the practice of confession and forgiveness as part of preparing for the Lenten season.

Mark your calendars now for Feb. 28, 6:00-7:30 pm in the Great Hall, to come and prepare our bodies, hearts and minds for Lent. Sign up in the narthex or via www.viennapres.org, cost is \$5/person and you pay at the door.

Ash Wednesday Service

Mar. 1 marks the beginning of Lent, a season in the church year in which we have an opportunity to intentionally reform and renew our spiritual lives.

VPC will again have an Ash Wednesday Service that will begin our Lenten season with a time of prayerful reflection, confession, and the placing of ashes on our foreheads to remind us of our mortality and of our need for salvation. This year's service will be held in the sanctuary at 7:30 pm on Mar. 1. Everyone is invited to attend.

68 Join VPC

On Feb. 26, Pastor Pete James introduced 68 new members to the congregation.

Several small-group clusters attended a seminar on Feb. 1 and 2 to learn about VPC church membership and opportunities for growth and service at VPC. Then they joined by Confession of Faith, Reaffirmation of Faith or Certificate of Transfer. Welcome!

E-Forum for Sunday Scriptures

Now, thanks to Duane Wills and Susan Christ, there is a place online to explore, wrestle with and discuss VPC's Sunday sermon scriptures—<http://vpcscripture.blogspot.com>.

First, create your own account at <http://www.blogger.com/signup.g>.

After you've submitted your user name, password and acceptance of the terms, you can review comments already entered on a particular VPC sermon-related verse, or enter your own comments or questions by clicking on "comments" under the scripture. Your e-mail address will not be revealed in the exchange.



March at VPC

SERMON SERIES:

Lent '06 Vision for VPC

Mar. 5 **Joyful and Contagious** (Phil. 4:4-7)

Mar. 12 **Christ-Centered** (Phil. 1:21-26)

Mar. 19 **Community** (John 10:1-5)

Mar. 26 **Devoted** (Acts 2:42-47)

(Series continues through April 9)

ALL-CHURCH EVENTS:

• Ash Wednesday Service, Mar. 1

• WOW Lenten Bible Study, Begins Mar. 5

• Children's Ministries Open House, Mar. 19

Keeping Up With the Changes

by Dick Eagan, Executive Director



New vision, new leadership roles, new building, new and renewed staff with new roles, new ministries; the challenge is keeping up with all the new transitional changes. Our goal is to utilize every communications opportunity we can find to keep the information flowing. This monthly update is just one of those opportunities.

These first couple of months of '06 have been a time of dedication to God's service!

Building

Thanks to all who served on the Jan. 22 New Ministry Center Dedication Sunday Team; to the current Building Committee; to the original Facilities Development Committee members—John Davidovich, Hal Davis, Bonnie Downs, Patti Goodrich, Jerry Hajarian, Mike Lincoln, Karen MacVean, Rod Mateer, Steve O'Brien, Helene Oliver, Jim Swago, Don Turley, Jim Zinn and then-President of Trustees, John Hambel; to the Furnishings Committee; to the Move Transition Team; and to Operations Manager, Bill George. What a wonderful outpouring of volunteer spirit and effort to honor and serve God and this church!

Renovations under the sanctuary are now in full swing, with Music Ministries, Student Ministries and classroom spaces scheduled to be completed in April. Then, the plan is to worship in the Great Hall and chapel for three months, beginning in late April, as we begin adding balcony pews in the sanctuary in order to bring our worship capacity to over 1,000.

We welcome your prayers and patience through all this inconvenience and interruption. The construction should be completed in August.

Staff

We are still very much in a ministry operations transition period, while focusing on developing the church office as a Service Center for all the ministry and missions activities of the church.

Staff changes include:

• Mary Gamble, Student Ministries intern, is working with our Jr. High and Sr. High youth.

• Volunteer Coordinator, Barb Jones, is helping us develop this important position that supports growing the stewardship of volunteer service in our church community. If you would like to explore your Spiritual Gifts and opportunities to serve God and VPC, please contact Barb at ext. 111.

• Amy Reeves continues in the role of Crossroads (Young Adults) coordinator.

• Jose Salazar is our new evening Sexton; his schedule is Saturdays through Wednesdays, 5:00-9:00 pm (photo unavailable at press time).

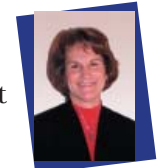
• Mark L'Italien is implementing the computer network infrastructure for our new operations. We thank former Network Administrator, Jud Main, for his support and service.

• Kathy O'Brien has stepped forward to coordinate the effective implementation and use of ACS, our church management software program.

We will continue with these monthly updates and look forward to your feedback and requests for updated information. God is definitely working in the life of VPC, and the best way to understand the transitional changes we are experiencing is to get involved. Please continue to be constructive, proactive communicators and share your thoughts on how we can improve.



Mary



Barb



Amy



Mark



Kathy

Your feedback is important! Contact us at

vpmain@viennapres.org



What It Means to Be a Presbyterian

by Bonnie Davis

VPC member Bonnie Davis will graduate in May 2006 from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Recently, Bonnie was approved as a candidate for ministry of word and sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) at a meeting of the National Capital Presbytery. The presbytery considered Bonnie's essay, and we share it here.

At the very heart of what it means to me to be Presbyterian is to regard Scripture as sole authority in our lives and to be guided individually and in our connectedness with others in the church and in the world by the leading of the Holy Spirit to understand what Scripture says to each of us and to us collectively.

What it means to me to be Presbyterian is to affirm that each of us may hear the Holy Spirit differently and that in our faith there is room for many understandings of God and how God works in our world.

Being Presbyterian means affirming our many differences and accepting the mystery of God that calls us to love as God loves in spite of our own predispositions to lean one way or another. Being Presbyterian means being always aware of our connectedness and at the same time being aware that "God alone is Lord of our conscience" so that in all things we come back to God both individually and collectively. It means that even in our connectedness we allow for our individuality.

What it means to me to be Presbyterian is to be guided in our faith and in our church by a Constitution that consists of two documents—the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order—and that the power of these two humanly created

documents is in their direct derivation from Scripture as the Church has understood Scripture. Being Presbyterian means being always reformed so that we hear God speaking to us through the Holy Spirit to continue to lead us to new Confessions that more clearly reflect God's will for us and our understanding of that will.

Being Presbyterian means allowing room for all voices in the Church through our elected system of representation. It means seeking ways to ensure that no voices are shut out of discussions but that all are heard. It means making decisions based on majority vote, but it includes hearing minority voices and hearing them with respect and consideration.

Being Presbyterian means having no hierarchy in our human relationships—that officers and members are equal and that ordination is to a function only and not to an elevated status. Because of that understanding in our Church, being Presbyterian means to me seeing the rest of the world the same way, seeing all people as equal, and therefore, speaking and acting to ensure that all are treated fairly and equally—that all have access to decent housing, safe drinking



Bonnie

water, decent health care, adequate food, and that all have reason to hope, to dream, to grow. Being Presbyterian means working for social justice—for God's justice—in our communities, our nation and our world.

Being Presbyterian also means being human and failing in even our best efforts more often than we succeed, but being Presbyterian also means being called by God and responding to God. Our sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper powerfully remind us that in spite of our total depravity, God reaches out to us through the sacraments to call us into reconciliation and communion with God's own self.

Being Presbyterian means to me to live out our lives in joyful celebration of a God who holds us individually in His love and calls us to work for the joyful liberation of those who are oppressed or imprisoned by the chains of bondage created by their own compulsive desires or by the oppressive acts and systems of injustice created by the societies in which we live.

Being Presbyterian means to be fully both the individuals God created each of us to be and to be fully part of God's connected web of humanity, recognizing God as creator of all.



Q & A with Christin French: Grapevine Books

Executive Director, Dick Eagan, writes, "Our new bookstore is scheduled to open in early March. Manager Christin French has been working hard to make the initial book selections and finalize business operations details to realize this ministry support-service opening. We will be dedicating this ministry and the memorial of Ellen Perkins, who started VPC's first bookstall many years ago. We also extend special thanks to Susan Thomas, who ran this ministry for several years through last year. We appreciate everyone's prayers and support in launching the bookstore and look forward to your feedback on how we can grow this service to meet the educational and recreational reading of our Christian disciple-making church community."

During your comings and goings in our beautiful new church building, you may have noticed some activity in the lovely room across from the Great Hall. This room is the home of VPC's newest ministry venture, and my new home away from home. I am Christin French, the bookstore manager, and I am here to tell you about Grapevine Books of Vienna Presbyterian Church.

Why is it called Grapevine Books?

The name comes from John 15:4-5, in which Jesus says, "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine...I am the vine; you are the branches."

I love the images in this metaphor of Jesus as the vine—the strong, woody, rooted-in-the-soil stalk—and us as branches born of the vine, intimately connected to, and completely dependent on, Jesus for life. This idea of connectedness speaks to the heart and mission of Grapevine Books. In fact, our motto states, "We will connect books to people, people to Jesus, Jesus to the world...one page at a time." Our role is to provide you, the VPC church community, with materials that nurture your spirits and engage your minds, and thereby further equip you to share the GOD news of your lives with others.



What can you expect to find?

Our collection of Christian resources will include fiction and non-fiction books for all ages and stages. This will include a variety of Bibles, Bible commentaries and Bible studies. We will also carry Christian music CDs, select audio books and children's DVDs, and a unique assortment of greeting cards and gift items. Our in-house collection will be enhanced by an on-line "store" where you will be able to order select items directly from our distributors for individual or group purposes. The profits from our sales will be dedicated

to furthering the ministry and mission of the church with a special emphasis on supporting The Perkins Memorial Library for youth and adults and The Pond Library for children.

When will you open?

We hope to open our doors in early March 2006. Once we are open, our hours will closely align with the usage of the church facilities. This means we will be open approximately five days a week from about 9:00 am–noon and 7:00–10:00 pm. Prior to the grand opening, I will be working diligently to gather

the resources necessary to make this venture a Godsend to all of us.

Where does VPC's family fit into this ministry?

(1) **PRAY** that God's purpose and plan will be carried out with wisdom and joy.

(2) **PLAN** to support this ministry by purchasing your Christian books with us. Your money will support VPC in many wonderful ways.

(3) **LISTEN**: Is God calling you to be a part of a fun-loving, lively bunch of folks dedicated to building up the Grapevine Books ministry? If so, contact me now! Our VineAlive! team needs branches. I can be reached via 703.938.9050 or christin.french@viennapres.org.



Left to right: Martha Strauss, Bonnie Gray, Christin French and Carla Schnell peruse items on display at Grapevine Books.



Local Mission Work: ESOL

Grant Facilitates Establishment of VPC Computer Program

Raman is a 48 year-old man who has lived in the United States for three years. He lives in Vienna with his wife and children. He works long hours at a local grocery store and struggles to earn enough to support his young family. Raman is a student in VPC's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) ministry. He is committed to learning English and anything else he is taught. Prior to moving to the U.S., Raman was an accountant in Egypt. He was well paid and respected in his profession. Here, however, Raman lacks computer training and job-seeking skills.

ESOL at VPC currently serves 240 students from 32 countries. Some of these students face multiple barriers to employment: they lack English speaking, reading and writing skills; basic computer skills; and job-seeking skills, such as where to search for a job, resume writing, interview techniques, etc.

Recently, ESOL at VPC was awarded a grant of \$20,924.15 from The SkillSource Group, Inc. through the U.S. Department of Labor. The grant will be used to purchase computers and develop a computer training program for ESOL students. Through the program, ESOL will respond to students'

needs and provide them with computer education and job search and retention skills.

ESOL at VPC has ministered to the local community for more than 13 years. It offers adult non-English speakers an opportunity for instruction and practice in written and spoken English. Throughout its history, ESOL at VPC has seen students struggle to find jobs to support themselves and their families. The staff and volunteers of ESOL

volunteers. If you have interest in teaching English, computers, or employment-seeking and retention skills, we have a place for you. If you have administrative and organizational gifts, we can use you. For information on ESOL, the Computer Education Program, or volunteering, please contact Bonnie Grouge at 703.938.9050.



Left to right: VPC member and grant writer Elaine Wright, ESOL Coordinator Bonnie Grouge, and Director of Missions and Outreach Sheila Breuer.

are committed to assisting students; however, until now we have been limited in what we can offer.

With the development of this new, and potentially life-changing program, ESOL is in great need of