



Vienna Presbyterian Church PC(USA)

The Vienna Press

A Disciple-Making Community

February 2008 (Vol. 49, No. 2)

As I See It



Photo: Kim Jackson

by Pastor Pete James

It happened at Marvin Gardens. John Ortberg destroyed his own grandmother. He took everything she had. It marked the first time he had beaten his grandmother at Monopoly. And to think of all the years his grandmother held the upper hand. Now John could claim title as the Master of the Board.

But John's grandmother still had one more lesson to teach him. "After the game is over, John, it all goes back in the box."

This simple story reminds us that what we accumulate is never really ours. We don't own anything. Everything we possess

(Continued on page 2)

Lent: A Season for Transformation

by Pastor Glenda Simpkins Hoffman

Ecclésiastes 3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Lent is a season for offering ourselves to God in meaningful ways in order to gain a better understanding of who Jesus is, the significance of his death on the cross, and how that has affected who we are and the way we live (or ought to live) our lives—the way we think, feel, behave, etc. Every moment is sacred, and God wants us to be growing all the time, no matter what the season. But the truth is that the earth itself tells us that there are some seasons for planting, some for growing, some for harvesting, and some in which the earth is fallow.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, and for those of us in the northern hemisphere, that journey usually begins in winter, when the earth is still, cold, seemingly lifeless. The ashes on our foreheads serve to remind us of our mortality. Lent ends in spring when the days are longer, the air is warmer and new life is bursting forth from the earth. The climax of Lent is Holy Week, with Jesus' journey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, his death on Good Friday, and the glorious celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday. He is alive!

The next 40 days of our lives will come and go whether we intentionally choose to take a meaningful journey through Lent or not. But I would urge each of us to think about how we might offer ourselves to God in meaningful ways that will help us to grow in our love for God and our understanding of his call on our lives. For some that may mean giving up something in order to practice the discipline of self-denial in order to experience a greater dependence on God. Others may choose to take on a new discipline such as meeting with God daily, attending corporate worship weekly, studying the Bible with others in a small group or adult education class, meeting to pray with a spouse, a friend, or in a group. I don't know what that will look like for you, but I know that walking through Lent in an intentional way can change your life and bring a greater sense of joy as we celebrate Easter.

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Deadline for March issue:
February 10

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE AT VPC (see page 5)

Feb. 6, 7:30 pm

HOLY WEEK:

Palm Sunday, Mar. 16: Services at 8, 9:30 & 11 am

"Triumphant Sounds of Easter" Concert: Mar. 16, 7 pm

Maundy Thursday, Mar. 20: Service at 7:30 pm

Good Friday, Mar. 21: Joint Service at First Baptist Church, 7:30 pm

Easter, Mar. 23: Services at 8, 9:30 & 11 am



As I See It

(Continued from page 1)

is on loan from God. Someday it all goes back in the box.

What will happen to our assets after we're gone? This isn't merely a question for those with considerable wealth or who expect to die soon. Planned giving is a Biblical principle. "We are God's stewards. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Cor. 4.2).

If we love our church while we're alive, why wouldn't we continue to invest in the Lord's work after we're gone? Our final act of living can be a gift that keeps on giving.

Churches are often reluctant to ask for legacy gifts. Let me assure you, my alma mater isn't the least bit reticent about asking for such things!

Our Session is commissioning an Endowment Board this month to assist us in planned giving. Our hope is to grow our endowment as a way of investing in God's continuing mission through VPC.

One of my absolute favorite places on earth is our 1874 chapel. I love its simple architecture, its wooden pews, its musty smells, its intimate setting. What an awesome legacy our spiritual forebears left us. What will we leave to those who follow us?

*The church office will close
Feb. 18, President's Day*

*Log on to www.viennapres.org
at any time for the most recent
information about VPC and
community events.*

2007: A Year of Giving Generously

by Catherine Dehoney, Financial Giving Coordinator

In 2007, the VPC community responded to God's call by supporting the church's programs through very generous giving—with a total of \$3.2 million for the Annual Budget, \$200,000 more than in the previous year, and \$1.2 million to the Building on Christ capital campaign. Look at just a few of the things accomplished together in 2007 for God's kingdom on earth!

- The church was blessed when Glenda Simpkins Hoffman accepted the call to serve as our Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation and Discipleship.

- The "Sunday Drive" and the "Underground" (aka our revitalized Sunday School and Youth Group programs for middle and high school students), mission trips, and summer camping gave 300 students the opportunity to grow in their relationship to Christ while experiencing enriching fellowship and just having fun.

- The Music Ministry involved more than 350 adults, youth and children through 16 vocal and instrumental groups and also sponsored outstanding special concerts for the community, such as the Army Chorus's performance this past August and the Glorious Sounds of Christmas—a truly glorious musical offering.

- The ESOL program served 324 newcomers from 48 countries with classes in English and citizenship and, when needed, support for spiritual and physical needs.

Thanks to the giving heart of our congregation, the current phase of the capital campaign is entering its last six months on target to raise \$5.5 million for capital improvements and missions, including:

- † New facilities that have allowed us to become both a Ministry and Missions Center to encourage disciples and serve those in need. VPC's buildings are used seven days a week to support the church's ministries and more than 30 community organizations;

- † Continued development of a new church in Brambleton in Loudoun County that just called an associate pastor;

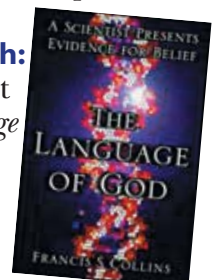
- † Critical supplies and equipment for the Hôpital Bienfaisance de Pignon in Haiti.

Thanks be to God for His many blessings through the faithful people of VPC!

Don't Forget! Two Feb. Events

- **Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life:** Feb. 2, 9:30 am-4 pm in the Great Hall. To be delivered via live satellite video broadcast, this seminar will feature nationally known Christian authors and speakers Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend. \$25 fee includes lunch. Register at Grapevine Books or via www.viennapres.org

- **Dr. Francis Collins, Man of Science, Man of Faith:** Feb. 10, 12:30-2:30 pm in the Great Hall. Hear eminent scientist Dr. Collins discuss his latest book, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. Free and open to the community; registration is not required. Optional \$5 lunch available if ordered in advance via the Sign-Up Table or www.viennapres.org/centerpoint





All-Church Events in February

- **Club 56:** Feb. 1 & 22, 7 pm
- **Boundaries 2008 Seminar:** Feb. 2, 9:30 am-4 pm
- **GriefShare:** Feb. 3, 10, 17 & 24, 6 pm
- **Lose It For Life:** Feb. 4, 11 7:30 pm
- **Jesus 101 Class:** Begins Feb. 5, 7-9 pm
- **Men's Fellowship Dinner:** Feb. 6, 6:30 pm
- **Ash Wednesday Service:** Feb. 6, 7:30 pm
- **Crossroads:** Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27, 7:30 pm offsite
- **Passages:** Feb. 7, 14, 21 & 28, 7-9 pm
- **Confirmation Class:** Begins Feb. 10
- **Dr. Francis Collins:** Feb. 10, 12:30-2:30 pm
- **SWATT Potluck Luncheon:** Feb. 13, noon
- **Piece Makers:** Feb. 13 & 20, 1 pm
- **Youth Orchestra & Choir Trip:** Feb. 16-18, offsite
- **Holy Grounds Coffeehouse:** Feb. 16, 7-10 pm
- **Youth Music Homecoming Concert:** Feb. 18, 7:30 pm
- **Book Discussion Group:** Feb. 20, 7:30-8:30 pm
- **Middle/High School 30-Hour Famine:** Feb. 22-23
- **Middle School Lock-In:** Feb. 29-Mar. 1
- **Kids' Nation 34:** Feb. 29, 7-8:30 pm

To announce an all-church event here, phone 703.938.9050 ext. 105

Photo: Kim Jackson



Keeping Up With the Changes

by Dick Eagan, Executive Director

Someone asked last month, *Are you still writing that Keeping Up With the Changes article? It's been two years, what do you find to write about?*

With a community as large as VPC, there is always change. Some months, it is specific personnel changes and other months it involves program announcements and updates. This month's newsletter has already captured the childcare leadership changes with Elaine Wright and Minh Towner (see page 5) and Pastor Pete's article about the re-launch of the VPC Endowment Fund (page 1).

There are also the larger transformational changes going on throughout our VPC community. One major change is the commitment of our ministry leaders to begin our meeting times "Being the people of God before doing the work of the people of God." This has been featured before, but what is changing is how God is honoring this practice. The simple practice of spending time in the Word by reading and reflecting on scripture and sharing and praying in small groups is having real impact. We are receiving constant feedback that the God-centered purpose for our meeting time together is being renewed and blessed by the Spirit. If you have any questions about how to lead what is being called Word, Share, Prayer, please contact me or Pastor Glenda so we can help you enrich your meeting experience.

February 2008

Another obvious transformational change is the Next Generation Ministry. Personally, I thought this was about the 20- and 30-year-olds. However, what God is revealing is that next generation ministry is as much about us "second half" of life folks and what we are doing to leave a legacy of spiritual leadership. Whom are we helping to develop to pass the torch for fulfilling God's plan for VPC? There seems to be an awakening in the elder citizens' role in nurturing and supporting the children through young adults in the community to ensure continuity. We openly affirm our generational commitment to support children and their parents in their discipleship journeys beginning with the Sacrament of Baptism. God is opening hearts, minds and relationships throughout our VPC community as to how we can continue to grow in supporting the next generation.

A third obvious transformational change has been in the growing emphasis to genuine hospitality throughout our ministries. Have you happened to notice the number of receptions, of individuals cooking for each other, and of "Ask Me" activities going on throughout our church? It is difficult to single out specific individuals whom God has called to the greater ministry of hospitality, but I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the impact Deb Crumbliss and Deborah Mateer have had on the hospitality culture of our church community. The leadership of Elder Jim Thomas and the Welcome Ministry efforts are making a real difference, too.

The VPC vision of what it means to be a **community of Joyful, Contagious, Christ-centered Disciples** is becoming clearer every day.



Showing We Care, One Call at a Time

by Lisa Baltzer and Emmy Parker

How nice to receive a phone call from someone who says, *Hello! How are you? I'm just calling to check in.* Today's world is so busy and impersonal that a friendly phone call or handwritten note is a rarity. Through the Call and Care Ministry, VPC is striving to reach God's congregation in this personal way.

Our callers are a loyal volunteer force of over 100 men and women. When they make their calls, they extend the love of Jesus to our congregation. Each caller touches base

with 10 families twice a year in friendly, brief conversations. The callers relay any needs for support, prayer requests, questions or concerns to the church for follow up.

There are 100 families still waiting to be placed on Call Lists. Will you help us with this ministry? Contact Lisa Baltzer at 703.560.9398 or lisa@thebaltzers.com and we will supply you with guidelines, suggestions on how to call someone you may not know, and a list of 10 families to call.

Welcome Home, Youth Music Ministry, on Feb. 18



On President's Day, Feb. 18, VPC's Youth Music Ministry orchestra and choir will return from a chorus tour to South Carolina. Please join us in welcoming them back as they offer their annual free tour homecoming concert at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary.

The program will feature new arrangements of favorite hymns. It's a terrific way to introduce music-loving friends and neighbors to a wonderful aspect of Vienna Presbyterian Church!

"Everything Must Change": Brian McLaren

On Mar. 7 &8, Christian author and pastor Brian McLaren will appear at VPC as part of an interactive, interdenominational, national speaking tour supporting his new book, *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope.*

The book addresses two questions: What are our world's top global crises? What does the message of Jesus say to those crises?



The format of this 24-hour "participatory experience," which begins at 6:00 pm on Mar. 7, will include new music, guided reflection, and dialogue and conversation groups about faith, art, justice, mission, spiritual formation, worship and community.

The registration fee, normally \$99, is available for \$79 to the VPC community through Mar. 7. For information and to register, visit www.deepshift.org.



OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Jesus 101 Begins Feb. 5

This class, taught by Pastor Pete James and Parish Associate Chris Hammond, is designed for those who are new to Christian faith and have an interest in exploring the person and message of Jesus Christ. It is also intended for those in the church who would like a refresher course on Jesus. The class textbook will be the Gospel of John. This class is introductory in nature and accommodating to those unfamiliar with church settings and Christianity. No prior knowledge of the Bible is needed. This class will meet 7:00-9:00 pm each Tuesday, beginning Feb. 5 through March '08.

Ash Wednesday Service

Lent is a season in the church year in which we have an opportunity to intentionally reform and renew our spiritual lives.

This year's early arrival of Easter means that the 40-day observance of Lent begins on Feb. 6. To mark this "new season," an **Ash Wednesday Service** will be offered in the sanctuary that evening at 7:30 pm. This worship is a way to begin the 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. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

New Youth Group For Grades 3 & 4

Kids' Nation, a new ministry for 3rd and 4th graders, offers games, music and mixers to help the children make connections to one another and to the Bible.

"Our purpose is to provide a place where children can

hear about Jesus and a place where the children can get to know each other outside of a Sunday school setting," says Assistant Director of Children's Ministries Daryl Wright.

Meetings are held approximately one Friday per

month, 7:00-8:30 pm, on the Ministry Center's 3rd floor. Upcoming dates include Feb. 29 (Leap Year and Olympics theme), Apr. 25 and May 9. Join us and bring friends!

Childcare Ministry Builds Disciples

This article is written by Director of Childcare, Elaine Wright, whom we welcomed to VPC's staff recently.

Recent months have seen many staff changes to the childcare ministry at VPC. I invite you to join me in saying goodbye and thanking Karen Hilger for her service to the Sunday morning nursery program. I'm delighted to welcome Minh Towner, who has recently joined us as the Sunday Morning Nursery Coordinator. We are blessed with such fine women in this disciple-building ministry!

Before I spent significant time in the childcare wing, I would have said childcare at VPC supports programs that are building disciples. Because we offer such extensive childcare, parents are able to be a part of small groups, Bible studies, and a variety of ministries. I believed that childcare was a tool that ministries used to bring people together. I now know I was only partially correct.



Elaine (left), Minh (center) and Karen (right).



Childcare Ministry *(Continued from page 5)*

Childcare is a tool and it does enable parents to grow in their faith by being a part of the life of the church, but it is more than that. The VPC childcare program is a ministry in and of itself. We minister to the children and to their parents. The little ones in our program are VPC's youngest disciples. They are learning how to be in community and fellowship with each other, and they are becoming more familiar with their church home each time they're in our care. These relationships are very important to our children and help build

a foundation for continued growth.

I am impressed with the level of care that is given in our childcare ministry. The caregivers spend time with the children playing, caring and teaching our littlest members that Jesus loves them.

For many families, the childcare staff is the first group of people they meet when visiting the church. Before they see an usher, sing a hymn, meet other worshippers or hear a sermon, many parents drop off their children in the childcare

wing. On Sunday mornings and during the week, the childcare staff is committed to helping families feel welcomed and at home. We assure them that their children are safe and nurtured.

VPC is making disciples, beginning with our smallest members and their families. Each time a child is in childcare, two ministries are going on at once: one with the child and another with the parent!

Ed. note: To volunteer for this vital ministry, please contact Elaine at childcare@viennapres.org or ext. 351.

Sharing the Light

Pastoring Practice for Shannon

When Shannon Jordan lived in Newport News, she was very active at Hidenwood Presbyterian Church there, as a deacon, a Stephen Minister and in congregational care. She says the longer she worked with adults, the more she found it important to get them to understand who Jesus is and why it's not just salvation that's important but our daily discipleship, as well. It was not surprising that she decided to enter the ministry.

She moved to the Oak Hill section of Fairfax county in late 2005, enrolled in Wesley Seminary in Washington, D.C. in August of 2006 and joined VPC in October of that year.

It didn't take Shannon long to become active in our church, and she was soon working with young adults. She had talked to Pastor James and VPC Executive Director Dick Eagan about how to get those young people more involved in our church, so when Bob Griffin left, Pete suggested she might be interested in becoming Interim Director of Congregational Care. When he later learned of Shannon's experience as a Stephen Minister and in congregational care at her previous church, that seemed to cinch the proposal.



Shannon

Her acceptance, however, was not immediate. "I was in seminary," she says, "and that was enough for me." After some prayerful reflection, though, she realized that "the offer was God's answer to my prayers for more clarification on how he was calling me."

Since taking on the congregational care post, Shannon has enjoyed the visitations, working with large numbers of other church members involved in congregational care, the deacons, Stephen Ministers, Cancer Companions and other groups. And, of course, we have all seen her on occasional Sundays helping the pastor with the worship service. In effect, she has been getting experience in many of the things she'll be called on to do once she finishes seminary and becomes a minister.

"I love to teach," Shannon, says, "but I certainly don't need to be ordained to do that. This post is giving me a wonderful opportunity to get an idea of what being called into ministry means."

It has been said that we should practice what we preach. In Shannon Jordan's case, she may someday find herself preaching what she practiced. —rds

Photo: Rommie Jean Irvin



Missions Work: Partners of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Virginia Tech

by Wes Barts, Campus Staffworker for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Virginia Tech University

JD was finishing his freshman year at Virginia Tech when the Apr. 16 tragedy occurred. In search of some form of consolation, JD decided to spend the following days at the temporary memorial that was created by fellow mourners on campus. He found comfort in relighting candles that represented the victims. One day, as JD was serving as a steward of the candles, he recognized the melody to one of his favorite childhood hymns, "In Christ Alone." The singing was coming from a group of worshippers who had gathered to praise the name of Jesus at Burruss Hall, about 50 yards from the site of one of the shootings. When JD walked over to see what was going on, he was greeted by Jon, a small-group leader with InterVarsity.

JD was overjoyed to meet followers of Jesus. At the beginning of classes last fall, he joined a small group. I got to meet JD during the second week of the semester. He openly shared frustrations of his first year at Tech and how he desired to turn his life around, and I had the joy of speaking about the gospel to him.

I praise God for letting me witness Him work in the lives of students. I saw JD transformed as he heard the gospel preached and saw it lived out by his friends in InterVarsity at Virginia Tech. He loves his small group and wants to lead one next year. JD is one of many students whom Jesus has brought into a worshipping community through the events of Apr. 16.

[Ravi Zacharias Speaks on Campus](#)

Last October, internationally known apologist Dr. Ravi Zacharias spent two nights on campus addressing the subject, "Finding Answers Amid Life's Greatest Losses." Over 20 local ministries, including InterVarsity, worked together on this event that drew 2200 students and faculty the first night and 4000+ students and community members the second night.

The event helped open the door for me to meet weekly with a freshman who is a self-proclaimed agnostic but is very interested in exploring Christianity. The Small Group in Pritchard Hall has shown him much love and welcomed him into their community. They did all the work of building trust and a deep friendship. I simply asked if he wanted to meet weekly and talk about Jesus. We've been having a blast looking at stories of Jesus. He asks fun, honest questions and is very eager to know more about Jesus. Pray that in his search for truth, he will see that Truth is a person—Jesus Christ.

[I'm Married!](#)

On Nov. 24, Lindsey Jones (of Radford University's InterVarsity staff) and I became husband and wife. The picture below was taken at our favorite place in Blacksburg, near the chapel on campus at Virginia Tech. Lindsey and I will remain on staff with InterVarsity, working at Virginia Tech and Radford. We would appreciate any additional support or special one-time gifts. Thank you for helping to continue the ministry at Virginia Tech!



From left to right: JD and friends, Dr. Zacharias, our wedding

Please pray for this ministry, which is supported by VPC, and visit www.passionfortech.com



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Thanks for being a good steward of time and trees!

Grapevine Books

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1/2 price

Hours:

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M/W 6-8 pm



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Send articles to: newsletter@viennapres.org
or bring to the VPC Office (Ministry Center, 2nd Floor)

Vienna Presbyterian Church

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Shannon Jordan

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Tuesday/Thursday/Friday, 8:30 am–5:30 pm

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