

The Lifeline

St. Giles Presbyterian Church

Volume 4, Number 2

February 2009

*At church,
moments
when time
stops and
everything
shines come
more often.*

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Committed to glorifying God by reaching out in service to one another and the world as a beacon of the hope and salvation of Christ.

Snippets from Your Pastor

Morning Walk, Monday, January 5, 2009

By 7:45 I was walking into a grey morning to the post box at the shopping center with a handful of Netflix movies to mail. I wore old clothes, loose cord pants, and a washed out sweatshirt that I got free from the MFA program at Old Dominion University, a sweatshirt that is thick and warm and which I treasure because it represents part of my past that I love, the days of writing, and talking about novels, and workshopping stories written by people from all walks of life, of all ages, who landed in classrooms in the upper floors of the Balantine building overlooking the ODU grounds.

I perched my new JBL headphones on my head. They're sleek in the studio, but on a walk through the neighborhood, they must have looked ridiculous. My gaudy toboggan hat with drop-down ear flaps didn't help. I was listening to podcasts of Garrison Keillor's "Writer's Almanac." His voice was low and soothing, above which I could barely hear my own footsteps and sometimes birds. The pauses were filled with blessed silence and his baritone breathing.

By the time I got to the main road, however, the noise of traffic competed with Garrison. I'd hear the first part of a poem, then the rattle of a truck with lawnmowers on a trailer, the swoosh of a BMW, the coughing of a diesel delivery van. A whole poem about snow and all I hear is the description of a green apple hanging from a branch covered with ice. I hear the part about how the poem "The Night Before Christmas" is one of the most beloved in this country, was published anonymously, later attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, but recently the authorship has been disputed. I missed who. I missed why.

Swoosh goes a pickup, all chromed with a full bed and extended cab for a single, slight man in a suit driving to his job selling insurance from a second-story office. Two minivans. A blue Chevrolet. Noise, noise, noise. The quiet roads are better, but they don't lead to the post box I'm heading for.

Attractive women jog in pairs. If I tried with all my heart, I couldn't keep up with them for more than a block, which is what I get for eating peanut brittle for breakfast this Christmas, and all the other Christmases for the past two decades. Older women approach on their power walk. I yield the sidewalk and nod. I pass a high school kid at her bus stop; she's gabbing on the phone. I nod again, big headphones jiggling atop my head, funky striped hat with ear flaps and dangling tassels. I smile, and bow, and nod as I walk by. I'm sure I looked pitiful. My kids would not have wanted to be seen with me, my own kids.

Yesterday after worship, a recent widow greeted me on that first Sunday of the New Year. (*She's given me permission to publish these thoughts.*) She wore a shiny silver and black jacket that was quilted and soft and silky. Her hair looked like a perfectly white summer cloud. She had real pink cheeks, real life in them, not make-up. She had bright eyes. She looked like a fragile Christmas ornament, like the few I have on my tree that were gifts given me when I was a child. She smiled through those glistening eyes, nodding. I held her hands for a long moment.

She said something about how this year would be hard. I was struck, for some reason, by her use of the word "hard" instead of "difficult." I was struck by the firmness of her grip and by her reluctance to im-

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St. Giles Youth-N-Action

Understanding Your Teenager

First Presbyterian Church in Spartanburg and the Ministry of Youth at First Church will present a community-wide parent seminar and youth program on **Friday, March 6, from 6:00-9:00 p.m.**

The theme of the program will be “*Understanding Your Teenager*,” and the leader will be Duffy Robbins, a veteran youth worker and youth ministry educator. If you have teenagers or will have teenagers, you are invited to this lively, informative presentation on some of the best parenting advice you'll ever get.

Contact Jackie Martin at 4jmartin@bellsouth.net if you would like to attend or want to carpool. Registration forms are required.

When are the Youth mission trips?

What time does Youth group start this Sunday?

How can I get a release form for youth activities?

Curious about Youth events

or just looking for updates.....

Discover the Youth page on St. Giles website

www.stgilespres.org and stay updated.

Youth Winter Mixer and Concert

February 22 - 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church
307 N. Main Street, Fountain Inn
(For Middle and Senior High School Youth)

Featuring the band CRASHING JERICHO

There will be community building, small groups and a concert. Theme and discussion will be on how we are all different, but have “common ground” on which we stand — our faith in Christ. RSVP by February 10 to Jackie Martin at 4jmartin@bellsouth.net if you would like to attend. Event is **FREE** but we need to have the number attending from St. Giles.



NO YOUTH GROUP on SUNDAY, FEB. 22.

The Youth will be skiing in Winterplace, WV.

Leaving Friday, Feb. 20, and returning Sunday, Feb. 22.

Super Bowl Youth Parties

February 1, 2009—6:00 PM

Joyonyas: Joseph Matthews' House
New Hopes: Jill & Randy Tyner's House

Bring Appetizer & Friends



TAMPA BAY 02.01.09

Foothills Presbytery
Senior High Retreat

Montreat, N.C.

March 13

“The Deciding Factor”

Psalm 139:13-16

Cost \$110 per person

(NON-REFUNDABLE) BY 2/1/09

(Includes lodging, meals, programs, and a T-shirt)

Registration forms will be emailed to
Parents of Joyonyas

Not on the email list? Email Jacqueline Martin at
4jmartin@bellsouth.net

Do New Year's Resolutions Work?

[Editor's Note: The following article by Robert I. Mathis is used with permission.]

New Year's resolutions are founded in a desire to change. Ranking among the most popular New Year's resolutions are weight loss, physical conditioning, paying off a debt, getting a better job, getting organized, and various ways of changing stress patterns. A New Year's resolution is a commitment of a person to make a change for self. Therein lies the value and an inherent lesson.

Did you ever hear a New Year's resolution like, "Get my teenager to come home on time"? "Have my boss give me a raise"? "Require my spouse to lose weight"? I hope you are saying, "That's ridiculous; everyone knows you cannot make a New Year's resolution for someone else. You make New Year's resolutions to change yourself."

Change in self is no small matter. I regularly say to clients, "You can only change yourself. You cannot change anyone else." For change to be genuine and lasting it has to be for self. If you make a change in order to get someone else to change, it doesn't work. The focus is still on the other. Making change in self is no small matter. Over time change in self, when done genuinely for the commitment to personal goals, values, faith, or self-worth, will bring about some change in the relationship system.

What motivates change? Pain. Pain is not the enemy. It is the body's built-in alarm system that something is wrong and something needs to change. Without pain there is no awareness of a problem. The intensity of pain and the motivation for change are connected. Change in self while letting go of even the expectation that the other will even notice, will overtime make a difference.

What does it take to change self?

1. Identify your pain. Not the person or the situation, but the pain in you.
2. Write down what you want to change. Not just the resolution, but what it will look like to be on the other side. Once again, not how others will act but how you will act.
3. Be patient with self. If the matter you are addressing is a significant hurdle, it is more than the present. It is a matter that is deeply connected to your own journey and may take some work to figure out.
4. Refuse to be dependent upon someone else to notice your change. Remember, this is for self, not other. If you are looking for approval or appreciation from someone else it won't work.
5. Realize that change takes time. Refuse to expect a quick-fix.
6. When—not "if" but "when"—you meet resistance, realize you are moving in the right direction, expect more resistance, and keep moving in your chosen direction.

Snippets — continued

(Continued from page 1)

diately let go. Nodding, she said, "But I'll make it. I'll make it. It'll be hard, but I'll make it."

"You'll miss him," I said.

A few real tears now, just a few. She nodded, quietly. I nodded back. We were Presbyterian bobble heads on a cloudy, warm day standing under a Bradford pear in a miraculous, fleeting patch of sun. She shook my hands like the reigns of a horse pulling a carriage on a slow country ride.

I should have been quiet, but like a noisy car interrupting a quiet walk down Batesville Road, I paraphrased Frederick Buechner who said the past is forever over and gone, but because we remember it, it lives forever. At least it lives as long as we do, and the others with whom we've shared the memory, told the tale. *Forever*, or thereabouts. Mere mortals that we are, we already know something about eternity. Like a truck driving too fast pulling a trailer loaded with lawn mowers and rolls of chain link fence, I also said that her husband will never, really, ever be gone.

Holding hands for a few wordless moments would have been enough, of course, but she didn't seem to mind too much the intrusion of my comments. Besides, I was right. She had told me as much the day of his funeral. She had held him closely even months after she got down on old knees and helped her grandson lower the plastic box with his ashes into the ground at that country cemetery.

One reason I don't ever want to miss a Sunday of church is because moments like these happen more there than anywhere. At church, moments when time stops and everything shines come more often.

Why I thought of that dear woman on my morning walk, I'll never know. But she was my companion today, hand in hand, her and that patch of sun on a rainy day. On this day I let Garrison Keillor do all the talking.

And I walked the last half-mile home in a light but steady rain. My neighbor in a yellow slicker with his loping white dog approached out of the fog from behind the slight hill. We smiled and waved.

—Matt Matthews

As It Turned Out, Money Was the Answer

In times like these, safety and security are hard to find. People are asking themselves questions such as, "Is my job secure?" or, "Is my company going to cut my pay?" Others are worried about clients ending business relationships and their companies suffering the consequences. Self-employed folks are looking at their books and making difficult decisions about the future of their companies and their employees. Ultimately, the question we're all asking is, "How are we going to earn enough money to support our families?" It's a good question. For some, it may be freelance work. For others, it may be picking up a second job. For me, it has been a tumultuous couple of weeks.

I lost my job on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. I had done nothing wrong. I had done everything my employers had asked of me and anything extra I could think of to increase my value in their eyes. It didn't matter. They let me go anyway. Just as they had let seven other people in my similar position go before me. I was down to the final three, so I guess you could say I took home the bronze medal. Only there was no bronze medal. Just a week of severance for each year of dedicated service. It was a jagged little pill that got in the way of some very good turkey the following day. That Thursday and Friday tend to stick in my head like a paused movie. All I could think of was the depression, anxiety, hurt, nausea, frustration, tears, helplessness, and embarrassment that comes with job loss. I asked myself repeatedly what I could have done differently. I asked myself what I did wrong. I wondered why was this happening to me? Why was this happening to so many people? It's a good question.

For as long as I can remember, I have worried more about the security of my family than any other worry in my life. My role as the provider is probably the number one role I identify with. When people ask me about JJ, usually one of the first things out of my mouth is who I work for and what I do for a living. It's a tremendous part of my identity. I've worked in a bank for going on 13 years. So my role as provider, and my job being to handle money, you can imagine what symbol has represented security to me for the past 13 years. It wasn't a cross. It was a dollar sign. I would say things to my wife like, "We need more money in the bank. We need to start saving for the children's education. We need to be doing more for retirement than just the 401(k). We need to payoff all our debt. Once we get all our debts paid off down to the mortgage on our house I'll feel comfortable. We need at least six months of income in the bank in case of job loss. We need X, Y, and Z and then I'll feel secure." Sometimes I sounded like Suze Orman, Warren Buffet, and every other brilliant financial planner. You know, the ones you find at Shearson Lehman, or Merrill Lynch, or AIG, or Smith Barney, or Wachovia, or....well you get the idea.

So I ask this question. How much money do you need to

feel safe and secure? Does six months' worth of savings solve it? Does a million dollars cure the problem? Is it some random assigned figure based on future income projections, lifestyle, and inflation rates? How much do you need to feel safe? How much do you have to have before it can't all be taken away from you? How big does your company have to be for it to be bulletproof? Does it have to be the size of GM, Ford, or Chrysler? We could talk about the audacity it takes to show up on your private jet looking to the government for a handout, but that's not the point of this essay. Or maybe if you had the money that the federal government had at its disposal. Maybe the government could make us all feel safe and secure. Oh wait, no, they're already trillions of dollars in debt so that won't work. So where do we go to get enough money to feel safe and secure?

I have the answer to this question. Reach into your wallet, or go to your child's piggy bank and pull out a dollar or a coin. Tell me what it says. In whom do we trust?

That's right. It occurs to me that it doesn't matter how much land you have, how many employees you have, or how many dollars you have. There is nothing that is given that can't be taken away. There's no amount of money, net worth, or insurance that will ever provide you with the safety and security you truly need. The only thing that will ever give you the safety and security you need is your faith and belief. You have to believe that God exists. You have to believe that he has a certain amount of control about what's going on. You have to believe that you are a part of God's plan. You have to have faith that God will provide. You have to have faith that God's plan will be revealed to you when he wants it to, and not when you want it to. You have to have the humility to pray and ask God for the help, and to accept whatever lesson or service is required. When you think about it, faith and belief are almost synonymous with safety and security. The money had the answer all along.....once I realized its intrinsic value. In God we trust.

I wish I could tell you how much your kind words, thoughts, and prayers have meant to me and my family. So many of you have come up to us and said, "We're so sorry for what you're going through." More have said that you're keeping us in your thoughts and prayers. I cannot tell you how much that has meant. I can't tell you what kind of peace, joy, and love you have shown, or that my family has felt. By God's grace through you, we have felt more safe and secure, more loved and respected, more humbled and graced, than at any point in our lives. So I pray for you in return for the peace, joy, and love that you have shown this advent season. Merry Christmas. May God bless you and your family this holiday season.

Sincerely,
JJ Martin

Bits and Pieces

St. Giles Preschool

The children did a wonderful job with the Christmas program, and it was enjoyed by everyone.

We had "Pajama Day," and everyone got to wear their "jammies" to school, even the teachers. We ate pancakes and popcorn, and we watched a movie. The children think this is just great!

We are beginning to work on our Silent Auction for year-end. If you have any items or services you would like to donate, please call the Preschool at 244-9403. We would appreciate any help you can give us.

It's Registration Time! It's hard to believe, but it is time to start thinking about the 2009/2010 school year. The schedule for registration is:

- January 20th - begins in-house registration
- January 26th - begins church members registration
- February 2nd - begins registration for the public

If you or someone you know are looking for a fun, caring preschool please keep us in mind. Brochures are located in the Narthex if you would like more information, or call the preschool at 244-9403.

Ten Thousand Villages

Ten Thousand Villages is welcoming the new year with brisk sales. The second Saturday of every month we have a special event for the community. The next two are ones that your church members might want to support. Thanks. Susan Shelley

February 14 - a community shopping day on which 10 percent of the sales for that Saturday will be given to Habitat for Humanity. Store hours are 10:00 - 5:30.

March 14 - a book signing with Beth Templeton of United Ministries. Beth will be in the store from 11:00-1:30 selling signed copies of her book, *Loving Our Neighbor: A Thoughtful Approach to Helping People in Poverty*.

Triune Mercy Center

Because we so often deal with people in the worst pain they will ever know - homelessness, addiction, separation from family - they often leave Triune when they get better. We understand that - even support it. We recognize that Triune has frequently been the site of deepest shame, and acknowledge that it's a sign of health when someone outgrows us.

That's why it's such a blessing when we can step back and

see results. David Gay has been doing his year-end tallies on folks we've sent to drug rehab, and has come up with some pretty astounding figures. Out of 100 people placed in rehab in 2008, he estimates 39 are still clean. Of the 216 people he's placed over the past three years, he estimates 30 percent are clean.

And that doesn't even include people like Ray, to whom we ministered but didn't send to a rehab facility. He showed up for worship in December, scrubbed and well dressed, after a six-month absence. Here's the note he put in the offering plate:

"I would like to thank the Lord. I came to Triune hopelessly addicted to crack and they, through His blessing, helped me to get a new apartment and take away the drug craving. It's been 6 months now and I am drug free. I have also bought 2 cars and have a good job. What a difference He has made in my life."

Another man named Paul called last week from South Dakota to tell us he has remarried his ex-wife and his young daughter is doing well. Paul lived on the streets of Greenville for eight years, and we prayed often for the daughter who needed surgery.

"She's got two more sessions with the doctor," he said over the phone. "And I'm going to NA three times a week. I just wanted to thank all of you."

I'd love to have firm numbers and figures and updates on all the people who come through here, but that's never going to happen. And God doesn't require it.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow." That's how I see our work. We might not always see the plants emerge from the ground, but we can't worry about that.

We do what we can do, and we leave the rest to God.

—Deb Richardson Moore

Church Bulletins We Love

- ◆ The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- ◆ Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use the large double door at the side entrance.
- ◆ The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge—Up Yours."

Required Minimum Distributions Waived

[Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted with permission from the Oast & Hook News.]

The stock market meltdown in 2008 has resulted in at least one reprieve for seniors. President George Bush recently signed the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008, which, among other provisions, temporarily suspends the penalty for seniors who do not take the required minimum distributions (RMD) from their IRAs or 401(k) accounts in 2009.

There is normally a 50 percent excise tax as a penalty for failure to withdraw the appropriate amount each year when account owners reach retirement age, after age 70 1/2. The percentage that must be withdrawn is based on life expectancy and increases every year. In order to prevent seniors from selling stock in a down market to fund their RMDs, Congress suspended the RMD rule for 2009. Those who turned 70 1/2 prior to 2008 will not have to take the RMD that would normally be required by Dec. 31, 2009. Those who turn 70 1/2 in 2009 will not have to take the RMD that would normally be required by April 1, 2010. Beneficiaries of inherited IRAs and employer retirement accounts are also covered by the penalty freeze for 2009.

The penalty freeze does not affect RMDs for 2008; unfortunately, this will result in a double hit for seniors. The RMDs are based on a percentage of what the IRAs and

other retirement accounts were worth at the end of 2007. If the accounts were heavily invested in stocks, then they could have lost 30 to 40 percent in the last year. The taxpayers will have to withdraw and pay taxes on a higher amount taken from accounts that may have lost significant value. Those who turned 70 1/2 in 2008 have until April 1, 2009, to take their first RMD. These taxpayers may want to see if the firm holding their accounts will allow them to take an in-kind distribution that could then be transferred to a taxable account. For example, Fidelity and T. Rowe Price allow such distributions, but others, such as Vanguard and TIAA-CREF, do not allow such transfers.

Many elderly taxpayers rely on the RMDs for their daily living expenses; these seniors may not benefit from the penalty freeze. Seniors who do not need the funds from RMDs for their living expenses can benefit more from the penalty freeze. Some taxpayers may decide to take distributions equivalent to their 2009 RMD even with the penalty freeze. If they take distributions in 2009 and pay taxes on the withdrawals, then they may be able to put the after-tax dollars into a Roth IRA if they meet the earned-income requirements for funding Roth IRAs. RMDs cannot be used to fund Roth IRAs, but other non-RMD withdrawals can be used. This could be particularly beneficial for taxpayers turning 70 1/2 in 2009; they could withdraw the funds between January 1 and April 1, 2010, and transfer the funds into a Roth IRA in 2010 when the income restrictions on funding Roth IRAs are lifted.



Coffee House

Saturday, Feb. 28

7 p.m.

Enjoy coffee, fellowship and music. No charge; fee for childcare.

February 2009

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

<p>1 Communion Youth to Mattoon 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship 3 Eagle Scout Court of Honor 3 Wolves 4 CE Committee 6 Youth Super Bowl Parties</p>	<p>2 11:45 Men's Lunch 5:30 Administration Committee 6 Worship Committee</p>	<p>3 10 Staff 6:30 Preschool Board Meeting 6:30 Brownies 6:30 Handbells 7-Boy Scouts 8-AA</p>	<p>4 9:30 Preschool Music 11 Stephen Ministry 5 Sunshine Choir 5:45 Cherub Choir 5:45 Wednesday Nite Celebrations 7:15 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>5 9:30 Preschool Music 9:30 Women's Bible Study 6:30 Junior Scouts</p>	<p>6 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8 AA</p>	<p>7 1 Daisy Scouts</p>
<p>8 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship/Congregational Meeting 12 Confirmands/Mentors Lunch February Birthday Celebrations 2:30 Membership Committee 3 Bear Scouts 3 Wolves 4:30 Session Meeting 6 Youth Groups</p>	<p>9 9:15 Preschool Chapel 11:45 Men's Lunch 7 Cub Pack</p>	<p>10 9:15 Preschool Chapel 10 Staff 10 Circle at Ginny Packard's 6:30 Brownies 6:30 Handbells 7 Boy Scouts 7:30 Circle at Bunny Auren's 8 AA</p>	<p>11 10 Prayer Group 5 Sunshine Choir 5:45 Cherub Choir 5:45 Wednesday Nite Celebrations 7:15 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>9:30 Women's Bible Study 12 4 Daisy & Brownie Scouts</p>	<p>13 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8 AA</p>	<p>14 1 Daisy Scouts</p>
<p>15 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship Lifewise Lunch after Worship 6 Youth Groups</p>	<p>16 No School 11:45 Men's Lunch 7 Bear Cubs</p>	<p>17 9 Presbytery Meeting 18 10-No Staff Mtg. 6:30 Brownies 6:30 Handbells 7 Boy Scouts 8 AA</p>	<p>18 9:30 Preschool Music 11 Stephen Ministry 5 Sunshine Choir 5:45 Cherub Choir 5:45 Wednesday Nite Celebrations 7:15 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>19 9:30 Women's Bible Study 9:30 Preschool Music 6:30 Junior Scouts 7 PW Coordinating Team</p>	<p>20 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study Youth Ski Trip 8 AA</p>	<p>21 Youth Ski Trip 1 Daisy Scouts</p>
<p>22 9:15 SS 10:30 Worship 15 Girl Scout International Day 3 Bear Cubs</p>	<p>23 9:15 Preschool Chapel 11:45 Men's Lunch 7 Bear Cubs</p>	<p>24 9:15 Preschool Chapel 10 Staff 6:30 Brownies 6:30 Handbells 7 Boy Scouts 8 AA</p>	<p>25 Ash Wednesday 10 Prayer Group 5 Sunshine Choir 5:45 Cherub Choir 5:45 Wednesday Nite Celebrations 7:15 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>26 9:30 Women's Bible Study 4 Daisy & Brownie Scouts</p>	<p>27 6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 6 Basketball Banquet 8AA</p>	<p>28 1 Daisy Scouts 7 Coffee House</p>

St. Giles Presbyterian Church
1021 Hudson Rd.
Greenville, SC 29615

February Birthdays

1 Zach Nance	25 Bryan DeYoung
1 Calie Stewart	26 Steve Hunter
3 Ginny Pannell	
4 Bob Snyder	
5 Norma Beall	
5 Donna Michael	
5 Jean Shew	
6 George Hollingsworth	
6 Wes Lawton	
6 Debbie Annin	
7 Chuck Russell	
8 Helen Truesdale	
9 Jean Strickland	
9 Cynthia Schillizzi	
9 Judy Patterson	
10 Joe Satterfield	
10 Nick Lesley	
12 Will Henderson	
14 Jim Pickett	
16 Harry McDowell	
16 Brian Holly	
16 Laura McCarthy	
16 Ashley Taylor	
17 Susan Rogers	
18 Beth Reilly	
19 Bob Taylor	
20 Chip Cash	
21 Hannah Morrison	
22 Sara Beth Drake	
24 Kathy Miller	



St. Giles Presbyterian Church
A Stephen Ministry Congregation
864-244-4887
www.stgilespres.org

The Congregation, Ministers
Matt Matthews, Pastor
Laurie Snyder, Christian Educator
Charlene Means, Music Director
Wanda Allison, Office Administrator
Cassie Boyd, Organist