

THE WITNESS



The purpose of Eastminster Presbyterian Church is to
share the Good News of Jesus Christ with all.
EPC Mission Statement ~ Adopted by Session 2011

January 8, 2014

As most of you know, Mary and I look forward to getting away to the coast of South Carolina whenever we can, and when we do, we take a lot of the back roads and pass, I would guess, 200 small, rural churches. We claim that one day we will actually count them as we go but as is customary, we forget until we are half-way home. Typically, as we drive those roads, there is very little going on at the churches: no cars in the parking lot, all the lights seem to be off and even yard work seems to need work; but depending on the day and the hour, much can change.

If it is Wednesday evening most of the parking lots are full and you can see these little churches bulging with folks who have gone to 'prayer meeting'. If it is Sunday morning there can even be some traffic out front and so I need to slow it down some. And during the holidays there are all kind of activities with cleaning up and making things look fancy. Then there is the occasional wedding and a funeral or two. I see this and what becomes so clear is that in a world that strives to be 24/7 in everything else that happens, we are comfortable attending church only a few hours out of the week. Why is it we give God's House so little of our time?

Last week we passed one of those churches and on the sign out front was a great message for the New Year. The sign read as follows:

"A DAILY DEVOTION IS BETTER THAN A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION"

How true that statement is! How many of us begin the New Year with all those great plans for making our way through the year in a safer, healthier, or more modest way. We have all those plans for doing more of some things and less of others and we are so very sure that this is the year we are going to make our resolutions stick. I have heard it said: "We resolve to do in January what we ultimately give up for Lent." But we are creatures of habit and change does not come easy. We continue to do the same old thing and expect the outcome to be different. (I think this defines some lack of mental ability...)

So I recommend a morning devotional to start the day off right. Think of it as a vitamin for your spiritual health which needs to be taken daily. I have found it the best way to start my day. Before the newspaper is read, or the television is turned on, I spend some time alone and quiet. Find yourself a devotional that will settle you down and allow you to focus on God's Word while being quiet and listening for His still, small voice speaking to you. It helps put people, places and things into perspective and allows you to begin the day a little more content with your life and a lot closer to the One who formed you and loves you.

Mary and I begin our 5th year at Eastminster and pray that 2014 will be a year of great blessings to each and to all. I pray for you and for me that we move a bit closer to walking with our Lord 24/7.

Blessings

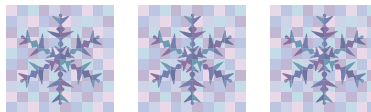
Caleb

Save the date

Mark your 2014 calendar now for Presbyterian Women's Annual Winter Retreat to be held at Eastminster on Sat., Feb. 23. Wendy Whaley will be our speaker. Many of you may have attended her Wed. evening presentations during the fall. More information to follow.

Found!

- ◆ Verizon cell phone charger
- ◆ Lady's black/red glasses



Time served: blessings to others

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and energy at the Stone Mountain Co-op during this hectic holiday season. We appreciate you taking precious moments from your busy schedules to shop, bring food, sort, shelve, and bag food for the numerous clients during December. Your willing hands and joyful hearts have kept the spirit alive this Christmas. Kudos to: Larry Bentley, Carol Carmichael, Linda Chapman, Ben Gerard, Barbara Morgan, Lei Norman, Charlene Smith, Pat Sully and Janet Uthlaut.

Outreach Committee

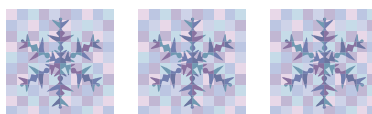


February Birthdays

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----|----------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Soon-Ok Oh | 8 | Kinley Gall | 15 | Carl Heckman | 20 | Pat Sully |
| | Madison Peters | 9 | William Fleck | 16 | Deborah Abraham | 21 | Kevin Carmichael |
| 4 | Ron Hickers | | Brian Swinkola | | Chris Smethers | 22 | Christy Howard |
| | Lynn Maxwell | 10 | Caroline Alff | 17 | Rose Marie Wells | 24 | Ruth Sullivan |
| 5 | Leon Collins | | Nicholas Frank | 18 | Chip Carpenter | 25 | Callie Adams |
| 6 | Mary Acosta | 12 | Carson Nix | | Leah McCulloh | 28 | Cathy McCoy |
| | Sammy Meers | 13 | Holly Eaton | 20 | Joe Evans | | |

Cupid's aim: college students and beyond

Now is the time to begin collecting gum, candy, granola bars, cheese/peanut butter crackers, microwave popcorn, post it notes, 3x5 index cards, highlighters, pens, pencils, valentines, etc. to send to our college students, missionary children, and students from Columbia Seminary. Each year close to Valentine's Day we pack, wrap, label, and mail/deliver shoeboxes filled with these special items to express our love, thoughts, and concern to these men and women living away or close to home. Please deposit all items in designated containers in the narthex, at the pre-school entrance, hallway adjacent to the sanctuary and third floor educational building, or church office no later than Sunday, Feb. 2. You may wish to come join us at 10:00 A.M. Wed., Feb. 5 in the gym when we assemble these boxes for delivery. You may contribute money to defray postage. Make checks payable to EPC and write "Valentine boxes" on memo line.



Thank you!

- ◆ Thank you so much for your continued kindness and prayers. Knowing how much everyone cares has been comforting.

Ron and Kelly Frank and Family

- ◆ There are never adequate words to reflect what is in my heart, but "thank you" for your concern for my well being is the best I can do. Your oral expression, cards and especially your prayers are all indicative of the truly caring congregation to which I am privileged to be a member. I am in deed grateful.

Tom Grissom



Valentine's Celebration Dance A Senior Prom for the Rest of Us

Saturday, February 15, 7:30 - 10:30 p.m.

Come dance to the songs we played when we were in high school and college
(back when they had lyrics you could understand)!

Put on a party dress, wear your best suit and come for an evening of fun and fellowship.

Please forward this to your friends and invite them. This should be a lot of fun,
just like high school or college but you can't get caught!

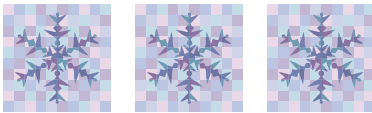
Be a part of the party, bring your favorite song and we'll play it. Bring your favorite snack and we'll share it.

Heartwarming Programs for a Cold Winter Month

During the months of January and February, Wednesday night programs will include:

- Wed, Jan. 8 Session Committees Meet / All others: Games to Sharpen Your Intellect
- Wed, Jan. 15 TED TALKS: Learning Something New in the New Year
- Wed, Jan. 22 Making the Most of a New Start: Reconciliation and Redemption Stories
- Wed. Jan. 29 One Month Gone: It's Never Too Late to Start Over
- Wed. Feb. 5 You Don't have to be Scottish to Love a "Kirkin" but Understanding It Helps!
- Wed. Feb. 12 Session Committees Meet / All others: Games to Sharpen Your Wit

You're Invited...



The congregation is invited to a baby shower for Mark and Sarah Sauls on Sunday, January 12, 2014, directly after the 11:00 church service. We will have a light lunch and drinks in the gym, followed by a baby shower in Founders Hall. Come show how much we love them, and how much they mean to our church! They are registered at Target and Baby's R Us. Call Paula in the church office to RSVP for this wonderful event.

Christmas blessings, given and received: Caring Tree 2013

Many thanks to all the faithful volunteers who organized, obtained family and nursing resident names, printed lists and maps, helped set up the "Caring Tree", phoned families ahead of time, prepared and served a delicious lunch, shopped, sorted, wrapped, and delivered gifts to needy folks in our local community. It takes many willing hands and cheerful hearts to complete this annual outreach project. We served 13 families, 41 nursing home residents, as well as providing gift bags/cards to the Burmese families. We are also grateful for the participation of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Eastminster's Preschool. Everyone would have to agree; "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Outreach Committee

Adult Classes Beginning January 5, 2014

Bible Sampler Room 323 Marty Hillman

The Mighty Acts of God, an excellent in-depth study of the Bible, passage by passage.

Seasons of Faith Room 324A Matt Adams, Jenny Rankin, Peggy McCurdy

For the month of January, this class will study the book *Radical Integrity: The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* by David Van Dyke. This is the story of a German pastor and theologian who gave his life to oppose Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime. Born into a prominent German family, Dietrich Bonhoeffer died in a Nazi prison camp, hanged for his plot against the man who'd plunged the world into war. *Radical Integrity: The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* explains what made Dietrich Bonhoeffer the man he was—compassionate minister, brilliant thinker, opponent of the heresies of Nazism and Aryan superiority. This easy-to-read biography details both Bonhoeffer's life and his powerful theology-of "cheap" versus "costly" grace.

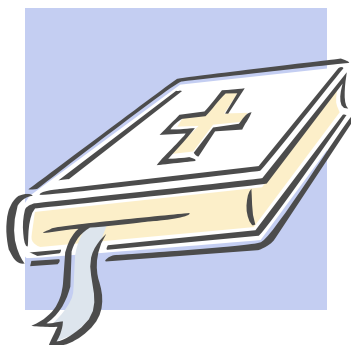
The Third Class Room 324C Mardee Rightmyer

This class will use *Understanding Difficult Scriptures in a Healing Way* by Matthew, Sheila and Dennis Linn to look at scripture passages that are "difficult," meaning ones that are often misunderstood in ways that present an unloving, frightening or narrow image of God. This study will give examples of life-giving ways of interpreting these difficult passages and present simple criteria that anyone can use in reading any passage of the Bible, so that we come away feeling closer to God, ourselves, others and the universe (yes, we will also look at how faith and science do not have to be mutually exclusive.)

These books are available from Mardee:

Radical Integrity: The Story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer \$10.00

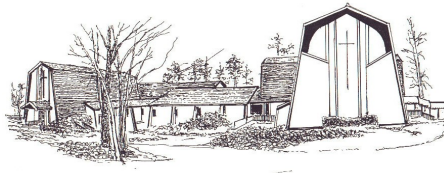
Understanding Difficult Scriptures in a Healing Way \$13.00



THE WITNESS IS
A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

5801 Hugh Howell Road
Stone Mountain, GA 30087
www.eastminster.us
eastminsterpres@yahoo.com
Contact: Paula McGill



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PHONE NUMBERS

Church Office: 770-469-4881
Fax: 770-879-9590
Preschool: 770-469-4880
School Age Program: 770-469-9489

DEADLINES

Newsletter ~ 5 p.m. Friday, January 31
Sunday Bulletin ~ Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m.

Church Staff

Pastor ~ Rev. J. Caleb Clarke III
Director of Family Ministries ~ Mark Sauls
Director of Christian Education ~ Mardee Rightmyer
Director of Music Ministries ~ Andrew Meade
Director of School Age Program ~ Celeste Sears
Director of Preschool ~ Sarah Baldwin
Communications Coordinator ~ Paula McGill
Financial Coordinator ~ Jan Zabarac