

FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY

Responding to God's Call.

April 2010 LeaderPak

MEANINGFUL PRACTICES in CAMPUS MINISTRY

Q: What is a "meaningful practice"?

A: An intentionally repetitive act which leads to deepened skill, compassion, awareness or insight.

At GSW

One of our most meaningful practices emerged 5 years ago, when alumni, who were deeply connected to our campus ministry, made it clear that they were still hungering for Christ-centered community which provided both depth and breadth. As a result, the alumni now gather two times a year for a weekend retreat at homes near Lake Blackshear. During their 40+ hours together, they reconnect, pray, learn, and serve. Each weekend retreat is designed around a theme which is selected by a volunteer alumni "speaker" who focuses on providing both clear direction and sacred space for reflection and renewal.

The weekend always ends with worship on Sunday and one of our most meaningful worship experiences occurred several weeks ago as we modeled our worship after that of St. Lydia's church in Manhattan, a dinner church. (*Check out www.stlydias.org) Rather than pull chairs into a large circle and place a small table in the center, we pulled large tables together, arranged place mats, and covered the table with china and a home-made meal. Setting the table together, folding napkins and insuring that there was ample space for everyone present became our preparation for worship. The blessing of the food and the gathered community became our invocation. And the sharing of food and passing of bowls was, in fact, a rich and joyous communion. We read Scripture in between bites, pondered its meaning as a group, and read prayers together from one of the oldest Christian prayerbooks, The Didache. Our benediction was, in fact, an unmistakable sending to begin the work of "cleaning-up", a reminder that community-care is messy and that we still have a lot of work to do in the world, especially if we are going to do more than leave mere crumbs in our wake. In a world where many do not know what it is like to eat as a community, where bowls are passed, bread shared, and drinks poured, this was a vigorous reminder that we are a "table people", called to invite, feast and share the goodness of the Lord. So yes, we'll be worshipping around a large, large table when we gather next in September! And yes, we hope you will join us!

Deb Bibler

At The Abbey

In This Issue

Meaningful Practices

Presbytery Moderator's Message

"Of such small things..."

Summer Ministry Ideas

Opportunities to Learn

April 2010 Calendar

Personals

Parish Paper

Quick Links

[Special Events](#)

(School for Lay Renewal, Sabbath Retreats)

[April, 2010 Parish Paper](#)

[Join our Mailing List!](#)

A practice that I have found meaningful in campus ministry is the practice of being present with students. I don't mean sitting in the student union and typing on my computer while students whirl by, though I do spend time in the student center. I don't mean getting coffee at a café that students frequent, though I do this too. I mean being present with students in an incarnational sense.

Being present with students means entering into their lives and creating a space, a holding environment, in which they can experience the presence of God. I do not bear the responsibility of bringing God to these students, for God has been and is already with them, stirring them, shaping them, troubling them, growing them. Rather, by being present with them I play the part of creating space that they might open to God's presence.

Being present with students requires that I be self-aware. I must be able to recognize if I am trying to flee the conversation, or letting my thoughts drift away, or imposing my agenda upon them. Being with students requires that I be flexible, open and perceptive. For sometimes creating a holding environment in which they can experience God will mean leading a Bible study or sharing my faith journey, but other times it will mean talking about the differences between vinegar based and mustard based BBQ sauces.

Jason Micheli

PRESBYTERY MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

This past Sunday, I was privileged to be a part of a local Baptist church's community service fair. As a board member for our local domestic violence non-profit agency, I was asked to set up a booth of information about our agency during both Sunday services and Sunday School. The church fed all of us breakfast and lunch and introduced us at both services. The sermon focused on everyone pulling together in their respective communities and for community pride. Since this particular church was celebrating her 100th anniversary, the minister challenged each member to accomplish 100 hours of community volunteer work this year. Members could receive information from our table displays of where to volunteer.

Can you imagine if every church did this! What an impact we could make in each of our communities. I encourage each church in our Presbytery to consider this in their congregations in some modified form. This particular Baptist church even has a sign at the end of their parking lot reminding each car as they left that they are now entering the mission field!

Go forth and spread the Good News!!

Nancy Reimer

"Of such small things...."

Reid Campbell is a young man who grew up at First Columbus and was deeply involved in youth ministry in our presbytery. The following note is printed with his permission.

"Having heard of the strain upon the presbytery's budget, I felt compelled to send what little I can. As I think about how I became the Christian I am today, I realize that the presbytery played a vital role. Events like Fall Youth Overnight, Quest, Montreat, and the Presbytery Youth Council not only strengthened me in my faith, but also helped to establish friendships that I carried to college and

beyond. It is not by accident that the first day I set foot in the Presbyterian Student Center at UGA, I already knew half of the people. It is truly a testament to the youth ministry of our presbytery that students from southwest Georgia all knew each other, while those from other presbyteries were strangers, even amongst themselves.

The importance placed upon youth ministry in FRP, including financial support, planted seeds in the hearts and minds of many young adults, shaping them into who they are today....(my gift) is a small donation, but it is the rightful harvest of a worthy ministry. The presbytery is in my prayers."

Summer Ministry Ideas

--Rev. John Sawyer

- An all-church Vacation Bible School that has classes for children, youth and adults every evening for 4-5 nights. Be sure to include time at the end when the children play outside on the front lawn of the church and everyone else stands around and eats watermelon and/or ice cream.
- An ice cream churn-off coupled with fun, intergenerational games, Bible songs, etc.
- An all-church movie night either at a local movie theatre or at your church (if you have facilities). The movie needs to be appropriate (obviously!) and it's nice to have some discussion questions associated with it for the adults ("Where could Christian themes, etc. be seen in the film?", etc.).
- A class for children on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Have the children touch water, taste bread, and make a table cloth that can be used from time to time during your communion service. You can make a table cloth out of a bed sheet and some fabric paint - you can even put the children's hand prints on the table cloth for a really nice and colorful effect!

Opportunities

TO LEARN

** *Taking Your Preaching to the Next Level*....Craig Barnes will be leading this seminar at Clairmont Presbyterian Church in Decatur, on Friday April 30 (9:30 am - 3:00 pm). Brochures and registration materials are in the Presbytery office.

** A new two year *Master of Arts in Practical Theology* will be offered at Columbia Theological Seminary this Fall. It is designed as preparation for specialized professional or volunteer ministry, and offers four areas of concentration: Christian Education, Christian Leadership, Pastoral Care & Pastoral Theology, Worship. Details at ctsnet.edu/Degree_Programs/MAPT.aspx

** *Linking For Ministry* is an event for smaller membership churches. This 3 day conference is designed to encourage and empower small churches towards new possibilities and opportunities through joint mission and ministry. June 2-4 on the Thornwell campus (Clinton, SC) For more information or to register, visit Trinity Presbytery's website at trinity-presbytery.org and follow the links.

** *Church Unbound Conference*....with keynoter Brian McLaren. At Montreat, August 11-14. Information and registration at montreat.org/current/2010-church-unbound..

** *Evangelism for the Rest of Us*.....May 2010 Thompson Scholars Conference (May 25-28 at Columbia Theological Seminary). Led by Steve Hayner (President of CTS and Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth), and Sharol Hayner. Go to ericksons@ctsnet.edu for an application.

FOR FUNDING

** *Synod's Hemphill Loan Fund*for small churches: up to \$20,000 for ten years at 6% interest. Applications are in our presbytery office.

Denominational resources at pcusa.org/financialaid/programs-pastors-smallchurches.htm

** *Boudnot Library Fund*....grants of \$200 to small churches to purchase books for the church library for the pastor's use

** *Leadership Training Scholarships*....grants of \$200 to pastors of small churches for use in attending training events.

** *Continuing Education Grants*....\$1,000 - \$1,500 for the first three years of a Doctor of Ministry program

REPAIRS TO YOUR CHURCH

Mark Bowen has become our resident repair expert at our campus ministry Pres House at GSW. He has a wealth of talent and experience, and is willing to come to you and make needed repairs at your church - and *all you have to do is pay for the materials and his mileage*. Mark can do electrical, plumbing carpentry, painting, roof repair, handrail fabrication and installation, concrete, welding, tree removal.....and he's also an experienced heavy equipment operator. Put him to use!!

April 2010 Calendar

6	6:00 pm	CEN
8	12:00 noon	NW Cluster at Morningside
9-11		Sabbath Retreat
10	1:00 pm	School for Lay Renewal
13	10:00 am	Finance Committee (conference call)
14	12:00 noon	NE Cluster at Northminster
15	9:30 am	PJC
15	10:00 am	COM
15	1:00 pm	CNL
22		Reformation Project Retreat
27	12:00 noon	South Clergy Cluster, Thomasville First
28	12:00 noon	Central Clergy Cluster
29	10:00 am	CPM

All meetings are held at the Presbytery Office unless otherwise noted.

Personals

Jason Micheli was installed as campus minister for The Abbey, on March 21

Christopher Peterson, pastor-elect of the Thomaston Church, began his ministry there on March 22

Burkett Carver had a heart attack while at COF. Two stints later, he is home and on the mend.

Tim Bell's brother (Mickey - also a pastor) died in Houston Texas. (Tim is serving the Donalsonville Church)

Jeannine Little has two brain aneurisms. Surgery is scheduled for April 8 (Jeannine is a Lay Preacher, and wife of Washington Avenue's pastor)

Pam Moyer's father has cancer and has begun chemotherapy (Pam is an Elder at 1st Columbus, and moderator of our Commission on Mission & Evangelism)

Judy Hay's daughter (Megan) was engaged to a soldier, Glenn Whetten, who was killed in Afghanistan on March 12. (Judy is CLP at Sherwood in Columbus)

Visit the Prayer List on our webpage!

Parish Paper

[April, 2010 Parish Paper](#)

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