

Commonplace Press

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Minister's Message

Dear Members and Friends of Faith Des Peres,

"What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?"

That's the title of a new book by Martin Thielen, a United Methodist pastor. The provocative title caught my eye when I first saw it in the Huffington Post. "What's this," I thought to myself. When I read his blog post and then clicked on the link to the book, I was surprised to see that the book was published by our own denomination's publishing house, Westminster John Knox. Now I was really intrigued.

I said in a recent sermon that there's a lot of bad religion out there. Unfortunately, Christians aren't always portrayed in the most positive light. A lot of the Christianity we see in the media is judgmental and self-righteous. This book is written to dispel some of that stuff we see – all those negative portrayals of Christianity. It's written for anyone who has ever asked themselves, "Do I really need to believe that?" It's written for anyone who has ever asked, "What matters most? Where is God? What about suffering? What brings fulfillment?" In short, it's written for us. And it's written for your friends and neighbors who have the same questions and don't come to church because they're afraid to ask those questions!

So, during the six Sundays of Lent, we'll dive headfirst into these questions. What do I need to believe? And, what do I not need to believe? If you've gone to church your whole life, or if you're just dipping your toes into this thing called faith, I think you'll get something out of this sermon series. I hope you'll join us on Sundays mornings at 10:30 am for worship. There's never been a better time to come to church.

And last, but certainly not least, ask a friend to church during Lent. Ask a neighbor. Ask someone! People are hungry for a vibrant, centrist, open-minded faith . . .and you have it to offer.

Blessings,

Annie

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Lent & Easter Services

Services will be at the Clayton Road Church unless otherwise noted.

Ash Wednesday

March 9 at 7:00 pm

Palm Sunday

April 17 at 10:30 am
with Adult & Children's Choirs

Maundy Thursday

April 21 at 7:00 pm
Old Meeting House

Easter Sunday

April 24 at 10:30 am
with Trumpet & Choir

Invite friends to join us!
Childcare is available.

Welcome, Stephanie!

Stephanie Ruzicka began her new position as Faith Des Peres bookkeeper in December. Stephanie has Bachelor of Science and MBA degrees in accounting from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, as well as several years' experience working as an accountant in the business world. She is at the church on Tuesday mornings. Please give her a warm welcome!

Making Sense of Scripture or at least trying to!!

Wednesday Food and Forum Lent 2011

What Is the Bible?

Is the Bible True?

How Is the Bible the Word of God?

Where Did the Bible Come From?

These are some questions we will ask in our conversations in the Wednesday Food and Forum during Lent (March 16-April 13). We will have these conversations on Wednesday evenings in the Gathering Space. We'll start with a simple supper at 6:00 and the conversation will run from 6:30-7:30.

Our goal is to become more fluent in the Bible and engage each other in conversation about the Bible. This class is appropriate for people who are brand new to the Bible and those who have been wrestling with it for a long time. There is a book that we will use to start our conversation, *Making Sense of Scripture: Big Questions About the Book of Faith*. It is in the form of a conversation about the Bible. We will expand on these conversations in our Wednesday evening conversations.

The books are available for purchase for \$12.00. Please let Pastor Annie know if you would like a book. Pastor Annie will lead the discussion.

From the Introduction to *Making Sense of Scripture*:

"Maybe you've studied the Bible for years, or maybe you haven't picked one up in decades. Maybe you know the Bible better than any other book you own, or maybe you heard the stories long ago but don't remember them very well. And—who knows?—maybe you're just wondering why people continue to make a big fuss over such an old book and want in on the action. No matter where you are, no matter how much or how little experience you have" . . . think about joining in on the conversation. Questions? Let's start a conversation.



Sunday Worship During Lent

“What’s the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?”

March 13: (Don’t) Gimme That Old Time Religion

March 20: Jesus’ Priority: What Matters Most?

March 27: Jesus’ Grace: Am I Accepted?

April 3: Jesus’ Work: Where is God?

April 10: Jesus’ Example: What Brings Fulfillment?
Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism for Jonathan David Newcomb

April 17: Jesus’ Death: What About Suffering?

April 24: (Easter Sunday): Jesus’ Resurrection: Is There Hope?

In addition to these worship services, we’ll have an Ash Wednesday Service on Wednesday, March 9 at 7:00 pm in the Gathering Space. On Thursday, April 21 at 7:00 pm, we’ll have a Maundy Thursday service at the Old Meeting House. Join us for these special services.

In Sympathy

It is with great sadness that we let you know of the following deaths in our church family.

Faith Des Peres member Peg Gamble passed away on November 26. She was 92 years old. Peg was a faithful member of our church family for 55 years . . . and a true matriarch of the church in so many ways. She was ordained as an Elder at Des Peres Presbyterian Church in 1965, becoming the first woman to serve in this role at the church. For many years, she was an active member of the Session and faithfully kept the finances in order at Des Peres and then at Faith Des Peres. The time, talent, and treasures she contributed to the church are too numerous to list but still have a lasting impact. She touched many lives here and is greatly missed.

Ed Sherrick passed away on November 12. A memorial service for Ed was held at Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood where he was a member. Ed’s wife Kathy is an active member of Faith Des Peres. Our thoughts and prayers are with Kathy and their family and friends.

Terry Baker’s mother, Mrs. Maralee Tilton, passed away suddenly on December 5. Mrs. Tilton lived in Belleville, Illinois and was a member of St. Matthew United Methodist Church. We extend sympathy to Terry, Jim, Daniel, Kenneth and their family and friends.

Our sympathy is extended also to Jean and Susan Neunreiter on the death of Eunice Neunreiter, 101, on January 28. A memorial service for Mrs. Neunreiter was held at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church where she was a member. Her son, Bob, passed away last October.

Happy Anniversary!

Becky Boyer-Hall & Jerome Hall (Apr. 12)
Mary Toy & Jerry Kircher (Apr. 14)
John & Tiffani Edney (Apr. 18)
Ron & Marilyn Scott (Apr. 29)
Sean & Sako O’Rourke (May 6)
Steve & Lisa Becker (May 9)
Phil & Dianne Modrell (May 14)
Elizabeth Pribor and Don Emery (May 27)

Happy Birthday!

Terry Baker (March 5)
Ainsleigh Glenn (March 20)
Sharon Fenoglio (March 24)
Sawyer Cleeland (April 3)
Jason Wickstra (April 7)
Henry Epling (April 11)
Stephanie Ruzicka (April 20)
Joanna Gerst (May 4)
Bill Malkemus (May 9)
Mike Onken (May 11)
Ethan Glenn (May 12)
Charlotte Ridley (May 13)
Marilyn Scott (May 18)
Annie Wyman (May 22)
Jacob McClure (May 23)
Jan Morris (May 28)



Thanksgiving & Christmas 2010

TNT (Twenty and Thirty Somethings) Group

Want to come to brunch with us? The Twenties and Thirties (TNT) Group meets every second Sunday of the month immediately after church at a local restaurant for some food and fellowship. Childcare is provided at the church for an additional hour or two. Just pack a lunch to leave with the little ones. It is a great way for us all to catch up! Any questions, contact Scott McClure rsmcclure@sbcglobal.net or 314 606-9895. We look forward to seeing you there.



*Printing of this newsletter
courtesy of Morgan Press in
Bedford, New Hampshire.*

Adult Discussion Group

The Faith Des Peres Adult Discussion Group (ADG) has had a great year so far with a number of interesting and thought provoking presentations. Whether it has been Ron Scott's book study, Annie leading us in a three week study of the history of race in the United States, Dr. Christi Griffin of the Ethics Project, Tim Townsend from the Post-Dispatch or a round table discussion led by one of our members, we have had great discussions and fellowship each Sunday morning.

On March 6 and 13, we will welcome Sheldon Enger to lead us in a review of the current status of the Middle East peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Sheldon is well known to our members who participate in the Washington University Life Long Learning program. Sheldon's presentation will bring us up to date on the current situation, along with presenting his thoughts on the solutions and likelihood of success.

On March 20, Woody Powell of Veterans for Peace will join us to tell us more about their organization. You can learn more about this organization at their website (<http://www.veteransforpeace.org>). I think that Woody will inspire us and the other veterans who are striving to bring peace to our world.

On April 3, we will welcome Khalid and Gul Shah to begin a three-week study of Islam. This should be a very interesting program as we strive to learn more about Islam and hopefully, begin to find out how we can foster a better environment for all Muslim Americans.

We are still planning the May programs, but will keep you up to date in the bulletin and on the website. We hope that you will join us in welcoming these visitors to our Church and learning more about the issues that they will be discussing.

If you have any questions, have a topic that you would like to discuss, or would like to lead one of our monthly roundtable discussions, please see Ron Scott, Will Ridley, Barb Abbett, Joe Morris or Jan Morris.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is planning a Spring Visitor's Luncheon to answer questions and encourage further interest in FDP. Jan Morris created a Visitor's Center in the church foyer to welcome newcomers. The Just For The Fun Of It Subcommittee recently hosted a January game night at FDP. Various tables played Bridge, Apples to Apples, Trivial Pursuit, Wits and Wagers, Hungry, Hungry Hippo and shared snacks and fellowship in the Gathering Space. Upcoming events include Easter Egg Hunts for the young and young at heart.

Meet and Greet Lunch

Are you interested in finding out more about Faith Des Peres? We're hosting an informal lunch after church on Sunday, March 6 from 11:45-12:45. Meet and Greet is an opportunity for you to learn more about the church, to ask questions and to meet others in the congregation. There is no expectation that you join the church if you attend Meet and Greet, but we are planning to receive new members into the Faith Des Peres community on Sunday, April 3. If you are interested in finding out more about Meet and Greet or becoming a part of Faith Des Peres please contact Terry Baker at terrylvb@live.com or Annie Epling at 432-8029 or pastor@faithdesperes.org.

Easter Egg Hunts

Fun for all ages!

Adults' hunt

Friday, April 15
Clayton Road Church

Children's hunt

Saturday, April 23
Old Meeting House

Elders

Buildings and Grounds

Jim Gerst

Care Team Liaison

Sarah Ludlow

Endowment/Finance

Barbara Abbett

Fellowship

Leslie Barnes

Membership and

Evangelism

Terry Baker

Mission & Ministry

Joanna Gerst

Personnel

Will Ridley

Sunday School and

Young Adults

Sarah Ludlow

Scott McClure

Website

Sean O'Rourke

Clerk of Session

Joe Morris

Commissioner to

Presbytery

Dorcas Case

Treasurer

Kathy Sherrick

Mission and Ministries

DUO Recap:

Our annual Do Unto Others Christmas Giving Tree kick-off event was held on November 21st in the Gathering Space.

Again this year we all enjoyed a time of fellowship while we shared a catered Thanksgiving dinner complete with all the trimmings. Ornaments decorated the Christmas tree centerpieces, which described gift requests from the families we sponsored. A total of 10 families were supported this year, five from SSDN and five from Lydia's House, totaling 40 individuals.

Along with the gifts, each family was given a Wal-Mart gift card and the families from SSDN were also provided with financial support to help pay for their utilities. Additionally, we were able to give 10 Target gift cards to Presbyterian Children's Services for them to be able to assist children in need that they serve. This was all made possible by the incredible generosity of our congregation. Yet again, our members have shown how kind and compassionate they are. Both agencies expressed their sincere gratitude for all that was done for these families. Because of these gifts, Christmas was so much more beautiful for 10 families in our community. A heartfelt "thank you" goes out to each and every one who participated in this important event.



Food Outreach:

We have a date scheduled to do a "food packing" at Food Outreach, the organization that provides prepared meals and food to people living with AIDS and cancer. Please mark your calendars for March 26th, so you can participate in this worthy activity. Also, remember to donate canned food anytime for Food Outreach. Just bring the food to church and we will get it to them.

Children's Education

What fun we're having! The highlight of our winter was our "Living Lessons and Carols." In addition to singing "The Friendly Beasts" the children created a wonderful crèche. Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, the Innkeeper, Angels, Shepherds, Wise Guys and St. Nicholas himself all made an appearance. The story of the birth of Christ was told beautifully by our Narrator.

The Elementary children are having fun with drama and crafts in their class. They were excited to participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring and are learning how they can help others in need.

The Middle/High Schoolers are enjoying each others' company as they continue their study of the Old Testament. They watched Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat. A "big kid only" event is in the works. We're still working on the details. More excitement to come!

We would love to have you get to know our kids even better than you do now. Please consider teaching Sunday School. If you are interested please contact Pat Cleland.

FDP Closes Loan for Gathering Space

Since October 2009 we have been enjoying the comfort, convenience and attractiveness of our “new” Gathering Space; and now we have another reason to celebrate and rejoice.

All final loan documents for this project have been signed and filed with Church Development Corporation, our lending agency. And we have started making monthly principal and interest payments.

The balance at the time we closed the loan was approximately \$516,800. And we have reason to be as proud of that as we are of the Gathering Space. Because payments of the three-year pledges made during the first capital campaign have been made on a regular and timely basis, we were able to pay 10 percent of the loan balance at the time of closing and, therefore, reduce the amount on which we will make payments over the 30-year life of the loan by about \$58,000.

And there’s still another reason to be joyful! The \$20,000 that was pledged for mission from the capital campaign pledges is set aside. A special committee, composed of Joanna Gerst, Leila Davis, Dianne Modrell, Scott McClure and Will Ridley, has been convened. Within the next couple of months, they will make a recommendation to Session about how to use this money to carry out Faith Des Peres’ mission.

You may recall that CDC originally approved FDP for a loan of up to \$630,000 for the Gathering Space project. When bids for the work came in at substantially less than originally anticipated, Session recommended and the congregation approved including replacement of the steeple and replacement of the roof on the sanctuary and education wing of the church in the total project. In the end, the amount “borrowed” from CDC was \$574,800 . . . and in addition to the Gathering Space we gained a new steeple, a new roof and some significant plumbing repairs related to the project.

We do, indeed, have reason to celebrate and much for which to be thankful. And it gives us even greater reason to look forward to phase two of our capital campaign initiative, which will enable us to continue building for the future while we are reducing the debt on the Gathering Space. Planning for phase two of the campaign is underway. Look for more details about it when spring rolls around.

Endowment Ends Year on Positive Note

Market performance in the third and fourth quarters of 2010 was good for Faith Des Peres’ endowment investment. Earnings in the third quarter were \$28,000 and in the fourth quarter, \$12,900.

We are fortunate that this investment continues to provide a resource that helps support the operating budget of the church. At the same time, we are increasingly aware that we are drawing from the endowment at a rate that is greater rate than the earnings.

Last year when Session developed the budget, it made a commitment to draw less from the endowment in FY 2011 than in the previous year (\$60,000 rather than \$70,000). Even at this level, we continue to draw at a rate of about 16 percent annually. Investment advisers recommend that the rate of draw on an investment should be in the range of 4 percent.

At its recent meeting the Endowment Committee agreed to develop a proactive plan for both reducing reliance on the investment and encouraging gifts to the endowment to build its value. With that in mind, the committee is planning to schedule some discussion forums in the fall to focus around planned giving and wills. There will be other opportunities, as well, to talk about how memorials, tributes and other gifts can be made to the endowment to recognize special occasions and people in one’s life.

If you have questions or thoughts and suggestions you would like to share with the Endowment Committee, please contact Barb Abbett, Joe Morris or Kathy Sherrick.

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Visit us on the Web at:
www.faithdesperes.org

Did you know that the PWs...

...Provide two dinners a year for the guests at Lydia's House?

...Prepare and serve refreshments at funerals and memorial services?

...Sponsor an all-women's retreat?

...Hold an annual women's tea?

...Bake cookies every December for those in need of holiday cheer?

...Donate funds to support the greater St. Louis PW organization?

The Presbyterian women's fellowship is more than a monthly Bible study. Throughout the year we faithfully serve others within the church and beyond.

Music Notes

On March 6, the choir will present *A Festival of Hymns* by composer Hal H. Hopson. The composition celebrates the contributions of hymn writers from the 4th through the 20th centuries, including familiar and not-so-familiar hymns by Martin Luther, Charles Wesley, and Fanny Crosby, among others. The congregation has an important part in *A Festival of Hymns*. It's my hope that this will be a very engaging and enjoyable service at the close of the season of Epiphany.

The choir is working on several beautiful anthems for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and the Sundays in Lent. On Palm Sunday, the children will sing with the adults as we re-enact the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.

A trumpeter will join us for joyous and festive music on Easter, and the choir will sing a gospel-style anthem that will have you tapping your toes.

Our soloists are working on some special presentations, including some arias from Handel's *Messiah*. And you certainly won't want to miss hearing the children as they sing on Mother's Day.

Grace and peace,
Gay

