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Salisbury, MD 21804

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www.providencesalisbury.org

Sunday Schedule

9:30 am **Worship Service**
11:00 am **Sunday School**
6:30 pm **Evening Service**

February 2011

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FYI...

**March Submission
deadline will be
Monday, Feb. 21st**

Dates to Remember

- Feb. 7 Session Meeting**
- Feb. 8 WIC Bible Study**
- Feb. 11-12 Men's Retreat**
- Feb. 15 Deacon's Meeting**
- Feb. 19 Membership Class**
- WIC Craft Swap & Shop**
- Feb.22 MAT Meeting**
- Feb.23 WIC Crafters**
- Mar. 4-6 MAT Conference**
- Mar. 7 Session Meeting**
- Mar. 12 Men's Prayer Breakfast**
- Mar. 15 Deacon's Meeting**

The Necessity of Church Membership

One of my facebook friends recently updated their status to say something to the effect of, "Just me in my pjs, a waffle, a glass of OJ and a church service streaming on the internet...lovely Sunday morning." Such a "status" is the norm for many a nominal Christian. Church attendance is considered optional; and if that's the case with church attendance, how much more with church membership? Contra this contemporary understanding, what the following few paragraphs will demonstrate is that church membership is indispensable to the spiritual life and health of the Christian believer.

Let's start with Scripture. One thing the Bible makes abundantly clear is that salvation is fundamentally corporate in nature. Moses writes in Deuteronomy 7:6ff., "For you are a *people* holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a *people* for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." The emphasis is the same in the New Testament. In a text which we more commonly associate with marriage, Paul writes, "Christ loved *the church* and gave himself up for *her*, that he might sanctify *her*, having cleansed *her* by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present *the church* to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that *she* might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). We could multiply texts without number that consistently bear out the reality that God saves His *people* from their sins. Obviously, this means that individuals are saved, but (with apologies to our Western, individualistic sensibilities) only insofar as they are members of the corporate, covenant people of God.

Such Scriptural witness is what has historically led theologians to write things like, "You cannot have God for your Father unless you have the church for your mother" (Cyprian). "For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels...Furthermore, away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah (Isa. 37:32) and Joel (Joel 2:32) testify" (John Calvin). The church is "the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (WCF XXV.IV).

"But wait," one might say, "my 'membership' in the church isn't contingent on having my name on a roll somewhere; it's contingent on my relationship with Christ. I'm saved by grace through faith, not by a 'work' like church membership." True enough. What's also true is that faith without works is dead. And the case has been freshly made that saving faith should be accompanied by the "work" of joining a church: "Missing local church membership is like missing the fact that Christians are called to pursue good works, or love their neighbors, or care for the poor, or pray to God, or follow in the way of Christ. Submitting oneself to a local church is what a true believer does, just like a true believer pursues good works, loves his or her neighbor, and so forth. Someone who refuses to join – or better, to submit to – a local church is like someone who refuses to pursue a life of righteousness. It calls into question the authenticity of his or her faith."

Ouch. So how *do* you know that your faith is authentic? Well, as a presbyter once told me, "Not because *you* say that it is." Someone's profession of faith in Christ is credible only as it is validated by the Church to whom Jesus gave the authority to "bind and loose" (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:18-20). "If this real, not abstract gathering (in Presbyterian polity, the Session) determines that the individual's profession of faith is credible, they will unite the individual to themselves. If not, they won't. How do they exercise their authority to unite? They unite with the two external, visible, institutional mechanisms given to them by Jesus: initiation through baptism and ongoing participation through the new covenant meal. How do they unbind or loose? They deny the individual the opportunity to participate in this ongoing meal."

And therein lies another hindrance presented by non-membership: It prevents the Church from effectively exercising oversight and discipline. The Church's jurisdiction is limited to those who have been baptized and have willingly and publicly submitted to its government and discipline. If someone has not done so they have (consciously or unconsciously) declared their independence from the visible body of Christ; and as many a theologian has pointed out (see above) that is a perilous position to be in.

To close on a more positive note, as someone created in the image of the Triune God, you are made to live in community. It is a fundamental facet of your existence. Yes, you are a uniquely crafted, never-to-be-duplicated, one-of-a-kind masterpiece. But you were also created to live out your individuality in the context of a community who "like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). Only as a member of such a house are you able to fully contribute to its edification and receive its structural support. It's just the kind of community that Jesus died and rose to unite you to. So what are you waiting for? Whether it's at PPC or some other Bible-believing, gospel-preaching body, for God's sake (and yours!), become a member of the Church!

And if you already are a member of the Church, take stock of the individual contribution you're making to its corporate well-being. To borrow the language of your membership vows, In humble reliance upon the Holy Spirit, do you still endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ? Are you still supporting the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability? Are you still pursuing its purity in peace? And are you availing yourself of the support it has to lend you (via the Word, sacraments, prayer and fellowship) as you do these things alongside your brothers and sisters? As members of the house and family of God, may we all, with renewed vigor and dependence upon God's grace, "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Eph. 4:15-16).

Worship Volunteers

February

Head Usher Andy Anderson

2/6 Joshua Franklin, Andrew Seipp, Joe Cote, David Schrey, Mark Comolli
2/13 George Conner, Ray Griffith, Jon Sherwell, Richard Townsend, Bob Hall
2/20 Chris Salvatore, Ken Spicer, Steve Hallman, David Ingersoll, Jerry Lankford
2/27 Perry Adams, Rob Anderson, Chris Williams, John Render, Bert Meyer

Guest Services Team

Bruce & Debbie Ford
Suzanne Taylor & Kathryn Badger

Refreshments

2/6 Tim & Debbie Kraemer
2/13 Kirk & Grace Franks
2/20 Kevin & Tammi Griswold
2/27 Barbara & Ravi Ayra

Children's Church

2/6 Andrew Seipp, Anna Harr, Keith Franklin
2/13 Trish Robins, Anna Peipon
2/20 Dee Buchly, Dean Franklin
2/27 Barb Coltellino, Carolyn Webster

Nursery

2/6 Donna Griffith, Trish Robins, Dean Franklin, Rob Anderson, Mary Washburn, Emily Render, Meaghan Conley
2/13 Debbie Price, Geri & Micaiah Votta, Alice Downes, Tim & Hope Harr, Lara & Emma Banks, Luke Harr
2/20 Kate Huntington, Pam Render, Luke Williams, Donna Anderson, Joann Katzaman, Anna Peipon, Rachel Downes, Amaris Ford, Seth Williams
2/27 Connie Libby, Vanessa Smullen, Greta Downes, Mary Doss, Chris or Kelly Clarke, Hannah Libby, Kate Howard, Lauren Fickenscher, Luke Downes

Church Open & Lock-Up

2/6 Paul Katzaman
2/13 Andy Anderson
2/20 Ted Cogswell
2/27 David Ingersoll

Communion Service

2/27 Andy & Nancy Anderson

March

Head Usher Steve Brezler

3/6 Tim Kraemer, Dan Bacon, Jimmy Garrity, Jonathan Freed, Blessey Jacob
3/13 Kai Schrodt, Peter Render, Eric Catellier, Matt Smith, Michael Munday
3/20 Steve Keim, Ford Waggoner, Paul Marshner, George Winsor, Jared Votta
3/27 Les Heineken, Eric Lagstrom, David Spinnato, David Whitsell, Ted Evans

Guest Services Team

Joan & Jay Ball, Barbara & Ken Coltellino

Refreshments

3/6 Bob & Joanne Hayes
3/13 Tim & Debbie Kraemer
3/20 Tom & Joy Hayes
3/27 Kirk & Grace Franks

Children's Church

3/6 Tim & Debbie Kraemer, Nathan Katzaman,
3/13 Sue & Hope Harr, Emily Price
3/20 Ken & Bobbi Spicer, Stan Wilson
3/27 Bruce & Debbie Ford, Emily Cross

Nursery

3/6 Kathy Townsend, Suzanne Taylor, Faith Shelton, Hannah Townsend, Brooks O'Donnell, Sarah Skolka, Stephanie & Eric Catellier, Emily Cross
3/13 Amy & Amanda Ingersoll, Elizabeth Webster, Charity & Chris Render, Josh Ingersoll, Barbara Coltellino, Bev Thompson, Meredith Conley
3/20 Donna Griffith, Trish Robins, Dean Franklin, Rob Anderson, Mary Washburn, Emily Render, Meaghan Conley
3/27 Debbie Price, Geri & Micaiah Votta, Alice Downes, Tim & Hope Harr, Lara & Emma Banks, Luke Harr

Church Open & Lock-Up

3/6 David Linde
3/13 Dan Bacon
3/20 Kevin Griswold
3/27 Eric Schultes

Communion Service

3/27 Jim & Lois Hart

**Follow Me
I Will Make You**
FISHERS OF MEN



**MAT
Conference
March 4-6, 2011**



Marc was born in 1953 in a French-Canadian Roman Catholic milieu in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. He began searching for the meaning of life when he was around sixteen.

After getting involved in hallucinogenic drugs and oriental mysticism at Georgetown University in 1972, he hitchhiked across Europe and stumbled on Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland where his oriental convictions were shaken. He continued on to India where, in April 1973 in Benares, the Lord dragged him into the Kingdom. His search for Truth is the subject of his first book: "Discovery on the Katmandu Trail." (1983)

Marc settled in France in 1973 where, after a year of preliminary language study in Paris, enrolled at the Reformed Seminary in Aix-en-Provence where he met his wife Aline. They were married in March 1978 and have been blessed with three children; Calix (1980); Justin (1982) and Anaïs

MEN'S RETREAT—FEBRUARY 11-12, 2011



Topics

- Being a Man of God as a husband
- Being a man of god as a father
- Being a man of god at work
- Summary session—a holistic approach to serving God

MEMBERSHIP CLASS
The next membership Class is tentatively set for Saturday, February 19, 2011, from 8:45 am until Noon in the Church Library. If you anticipate membership and come from a sister-PCA congregation (or like-minded Reformed Church) this class is not mandatory. However, you will need to complete a Membership Application and arrange an interview with members of the Session. You can speak to any Elder and get help with this matter. Please let Pastor Jason know of your intentions to be in the Membership Class so he can provide you with some reading material (available at www.providencesalisburg.org). Reach Pastor Jason @410-546-0577/e-mail: gracejbs@comcast.net Please speak to any Elder if you have questions or concerns about membership.

God's Valentines

"How precious is your constant love, O God! All humanity takes refuge in the shadow of your wings." *Psalm 36:7*

"See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children." *1 John 3:1*

Love comes from God
"Dear Friends, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know him better. But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows that he doesn't know God—for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into this wicked world to bring us eternal life through his death. In this act we see what real love is; it is not our love for God, but his love for us when he sent his Son to satisfy God's anger against our sins." *1 John 4:7-10*

"And so I am giving you a new commandment to you now—love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples." *John 13:34,35*

News from Manna Ministry at PPC

Meet your new Manna contacts, Geri Votta and Pat Naugle. Manna ministry is provided by the women of Providence Presbyterian Church to our church families that are in need of meals for a limited period of time, during times of illness, births, hospitalization, or when there is a need to express the love of God through meal preparation. Volunteers are needed to provide this service when contacted by Geri or Pat. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry, please contact one of the ladies and have your name added to the list. Our list is growing which means that you should not be overburdened with requests for meal preparation.

Geri Votta: 410-219-3247

Pat Naugle: 302-846-9733

Hebrews 6:10: "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."



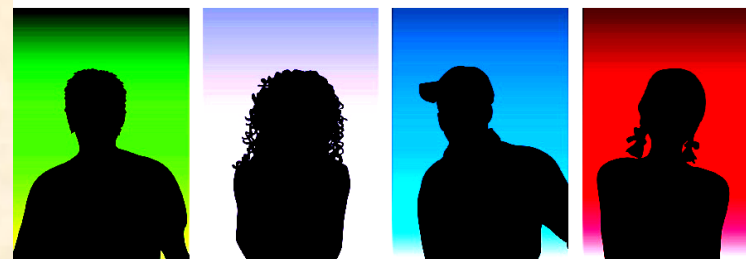
Mark Your Calendars for the PPC "SOUPER BOWL" on FEB. 20th at 4:30pm!

Nothing warms the heart like a bowl of hot soup and nothing warms the soul like the singing of favorite hymns and praise songs, SO.....we decided to combine the two! Beginning at 4:30, we will have a time of singing some of those favorite hymns and songs as well as learn a new piece or two! After singing, we will break for a meal of soup and sandwiches. The PPC choir has kindly volunteered to provide the soup and we are asking everyone else to bring a plate of sandwiches or cookies to share! It should be a grand time of music and fellowship. ALL are welcome.

Mae



All College (and College-Age!) Students: Come out to Pastor McGuire's house (4970 Lords Creek Dr., Eden, MD 21822) on Thursday nights at 7 PM for fellowship and discussion of a chapter of Tim Keller's book, *The Reason for God*. Each chapter stands on its own, so don't let lack of reading (to this point) be a hindrance. We look forward to seeing you!



Junior and Senior High Youth are active again In 2011. Join the Junior High Youth on Sunday evenings at 6:30. The Senior High Youth meet on Wednesdays from 7-9 pm. See YOU there!