First Press

FEBRUARY 2012



A publication of the **First Presbyterian Church** of Englewood, NJ

From the Pastor

Execution Is Everything

Going through old church files, I came across a document from 1979 entitled "Church Officers' Retreat: Evangelism." It recounted the tremendous dropoff in worship attendance our church experienced from 1963 to 1979 (from an average of 418 to 160, a drop of over 60%). The report then outlined a series of actions they needed to take to stem the tide.

Most of the ideas were pretty obvious. "We must create a friendly, accepting church." "A way must be found to note visitors." "We need to investigate our relationship with blacks and Hispanics." "Minister to singles." "Explore possible service projects in the community."

In recent years we've been blessed to experience an influx of new members and attendance growth. Why? When I looked at the this 1979 report, it seems that we've actually implemented almost everything on the list. We've achieved a significant level of diversity. We minister to different groups. We are definitely friendly and accepting. We have implemented a variety of community mission projects.

The 1979 report even identified some geographic opportunities, such as noting that there is no other Presbyterian presence between us and the Hudson River. And sure enough, a huge chunk of our growth is families attending who live east/southeast of us.

The interesting thing is that we didn't have an officers' retreat to determine that we should do these things. We've just been doing them. We consciously focused on how welcoming we were. We paid special attention to underrepresented populations of all kinds. And it is working.

Lesson: diagnosis is easy, execution is everything.

One of the underrated characters of the Bible is Nehemiah. Yes, he even has a book of the Bible named after him, but it isn't read very often in our churches. His story is set long after the kingdoms of Israel and Judah had been conquered, and Jerusalem – the capital city of Judah – had been destroyed by the

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am doing
a great work and I
cannot come down."

- Nehemiah 6:3



Babylonians. The Persians (modern-day Iran) conquered the Babylonians (modern-day Iraq) and restored relative freedom to Judah. Perhaps a hundred years later comes the story of Nehemiah – somewhere in the vicinity of the year 450 B.C.E.

In ancient times a city was defined by its walls. Nehemiah, cup-bearer to the king of Persia, learned that the walls of Jerusalem remained broken-down. He asked the king for permission to visit Jerusalem, see the walls in ruins, and sought permission to rebuild them. He inspected the walls, and made a simple proclamation: "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace." (Nehemiah 2:17)

Was he the first person to notice that the walls were in ruins? Of course not. But for years no one had taken the initiative to start the project. Of course, as soon as he did so enemies of Jerusalem surfaced. There were those who had a vested interest in keeping Jerusalem in ruins. Sad to say, we often find ourselves in the company of some people who have a vested interest in keeping us weak or dysfunctional. We have to, as Nehemiah did, ignore those voices. When people tried to distract him (some even with the intent of luring him into a death trap), Nehemiah simply refused to come down from the wall: "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." (Nehemiah 6:3)

How often do we expend too much energy thinking about what we should do in situations where we already know what we need to do? Sure there are times when we truly don't know what to do. But sometimes – perhaps more often than not – we know what to do and we simply haven't done it. In such case, we just need to decide to start fixing what we know is wrong in our lives, our families, our workplaces, our church. You already know what needs to be done. Go, start it, stick with it, and don't come down until it's done.

Peace and blessings,



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From the Choir Room

WINTER BELLS

A handbell choir is being formed to play for Lent and Easter. There will only be 2 months of rehearsals on Saturdays at 3 p.m. starting February 4. All are invited to join. No previous experience necessary, just a rudimentary knowledge of notes and rhythms.





EASTER CHOIR

Anyone who would like to sing in the Chancel Choir for our beautiful Holy Week and Easter services is invited to join us every Sunday Morning at 9:30 a.m. for choir rehearsal in the choir room. Light refreshments are provided. Consider singing in the choir as your Lenten service offering. All are welcome!

YOUTH ENSEMBLE

The Youth Ensemble will sing for worship **Sunday, February 26**. Rehearsals continue every Friday 3:45 – 4:30 PM. *There is no Youth Ensemble on February 17.*





FIRST PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

Jenni Choi and Grace How, Co-Presidents of FPPK Board, report that there are a few spots left for the 2012-2013 school year in the 2 ½ year, 3 year and 4 year old programs. If interested, please contact FPPK at 201-568-3042 to schedule a tour and for more information.



CROSSROADS

Come and check out the CROSSROADS worship on Sunday evenings at 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel. It's casual, lively, and fun, with a great band led by Jane Kelly Williams and the same basic sermon as Sunday morning (with multimedia enhancements). It's a great alternative – give it a try and invite your friends!

Family/children's/Youth Ministries

C.A.M.P.

C.A.M.P., our new Children's Art and Music Program, begins another six-weeks on Sunday afternoons, starting on February 26 at 3 p.m. The C.A.M.P. is for 2nd to 5th graders directed by Jane Kelly Williams with several others providing leadership. It includes the choir rehearsal of Singing Sensations, time for Bible Study, homework, a snack, attending worship at Crossroads at 5:30 p.m. for Time with Children and then at the end of the Service to return and sing to the glory of God.

CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT GIVING

In January, children had the opportunity to learn what it means to give an offering to the work and mission of their church with members of the Stewardship Committee, Paul Platek and Linda Farrell. They also received offering envelopes for 2012. We have noticed that only about 5 or 6 students do give an offering almost every Sunday. Thank you to parents who are guiding their children at a very young age to be good stewards of the resources that we have.

GENERATION CHANGE

The two Youth Classes met with Paul Platek for a review of GENERATION CHANGE which is Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University for youth and encouraged them also to be good stewards of their money, their gifts and talents.



FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY, JR. is a one-hour, single session course for parents and children. The resource kit for the class contains the same principles of the adult course, and is only \$19.99. Eleven parents with children age 4 to 14 have already begun the process. Who else is interested? Speak with Paul Platek or Dorothy VanderWerf.



GODSPELL

The Godspell performance on Broadway was thoroughly enjoyed by 35 children, youth and adults on January 22! Here are some of their comments:

I loved it soo much!!! It was especially fun because we performed a junior Broadway version of it a few years ago.

The stage was soooooo cool and the cast was so full of energy! The show was fantastic!!!! Who would have thought that a musical about the Bible would be so entertaining? The cast truly had the voices of angels, and the intimate setting of a small theater in the round was perfect for telling the story. I loved the fact that they included very timely references. Fabulous!

The first half was so funny that I cried off my mascara. The contemporary material was brilliant. The second half was so poignant that I just kept on crying. The cast performed for us as if there was nothing on earth they would rather do. They are a young class of very professional actors and actresses, everyone blessed with good voices, and amazing talents. It was great. I absolutely loved it!! Thanks to Dorothy for making all the arrangements.

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PARENT/PLAYGROUP MEETS IN FEBRUARY

All parents with their young children are welcome to join others in the Nursery on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. Jenni Choi prepares a story and activity for the children while parents connect with other parents and enjoy this time together on Wednesdays, February 1, 8, 15, and 29. They will not meet on February 22.



2ND SUNDAY PARENTING GROUP SPONSORS VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY

Young children and their Parents are invited to a "MAKE A VALENTINE" party in the East Room on Sunday, February 12, at 12:15 p.m. Snacks and all the supplies for children to express their creativity in making valentines will be provided. Alison Raffaele, coordinator, Glenn Tatem, her husband, and India, their 2 ½ year old daughter, welcome you to join them.



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

This year, on <u>February 5th</u>, our church will join thousands of groups nationwide to raise money for a local charity. Last year, 260,000 Youth came together to raise a total of \$9.5 million worth of money and food donations. This year, our national goal is to have 275,000 Youth gather to collect \$11 million. Our

church, last year, was able to raise \$500 ~ the most we have ever collected!

Everyday, people throw out some of their food; whether a restaurant gave them too big of a portion, or they simply don't want what was offered to them. One in seven homes do not throw out their food because they don't have enough to eat to begin with. This unfortunate ratio leaves over 16 million kids without very much food. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 52 years, this has been the highest number of Americans living in poverty.

Last year, First Presbyterian Church of Englewood hosted homeless families through *Family Promise* for two weeks in July and a week in December. Money collected from the Souper Bowl of Caring was used to buy materials to provide comfort for the families and to give the parents gift certificates to buy their children a present for Christmas. Because it was so successful, we will use the money we collect for materials we need to host the families this year, as well. To help reach the national goal and help provide materials for *Family Promise*, please donate a few dollars to one of the youth group members holding a soup pot that will be standing outside the sanctuary after worship on February 5th.

* Katie Bigler, Project Manager*

SQUARE DANCE

PARENTS, bring your children to the Square Dance on Friday, March 2, at 6:00 p.m. Christian Education Committee provides this event with a chili supper and more. Is it's a fun family event for all. There is a suggested donation of \$2 for the dance and a free-will offering for supper.





CUB SCOUTS COME TO THE CHURCH

Boys from 1st - 5th Grade are cordially invited to consider joining a Cub Scout Pack here at the church. If you are interested, please speak to Rev. Hong or Dorothy VanderWerf or let the Church Office know of your interest.



Center for Discovery Discipleship





FIRST THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

Thursday, February 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the East Room

The First Thursday study group meets on February 2 at 10:00 a.m. in the East Room. Please join us for an interesting and enlightening time as Rev. Hong continues our exploration of the origins of the stories in the book of Genesis.



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SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Sundays, 10:00 a.m. in the East Room (Childcare Provided)

We really encourage you to try the Sunday Morning Bible Study at 10:00 a.m. in the East Room each week. In this study we review the text that forms the basis of the sermon that day, illuminating issues of history, context, and translation that affect the

interpretation of the story into a message for us. You'll understand more of the background that undergirds the sermon in a setting where you get to know some of your fellow worshippers better.

BASICS OF FAITH: THE BIBLE

Sunday, February 5 at 10:00 a.m. in the Meeting Room

We're continuing a monthly series of rotating presentations ideal for persons who are new to the congregation, the Presbyterian church, or Christian faith (though everyone is invited). This month Rev. Hong will lead a presentation on the Bible. What are the origins of our sacred text, and how do we approach interpreting it for our time? Future presentations, each on the first Sunday of the month, will focus on the church, and on Presbyterianism. Please join us and bring your questions!



ONE, NOT EVERYONE

Sunday, February 12 at 12:45 p.m. in the Chapel



Are you moved by the needs of the world yet frustrated by your inability to make an impact for the better? How can you make a difference in a big world with big needs when everything you have to offer seems, by comparison, inadequate? Do you want to make a real difference this year? Attend this session (first of two parts) where we will watch an incredible message by Pastor Andy Stanley that he delivered to his church (North Point Community Church) last year. It will motivate and inspire you to

understand how you - and we - can impact the world. Our elders and deacons watched this message a few months ago and decided it was important to share it with all of you.

THE POWER OF A WHISPER

Sunday, February 26 at 12:45 p.m. in the Chapel

After attending "One, Not Everyone" (or even if you missed it), please come to this session that combines a brief video by Bill Hybels (founding pastor of

THE POWER OF A

Willow Creek Community Church) with an opportunity for group discussion on the question: How can you be attuned to the directions of the Holy Spirit and choose a life led by God's whispers?

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SIN. GRACE. TRUTH.

Tuesdays, February 21 & 28, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. in the East Room

As we enter the season of Lent, let's take time to explore these most fundamental concepts of our faith. What is sin? Is it to be heard as a noun or a verb? Is it an act or a state? How about grace? It's not just compassion or forgiveness – it's so much more. In this two-part session led by Rev. Hong we will explore the truth about sin and grace ... and discover some truths about God and ourselves.

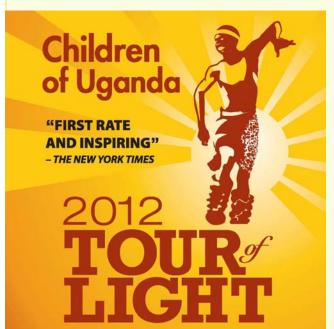


News for the Congregation

CHILDREN OF UGANDA TOUR OF LIGHT 2012

Concert of Dance, Song & Testimony

The First Presbyterian Church of Hackensack, 64 Passaic Street, Friday, February 3, 2012, 7:30 p.m.



The Children of Uganda is an organization working with local non-governmental organizations and community groups to address the needs of Uganda's most vulnerable population – children. Uganda's AIDS epidemic, extreme poverty and decades of civil conflict have left its country with more than 2.4 million orphans, the most of any country in the world. One of the ways that Children of Uganda is raising money is through the talents of Uganda's children who will be touring around the United States in 2012. Combining dance, testimony and music these young people have been delighting audiences and impressing reviewers around the globe. Tickets are available from Rev. Hong or at the door. All proceeds raised from The Tour of Light concert will go to support orphans and vulnerable children through Children of Uganda.

Ticket price: \$20.00.



The season of **LENT** begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. We have traditionally participated in a joint worship service with other area Presbyterian churches at 8:00 p.m. on that day; the location has yet to be determined. Please watch the Sunday bulletin for additional information.

As a part of our observance of Lent we will once again have our weekly Lenten Worship and Soup Lunch series each Wednesday at noon in the Chapel beginning on Wednesday, February 29 through March 28. Each week we will have a brief worship followed by fellowship around a simple meal of hearty soups and bread. Soup makers will be needed...



Stephen Schwartz's unsung epic, Children of Eden, will be playing at Westchester Sandbox Theatre next Sunday, February 5 at 3 p.m. Experience the classic Biblical tales of Adam & Eve and Noah and his ark in a rarely-seen light. Featuring an intense musical score and brilliant tribal dance, this sometimes comedic but heartbreaking tale will move you with its inspiring power. Tickets: \$25 for adults, \$22 for students/seniors. If interested, call 914-630-0804 for tickets. We can carpool. Contact Linda Moats.

FOOD TO FIRST ON FEBRUARY 5 & MARCH 4

Bags of food keep coming in almost every Sunday and we are grateful for your dedication to keep the shelves filled at CFA for those who need help. It also keeps two of our youth, Joshua Kahn and Alyson Kumor, busy bringing the bags to the church office for delivery to the Food Center in Englewood. Our goal this year is 365 bags of groceries.



SINGLES CONNECTION HEADED TO DINNER & A CONCERT! SATURDAY, FEB. 18TH, 8 P.M. AT BERGEN PAC!



We're doing something different - headed to a Saturday concert with easy/free parking!! Those who wish to begin early, we'll have dinner at an inexpensive restaurant in downtown Englewood within walking distance to PAC. Those who just want to attend the concert with us can do that. We will order \$40 mezzanine tickets (PLUS \$3 per ticket service charge) for those who pay at church by February 5th. Join us for: "Tschaikowski",

St. Petersburg State Orchestra with pianist Alexander Pirozhenko on Sat. Feb. 18 at 8 p.m. Enjoy a world class orchestra playing Wagner "Prelude and Liebestod" from the Opera, "Tristan und Isolde", Beethoven "Piano Concerto No. 2" and Mussorgsky, "Pictures at an Exhibition". See Mibs Wagner for tickets on Sunday Morning.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

On March 6, 2011 First Presbyterian Church of Englewood will be offering Financial Peace University for the fourth time. This thirteen week course



teaches you how to beat debt, build wealth, find bargains, invest for the future, give like never before and much more! Each week you will view a DVD with world renowned financial expert Dave Ramsey and then a discussion will be facilitated by Paul Platek our resident certified financial planner.

Don't worry if you cannot attend each class as you will have an opportunity to borrow the DVD and make up classes will be available. The cost is \$99.00 which is the cost of the Financial Peace University kit. This kit consists of CDs for each week's course, Dave Ramsey's latest book, a workbook and more.

The people who have taken the course previously have stated that it is truly life changing. The course is ideal for younger individuals and couples, but people of all ages will get a tremendous amount of useful information. You can contact the office, sign-up at Coffee & Conversation, or go online at daveramsey.com to register. Please tell your friends as this course is offered to everyone, not just church members.

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Other News

INDOOR LABYRINTH OPEN IN FEBRUARY

Come, walk the Labyrinth on Friday, February 17, open from 4 – 7 p.m. and on Sunday, February 19, open from 12 noon to 4 p.m. The Chapel is a beautiful setting for a walk with soft music playing, candlelight, a time for prayer and meditation in a quiet space. Walk with a friend. Walk with your children. Walk alone. Walk the "Labyrinth on the Lawn" behind Elmore Hall if the weather is just right.

CHILI SUPPER & SQUARE DANCE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2012

6:00 p.m. Supper / 7:00 p.m. Dancing Begins in Elmore Hall

Rev. Debra Given, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Leonia, is our *SQUARE DANCE CALLER* for the evening! She has a live band with lots of dances to enjoy! Put on your comfortable shoes and join us in Elmore Hall for a fun time! If you do-si-do, line dance, enjoy live music, or just enjoy watching others dance, then come on-a-round and join the very young to much older folks for a great evening!

Call 201-568-7373, ext. 307 OR email dorothyv@englewoodpres.org to make your reservation. You are invited to the Corn Bread and Chili Supper at 6:00 p.m. (Reservation needed, donation appreciated) It's only \$2 for the Square Dance.

Great refreshments! Child Care provided for the little ones!

Sponsored by the Fellowship Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Leonia and the Christian Education Committee of the First Presbyterian Church in Englewood

MANY WINTER COATS COLLECTED

Jacinth Timol-Francis managed this project for both the Mission and Outreach Committees.

There were two huge boxes overflowing with coats donated by the congregation. Benny Baez informed us that the families in North Bergen who lost their homes in that terrible fire could use clothes and food. Jacinth said that when she delivered them, they were so appreciative and say, "thank you so much for helping us".

Mark Your Calendar: ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER IS ON SATURDAY, MARCH 17 AT 6 P.M.



Plan Ahead: THERE IS ANOTHER MISSION TRIP TO WEST VIRGINIA, JULY 29 - AUGUST 4, 2012!



A SOLID YEAR, BUT WE NEED MORE

I am very pleased to report that total giving for 2011 was \$341,870 which represents a 10% increase over last year's total of \$311,011. I realize that we are still experiencing very difficult economic times with many people losing their jobs and experiencing declines in the value of their homes and/or stock portfolios. I therefore thank everyone for caring enough about the good work of our church to support our efforts. I hope you gave not because you feel you had to but because of the love you feel for Jesus Christ.

On a little more somber note, commitments for 2012 are running slightly behind the commitments we received for 2011. Traditionally we raise more money than is committed as many congregants and friends of the church choose not to commit for the year, but still give generously. However, submitted commitments are \$243,384 from 83 congregants vs. \$248,215 last year from 92 congregants. There is still time to submit your commitment card, if you choose to, and we know that many people don't commit until they have a good understanding of their finances going into the new year. Please keep in mind that if your economic situation changes you will not be held to this commitment (you're also allowed to give more). We are projecting another 10% + increase in giving this year, thus the concern about the lower level of commitments.

On another note, I hope many of you have remembered the church in your wills. We are all enjoying the magnificent sounds of the refurbished pipe organ which some of you may not know would not have been possible without the generous bequest of Luella Schmidt, a long time FPC congregant and music lover.

If you would like to learn more about the techniques regarding leaving a portion of your estate to the church please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Paul A. Platek, Stewardship Chair



WHAT IS PER CAPITA & WHY ARE WE BEING ASKED TO PAY IT?

Those of you who received envelopes to remit your contributions to the church also got an envelope which may have confused you. That is the envelope right in the front called Per Capita. What is this and why are you being asked to pay \$30.00 per person?

Our church is part of a larger governing body called Presbyterian Church (USA) and as a member we share in the benefits afforded by this membership. Some of the things PC (USA) provides are the following:

- The production and distribution of the Book of Order (the book used by the Elders and Minister to govern the church) and the Book of Confessionals
- Expenses related to bringing delegates to a General Assembly, as well as holding the meeting
- Tools to develop and administer ordination exams
- The call system and other work that helps all Presbyterians discern their vocation
- A Presbyterian presence at ecumenical groups and gatherings in the U.S. and worldwide ... And Much More

Some of these items may not mean much to you especially if you are not involved with the governance of the church, but it encompasses the means by which our church functions and we do benefit greatly by being part of this larger body of churches.

Our church needs to pay this per capita amount regardless of whether you pay it or not. Last year we paid \$10,500 and collected \$2,000 from the congregants so \$8,500 was spent by the church. This is money which could have been used for mission projects or general maintenance of our building. I therefore, encourage everyone to pay their per capita amount. If you don't have envelopes you can still send in a check or drop it in with your contribution on Sunday.

Paul A. Platek, Stewardship Chair

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SUPER BOWL PARTY, FEBRUARY 5TH

Immediately after Crossroads at 6:30 p.m. we will enjoy the Super Bowl Football Game in the Chapel on the BIG screen. Bring a snack and/or beverage to share during the game. Ilta Schulzrinne, member of the Youth Group and very enthusiastic about getting together at the church for the game, will be hosting the refreshments. A friend of Duane VanderWerf is the designer of the half-time show. You are all invited!

February 14, 2012 Happy Valentine's Day



WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

been cancelled. informed of whether any events ha<mark>ve</mark> (think of pressing "S" for "Snow") to be During the opening message, just press 7 whether any of our activities are impacted. system and hear a recorded announcement of you are now able to dial in to our phone In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER,

FPC ON THE WEB

Web site, or directly at fpce.podbean.com. at no cost through the iTunes store, through our our sermons are available on our Podcast, accessible In addition to our new Web site, don't forget that

Twitter @fpcenglewood), or check-in Church of Englewood), follow us on Facebook page (just search for First Presbyterian You can also keep up with FPC by joining our

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLEWOOD

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

February 2012

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9:30a Playgroup (N) 7:30p Worship & Music (MR)	2 10a 1st Thursday Bible Study (ER)	7:30p Children of Uganda Concert (Hackensack)	4
5 Communion Sunday Souper Bowl of Caring Offer. 10a Basics of Faith: The Bible (MR) 12:30p Financial Peace University Preview (ER) 6:30p Super Bowl (CH)	6	7 6p Stewardship (MR) 7:30p Christian Education (MR)	8 9:30a Playgroup (N)	9	6:30p Supper and 7p Teacher Bible Study & Meeting (MR)	9-3p Officer Retreat (CH, EH, CFL)
12:15p Parent Grp: "Make a Valentine" Party (ER) 12:45p "One, Not Everyone" (CH) 7p FPU Begins (ER)	7:30p Outreach (MR)	14 Valentine's Day BE MY VALENTINE!	9:30a Playgroup (N) 7p Adult Christian Education (MR)	16	17 NO Youth Ensemble and Afterschool Program 4-7p Labyrinth (CH)	8p Singles Connection Concert at bergenPAC
19 12-4p Labyrinth (CH) 7p FPU (ER)	20 Washington's Birthday Preschool Closed Office Closed	7p Sin. Grace. Truth. (ER)	22 Ash Wednesday	23	24	25
26 Youth Ensemble Sings 12:45p "The Power of a Whisper" (CH) 3p C.A.M.P. Begins 7p FPU (ER)	27 Preschool Resumes	28 7p Sin. Grace. Truth. (ER)	9:30a Playgroup (N) 12p Lenten Worship & Soup Lunch (CH)	11:15 am Ch	9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehe ble Study; 11:00 am Worship Se urch School & Youth Scripture: 12 noon Coffee & Convers Id care available from 9:30 - 12:3	earsal EH-Elmore Hall ER-East Room LIB-Library Study MR-Meeting Room MUR-Music Room

3:45 pm Youth Ensemble; 4:30 pm Afterschool Program

Crossroads Contemporary Worship 5:30 pm

SANC-Sanctuary