

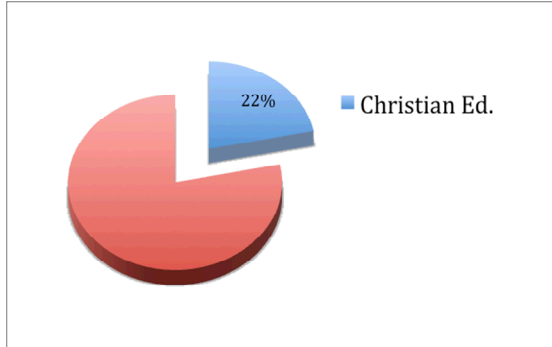
STEWARDSHIP TIMES

Sunday, October 18, 2009

Vol. III

“We Do!”

FOCUS ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



“We do!” Loud and unwavering, we give our response in the sacrament of baptism.

We do ... what? Vow to tell the good news of the Gospel and teach all that Christ commands.

FPC takes that obligation seriously, investing over 20% of its resources to Christian Education (CE). The church provides a range of quality education opportunities for all age groups.

Donna Cashman, our part-time Director of CE, and Judy Grantham’s CE Committee have quite a story to tell. They coordinate Sunday school courses and teacher assignments, Lenten studies and small groups, 3rd Grade Communion Class, 9th Grade Confirmation Class, Advent Festival, Rally Day, and Vacation Bible School, to name a few of their accomplishments. Hundreds of children and adults participate.

Never satisfied with the status quo, Donna points to numerous ways to do even better, and has an aggressive plan for 2009/2010. The plan includes new school lesson plans, evaluation of a Special Needs Ministry, expanded church school mission projects and adult education offerings, as well as a focus on faith development through the family. Examples of “reach goals” not currently feasible are more personnel resources (full time Director role, or two part time Directors), more audio/visual equipment to aid in lesson delivery, integrated church-Sunday School database, and a new computer.

The youth program is perhaps the most obvious example of how FPC is living up to its goal of nurturing people. Pastor Jeremy Sanderson, who commits half of his time to youth ministry, can appreciate the gains and the efforts required to achieve them.

Jeremy says:

It has been a great year. Building on the success of previous years, we were able to welcome seminary intern Eryn Frederick to fill out our youth staff (made possible by a special \$5,000 donation). We continued a two-tier Sunday night youth program, with a number of special events such as lock-ins, mission outings, and holiday parties. We also had the largest summer mission trip yet, bringing 36 students and 7 adults to rural Kentucky for a week of home repair.

While in some ways the program has been successful, I continue to feel stretched between my youth ministry role and the other significant pastoral roles I play. I am deeply aware of students who slip through the cracks, program options that are beyond my time and energy level, and other aspects of a healthy youth ministry program that simply can’t happen on a 50%-time basis. There will soon come a time when, to realistically address the youth ministry needs of this congregation, a full-time youth director is needed, in addition to an associate pastor.

The great ends of the church include the nurture of the children of God, and preservation of the truth. By FPC’s educational programs we work toward those ends, for all generations. Please commit your time, talent, and treasure to our Christian Education and youth ministries.

“The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life.”

~ Book of Order



Deacon Meredith Hoobler (center)
and her sisters Katelyn and Sarah.

Friends Bring a Family

My name is Meredith Hoobler and I'm a junior at Haddonfield Memorial High School. My family and I have lived in Haddonfield for 5 years. Shortly after moving here from Maryland, my parents began the search for a church home. At the same time a few of my friends encouraged me to come with them to First Presbyterian Church. Before I knew it I had started rehearsing with the Thomas Sherrerd choir and began to attend weekly youth group meetings, before my parents even stepped foot in the sanctuary! While I was just a student at HMS and a resident of the town, I was welcomed with open arms and allowed to participate wherever I felt comfortable, even though I was not a member.

In my enthusiasm at finding such a fun place to be with my friends while growing in my faith, I encouraged my family to attend. Well, they came, and an hour after we left our first church service, Mr. Routon stopped by our home to extend a gracious greeting and let us know how happy he was that we came to visit. The next Sunday found my sister Sarah and I signed up for Sunday School and both of us in choir with Mr. Carter and Mrs. Wainwright welcoming us wholeheartedly.

In the blink of an eye my parents were becoming members. Pastor Bill and Pastor Jeremy were so easy to grow to love and look up to. They both have impacted my life in more ways than I can

express! In fact, my sister Sarah tells anyone that Bill is her best friend.

The enthusiasm for this place grew within all of us, the more we came, the more we got involved and the more people we met. The warmth and fellowship of this church and its family of faith enveloped us all. My parents Jim and Sharon, got involved quickly with cooking for New Visions, serving soup, attending small group Bible studies, working on mission trips and youth group events, driving people to church and becoming an Elder and Deacon, respectively. My older sister Katelyn even got involved teaching Sunday School.

And of course we gave: clothes to the homeless, food to New Visions, meals for IHOC, toys and stockings for needy kids near and far, items to auction for the mission trip fundraisers, lunches to Cathedral Kitchen and of course, those envelopes every Sunday for giving to help this church support itself, the greater community and those who have so much less. Before I knew it, I was even more active, Sunday School Superintendent, Bell Choir, Vacation Bible School Shepherd, Mission Trips and now a Deacon myself.

I have attended the last three youth mission trips and been greatly impacted by my experiences. It has taught me so much about myself, the world, and my faith journey. I have watched people who are perceived to have nothing, give so much to glorify God. In so many ways, the people I have the good fortune to meet, have given me so much more than I have brought to them.

I'm so grateful and appreciative that our church is a warm, welcoming and wonderful place where it's doors are always open for everyone, as Pastor Bill and Pastor Jeremy say every first Sunday of the month, "all are welcome at our table". With your help, I'm so hopeful that our church will always be able to provide and fund programs for kids like me who come in from outside for a visit and end up staying, until it becomes home. I know God had a hand in my arrival here at FPC but I guess I should thank my friends for getting me here too!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." ~ Matthew 28:19