

The South Church News

A Publication of The South Church, Mount Prospect, IL

February 2012

Dates to Remember

February is African-American History Month!

Tuesday, Feb. 14 –
Valentine's Day



Monday, Feb. 20 –
President's Day

Wednesday, Feb. 22 –
Ash Wednesday, 7:30
Taize service

Sunday, Feb. 26 – 1st
Sunday of Lent

Every Wednesday at 10
am, Bible study in the
sanctuary

2nd & 4th Sunday of each
month, World Religions
class, 9:00 am, Library

*To love another person is to
see the face of God.*

From Les Miserables

Message from the Pastor.....

A Book Review

Of the making of books there is no end. And I have acquired many. I have shelves of books devoted to helping us understand and make use of that ancient and remarkable book, the bible. So, it's not often that I feel that I must have a newly-published book on that subject. But sometimes you just need to buy another book.

The *Jewish Annotated New Testament* is one of those books. It is the work of many different Jewish scholars, who bring a badly-needed Jewish perspective to what, for some of us, is the most important book we know. I am happy to share that this book exceeds my expectations. It will take its place on my shelf of most frequently referenced volumes.

Why is the Jewish perspective so badly needed? Let me explain this way: I attended a seminary that believed it had a duty to train Christian pastors to be aware of the many ways Christians have been less than sensitive to our Jewish brothers and sisters. Almost since they were written, Bible texts have been used and abused to justify anti-Jewish prejudice. Some abuses are obvious, such as the misconception that the Jews killed Jesus. Only the Roman government had the authority to crucify a person. It was the Romans who murdered Jesus. But readings John's account of Jesus' death could lead to a difference conclusion.

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This is not to say that Jesus didn't create enemies among his own Jewish people. He did. But he was Jewish, through and through. His first followers were all Jewish. The first folks to call themselves Christians were Jewish as well. And yet the entire Jewish people have been demonized throughout history because Christians have been taught that "Jews killed Jesus." By demonized I mean forced to live in ghettos, expelled *en masse* from countries such as Spain, banned from entering other countries, and frequently tortured and killed. For centuries.

In seminary we were taught a simple but meaningful practice. Whenever reading the scriptures in public, and especially when reading from John's gospel, which uses the phrase "the Jews" most often, always substitute for that phrase "the Jewish religious authorities." This avoids casting a negative light on the entire Jewish population and yet honors the reality that Jesus and some Jewish religious leaders were at odds with each other.

All I can say is that after a short couple of hours with the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* I am aware of so many other ways that I should be more sensitive about misrepresenting the Judaism of Jesus' world. For instance, Jesus didn't invent parables, as many of us have been taught. Rather, this form of teaching has its roots in older storytelling traditions, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

This is truly the first book of its kind. I have other books that offer information about Jewish life and religious practice, but no book that is a commentary on the entire New Testament. The translation is the New Revised Standard, also the one we used in seminary and the one I am most familiar with. The text reads like any Bible with notes. A quick glance at the bottom of each page takes you to comments and interpretations from a Jewish perspective. Many sidebar essays appear throughout the text, bringing fresh insights to matters of Jewish faith and culture. At the end of the book is a large collection of essays on various subjects, beginning with the excellent "Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made about Early Judaism."

True lovers of the Bible appreciate new insights into the world's best seller. I expect this volume to inform my teaching and preaching for many years to come. I highly recommend the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* for any serious student of the Bible.

Serving with you,
Rick Kesler

Every February 14, we celebrate the loved ones in our lives with cards, flowers and chocolate. But Valentine's Day has another meaning that's been lost.

First declared a holiday by King Henry VIII of England in 1537, it commemorates the beheading of St. Valentine on February 14, 270 A.D. His crime? Performing wedding ceremonies after Roman Emperor Claudius II had outlawed marriage.

Valentine was martyred for faithfully doing the work God had given him. Although it's good to celebrate love and marriage, let's also remember the courage of a man who gave his life following his convictions.

Anniversaries

John & Lynn Kuemmel-Brown February 1
Jack & Patsy Piper February 5
Karen Glogowski February 10

Birthdays

Mike Tollifson February 1
Rufolf Drost February 2
Jean Johnson February 7
Rod Magnuson February 9
Lynn Kuemmel-Brown February 10
Trina Bryant February 13
Murial Novy February 13
Tom Degan February 14
Ricki Sajbel February 19
Don Berg February 23
Lora O'Brien February 24
Emily Sajbel February 24
Dennis Kocienda February 26
Kelly Ryan February 26
Marjorie Bennett February 27
Zanobia Irwin February 28
Amanda O'Sullivan February 28

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Figures represent January through December 2011

INCOME

YTD Income	\$184,933.40*
YTD Budget	\$177,184.00
YTD Income Over Budget	+ \$7,749.40

*Represents 101.04% of Anticipated Income For 2011.

EXPENSES

YTD Expenses	\$175,512.88
YTD Income Over Expenses	+ \$9,420.52

-Pat Piper
Comptroller

FROM THE PASTORAL RELATIONS BOARD

The South Church is blessed to have so many dedicated members and wonderful friends who donate time, energy and money to support the many efforts and programs of our small church. Our Pastor, and the various boards and committees, try to satisfy the spiritual needs of our congregation. We'd like to hear your thoughts about any aspect of The South Church. Your input is very important.

Pastor Rick is experimenting with different sermon styles and presentations. We would like to know what resonates with you. Please look for the "Sermon Feedback" forms in the narthex of the church and fill out the quick questionnaire. Just drop the form in the "Sermon Feedback" box in the narthex, and the PRC will consolidate the feedback.

A new suggestion box now resides outside the church office. It is meant for any comments pertaining to the church. A member of PRC will follow up with you on your suggestion. We will route the comment to the appropriate board or the pastor. These tools are truly important to further communication, and to enhance and increase meaningful experiences within our church community.



Annual Reports :

Trustees: by Chairperson Paul Zimmerman

2011 brought organizational changes to the Board of Trustees. We tried to establish a group that could respond to issues more efficiently and reduce the time required in meetings. This was with a group of three (Paul Zimmerman, Don Berg and Lisa Zwilling) that met monthly and delegated tasks as needed. As we moved through the year, we found we needed to better respond to routine maintenance issues. To do this, we established a maintenance list rotating between the board members each week. Moving into 2012, the board will need to work toward using the schedule effectively.

The Trustee expenses in 2011 were \$66,771 vs. a planned budget of \$53,659. Much of this was due to extra maintenance expenses that were not planned at the beginning of the year. The largest expense was roof replacement on the education wing. Additional expenses were used to replace sod due to grub damage, replacement of a floor in the parsonage, installing proper sink drains in the kitchen and boiler maintenance. Several updates were made to pass fire codes, and much of the extra expenses were paid for by a donation to the church.

As part of the roof work, we were able to have a roofing contractor inspect the roof and gutter areas on the main building. Damage was found and repaired on both sides of the building, fixing a water leakage problem that was several years old. The damaged wall on the east side of the building is now fixed and fixing the wall in Fellowship Hall is planned for this year.

Beginning in April, the council agreed to hire a cleaning service twice a month to reduce the load on our volunteers. The cleaning is done by two providers in alternating months.

As with most boards, the Trustees function through the help of volunteers. Many people have contributed time and effort to complete maintenance, participate in clean-ups and cleaning. Many thanks to all those who contribute!

Several maintenance projects are anticipated this year: the largest is improvement of the parking lots. The board will evaluate whether it should be filled and resealed or fully replaced. Other projects include leveling of the sidewalks and completing painting projects. We are also planning to hire landscaping services once a month.

Pastoral Relations: by Jessica Schwake

The PRC has been busy in 2011 making plans for 2012. Here are some of our goals:

- 1) We are looking into new Continuing Education opportunities for Rick in areas of sermons, Pastoral Care, personal spiritual growth and continuing his Anamcara studies.
- 2) As part of our annual compensation review, we had historically used a model that included 'years of experience' as a criterion for a pay increase. We have added 'Church and Pastoral Priorities' in place of experience, utilizing the top three priorities from our most current church survey: sermons, pastoral care and new members.
- 3) As Rick experiments with new sermon styles, he will be seeking your feedback. We will provide "Sermon Feedback" forms in the narthex every Sunday and welcome your input.
- 4) PRC will provide a Suggestion Box outside the office to enable you to share your ideas for the overall church life with us. PRC members will review the suggestions, contact you to discuss and route them to the appropriate board or Pastor Rick.
- 5) Jill Kaeding has replaced Melissa Ciske on the committee for 2012. Returning members are Murial Novy, John Brown and Jessica Schwake. Please contact the PRC with any questions.

Christian Education: by Chairperson Julia Degan

Christian Education had a fine year for 2011. We help a first communion for 4 of our youngest members in the spring. We had a very successful and fun vacation bible school over the summer. We just wrapped our production for the annual Christmas play. The kids have fun and learned about God and how to be citizens of the good news. We have a wonderful curriculum that we use for Sunday School. It is from the Center for Progressive Christianity. It provides all of our wonderful teachers with some great ideas and ways to tie scripture into modern day applications that the kids can relate to. The teachers do crafts and play games with the kids as tools for learning more about God and the world we live in. Speaking of teachers, where would we be without our great crew of teachers? We have such great support from the parents too. We truly have a program we can be proud of. Thanks to everyone, including God, who makes it possible!

Clerk: by Jessica Schwake

There were 12 new members in 2011: Candace Klein, Joan Smith, Seeta Hammer, Eric Hammer, Rebecca Williams, Thomas Cheung, Tammy Morgan, Barbara Miller, Jon Ciske, Joseph Ciske, Madeline White and Charles White. There was one loss by resignation (Molly Rupp) and one loss by death (John Welles). There were 4 baptisms/dedications, 2 funerals and 14 weddings. Membership as of December 31, 2010: 174. Membership as of December 31, 2011: 182.

Annual Meeting Highlights: by Jessica Schwake

The 2012 budget was presented by Pastor Rick Kesler. Highlights of 2011 are that the number of givers of record and visitor donations increased. Highlights of the 2012 budget are: An increase in the salaries of the Pastor and Music Director increased 1.5%; money has been budgeted for yard work and snow removal and interior cleaning.

Officers for the 2012 year are: Moderator - Dave Surico, Treasurer - Melissa Ciske, Comptroller - Pat Piper, Clerk - Jessica Schwake.

Board members were approved:

Deacons: Laura Lukas, Chair, Tom Suhar, Fidel Landa, Tammy Morgan, Carolyn Caruth, Virginia Moore, Murial Novy, Vivian Bornhoeft. Toni Bombicino, Sue Ketelson & Dennis Kocienda volunteer to serve as Communion Ministers in 2012.

Trustees: Bill Beattie, Mark Ciske, Frank Pantell, Pat Bryant, Eric Hammer, Bob Hess.

Christian Education: Julia Degan, Chair, Cindy Zimmerman, Sandy Kolar.

Christian Service: Harlie Des Roches, Chair, Eric Hammer, Joan Smith, Seeta Hammer.

Finance Committee: Sheri Pantell, John Brown, Pat Piper, Melissa Ciske, Rick Kesler

Pastoral Relations: Jessica Schwake, Murial Novy, John Brown, Jill Kaeding.

New Year's Eve Eve Jam Session at TSC;
Another one planned...

By Tom Suhar

Laura Lukas and Tom Suhar hosted a party on Dec. 30 in the lower level of the Christian Education building. All of Laura and Tom's musical friends, and everybody at church, were invited. Around 20 musicians showed up, including guitar players, drummers, singers, blues harmonica, tambourine, mandolin, and even a washboard player. It got pretty loud, as electric guitars do, and too many people played at once, but something very special was happening and there was no easy way to stop it. The way Tom looked at it was that everybody involved needed to do that, and a truly good time was had by all.

One thing worth noting is that the lower level of the school building is a very fun place to have a party with live music. Laura and Tom have cleaned up and decorated the youth room and empty classroom adjacent to it, which have been unused for a couple of years. There's a lot of open space for the musicians, and also for everybody else who came to the party in the furnished "youthful" room part. The food theme was "crock luck" and yummy hot food was set up in one end of the large classroom across the hall. Everybody also brought the last of their Christmas cookies so there were tons of sweets there too. Like any good party there were always people hanging around the food, and that room provided some refuge from the electric guitar circle across the hall.

So if you're thinking that you're sorry that you didn't go, and that you'd like to be a part of an event like this, we're planning another one on April 21. A certain member of the church is having a significant round numbered birthday around that date. The plan is for another gang of musicians to once again gather to help her celebrate with a big "Laurapalooza" at the church. Consider yourself invited and save the date!

THANK YOU!! FROM FRAN WILCOX

Dear South Church, Thank you SO much for your generous Christmas gift. I'm sure it will go to good use - dinner with the family and a deposit in the bank for later activity.
Love, Fran

Yomarcos Bingo night

Since we've all probably gained a pound or two during the holidays, there will be NO POT LUCK DINNER at the Yomarcos Bingo Night on Friday, February 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the church library. We will have a SNACKIE APPETIZING APPETIZER MEETING so please bring your FAVORITE APPETIZER to share. All are welcome! Hope to see you there!



TAIZE ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, THERE WILL BE A TAIZE SERVICE AT CHURCH FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, BEGINNING AT 7:30 PM. THE SERVICE WILL CONSIST OF A SERIES OF MEDITATIVE SONGS, THE IMPOSITION OF ASHES, AND PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND CONFESSION. TAIZE IS A STYLE OF MUSIC THAT STRESSES SIMPLE PHRASES THAT ARE REPEATED, CREATING A FORM OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER. THE SERVICE WILL LAST ABOUT ONE HOUR.

Also known as Black History month, African-American History Month has been celebrated in the U.S. and Canada since contributions that African-to pay tribute to the have overcome adversity and Americans and the Civil War" descent to destroy slavery and United States. The theme, of African American Life and reflect on the value of their contribution to the nation. There will be a variety of events throughout the month in Chicago; check local newspapers for times and locations.



1976. It is a month to observe the Americans have made to our society and generations of African-Americans that prejudice. This year's theme "African honors the efforts of people of African inaugurate universal freedom in the chosen by the Association for the Study History urges all Americans to study and

“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

-Albert Einstein

The South Church News is published monthly for the members, families, and friends of The South Church of Mount Prospect, Illinois. Articles for publication should be submitted by the 15th of each month, either by email or on a diskette to: Ricki Sajbel at sajbel@sbcglobal.net.

Ministers: Rev. Rick Kesler and the People of The South Church
Director of Music: Fran Wilcox
Editor: Ricki Sajbel
Production Coordinator: Murial Novy

The South Church
501 S. Emerson Street
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
Phone: 847-253-0501
Email: rkesler@thesouthchurch.com;
officemanager@thesouthchurch.com
Website: www.thesouthchurch.com
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:30 am
Office Hours: 9 am– noon Monday through Thursday

Refocus for Lent

Give up complaining — focus on gratitude.
Give up harsh judgments — think kind thoughts.
Give up worry — trust God to provide.
Give up discouragement — be full of hope.
Give up bitterness — turn to forgiveness.
Give up hatred — return good for evil.
Give up anger — be more patient.
Give up pettiness — become mature.
Give up jealousy — pray for trust.
Give up gossiping — control your tongue.
Give up sin — turn to virtue.
Give up giving up — persevere.

—Author unknown

The South Church
501 S. Emerson Street
Mount Prospect, IL 60056

Address correction requested

FIRST-CLASS MAIL