

Philadelphia Presbyterian Church
351 Morrow Road, Forest Park, Georgia

THE CROSSROADS



"Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16

FEBRUARY 2013

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and His Four Degrees of Love

A light in the community that brings all people to God through Christ centered worship and ministry and nurtures their faith in order to extend His kingdom.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

THANK YOUS	2
PW MESSAGE CORNER . . .	3
THE CRAFT GROUP	3
SOUPER BOWL	3
BIRTHDAYS	4
ANNIVERSARIES	4
PRAYER REQUESTS	5

I was discussing with some folk about my experience at Fuller Theological Seminary located in Pasadena California this past week. I also was at a meeting of graduates from Reformed Theological Seminary which has campuses all over including one here in Atlanta. I described my experience as the most transforming of my spiritual life. Especially one course with Eugene Peterson on the minister and his spiritual life. He required readings from many books especially "the mystics" who wrote back in the 1100's and forward. I was my delight to read the "Four Loves" by Clairvaux who was born in 1090. It had such a jarring effect on me when I got to the end I thought I would share it's essence with you and see if you agree. We begin with Scripture.

"since we are carnal and are born of the lust of the flesh, it must be that our desire and our love shall have its beginning in the flesh. But rightly guided by the grace of God through these degrees, it will have its consummation in the spirit: for that was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual (1 Cor. 15.46). Here are the four loves the author talks about.

1. At first, man loves himself for his own sake. That is the flesh, which can appreciate nothing beyond itself.
2. Next, he perceives that he cannot exist by himself, and so begins by faith to seek after God, and to love Him as something necessary to his own welfare. When he has learned to worship God and to seek Him aright, meditating on God, reading God's Word, praying and obeying His commandments, he comes gradually to know what God is, and finds Him altogether lovely.
3. So, having tasted and seen how gracious the Lord is (Ps. 34.8), he advances to the third degree, when he loves God, not merely as his benefactor but as God.
4. The fourth degree and perfect condition wherein man loves himself solely for God's sake. Let any who have attained so far bear record; I confess it seems beyond my powers...For then in wondrous wise he will forget himself and as if delivered from self, he will grow wholly God's. Joined unto the Lord, he will then be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6.17)."

The Pearl of On Loving God

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux has much to say on the souls approach to love for God, and for the most part is the foundation of the book. For me, the real gem is found in Saint Bernard of Clairvaux's short but profound exposition of Psalms 19:7...

"Wherefore I take this saying, "The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul" (Ps. 19.7) to be of charity; because charity alone is able to turn the soul away from love of self and of the world to pure love of God. Neither fear nor self-interest can convert the soul. They may change the appearance, perhaps even the conduct, but never the object of supreme desire. Sometimes a slave may do God's work; but because he does not toil voluntarily, he remains in bondage. So a mercenary may serve God, but because he puts a price on his service, he is enchained by his own greediness. For where there is self-interest there is isolation; and such isolation is like the dark corner of a room where dust and rust befall. Fear is the motive which constrains the slave; greed binds the selfish man, by which he is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed (James 1.14). But neither fear nor self-interest is undefiled, nor can they convert the soul. Only charity can convert the soul, freeing it from unworthy motives."

So there you have it, the pearl of On Loving God, charity, love without self-interest, and certainly worth further discussion...What makes charity a pearl? Something so simply stated as the word "charity" yet which carries such a profound and life altering value when experienced can be easily compared to a pearl, mystic pearls.

"Only charity can convert the soul, freeing it from unworthy motives" I was delighted in my early days as a Christian to love God where upon He was my master and I was His friend. But when I read Clairvaux when he said we must love ourselves for God's sake I was taken aback. Then the pearl became obvious. As we surrender to God it must not be based on fear but love. That love means we surrender to God with no self-interest. And that when we give all we have to God He gives back to us a healthy love for God and all things including ourselves. It is the love of God that transforms us after we have given up fear, self-interest or put a price, like a mercenary, is put on our service to God. God gives back more that what we gave up. A mystery, I know, but true.

Your Pastor, Spencer.

OUR MISSION: To exhibit the kingdom of God to our community by being a witness to everyone who is within our reach that Jesus Christ is LORD. To proclaim the gospel by telling the good news of Jesus Christ while equipping all who will to be evangelist so the church will grow. To provide for the worship of God through traditional Sunday morning worship and offer alternative times and styles of worship to the community. To promote the ministry of compassion by providing opportunities for ministry and encouraging others to seek God's call for compassionate service. To preserve the truth of God's word by defending the faith against any deviation from the bible as objective truth. To educate the members of the body of Christ so they are equipped to live as becomes the followers of Jesus. To maintain the spirit of unity through the fellowship of the children of God. To expand the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

THANK YOU

Thank-you to all who made donations to the Troops and to the Duvall Home this past year. We sent 24 lb of food & non-food coupons to the troops in Germany, we sent 40 lb of Campbell Soup labels, canceled postage stamps, and greeting card fronts to the Duvall Home, which is a home for special needs children and adults. We will continue to collect these items in 2013.

Barbara Barlow, World Wide Missions

THANK YOU

Dear Philadelphia Church family,

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of you who were so attentive to our Mother, Grandmother, and Great-Grandmother, Besse Cooper, over the years. She enjoyed cards and prayers from you on numerous occasions. Your expressions of sympathy in December meant so much to all of us when she peacefully passed away. Thank you for your inclusion of her as an extended church family member. May God bless you always.

Love in Christ,

Angie Tharp, the Hal Banke family, and the Scott Wray family



THANK YOU

Dear Philadelphia Family,

I cannot tell you all how very much Spencer and I appreciate all of your prayers, cards and love during my heart work last month. I can tell you that I DID feel the prayers going up and I believe that God orchestrated my treatment every step of the way. A friend told me last week that she thinks I am still in denial about my heart condition...and she is probably correct. However I do believe the outcome would have been different if not for all of your prayers and good thoughts.

I have let God know that He has my attention and needs to let me know what I am to do, since it is evident that He is not finished with me!

God bless all of you and keep you in the palm of His hand.

Love,

Sherri



**ANNUAL SECRET PALS
REVEAL LUNCHEON**

Secret Pals at Philadelphia are ladies who provide anonymous encouragement and prayer support to our sisters in Christ. We meet annually, the Sunday nearest Valentine’s Day, to reveal our identity and to draw names for the new year.

The Secret Pal party for 201 will be held Sunday, February the 10th at 12:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. A covered-dish luncheon, participants are asked to bring your favorite (or most requested) dish. Those who have been Secret Pals this past year are also asked to bring an inexpensive (\$15.00 or under) gift for their 2012 Pal. Names for 2013 will be drawn at the party.

If you would like to be a Secret Pal to a lady at Philadelphia and support her throughout the year with greeting cards and prayer support, please plan to attend the luncheon. If you cannot attend, but would like to participate, please give your name to Dot Pearce or Carole Masdon, this years’ hostesses.

FUN RUN

Cotton Indian Elementary is sponsoring the Lucky Laces 5K and Little Leprechaun Fun Run on March 2nd at Panola Mountain State Park. Registration is \$25 for the 5K and \$15 for the Fun Run. All proceeds benefit CIE’s technology program. If you are interested in participating, please contact

Diane Kitchen at diane.kitchen@turner.com and she will get you a registration form. Thanks!



PW Message Corner . . .



- February 3—12:15pm—PWCT
- February 9—10:30am—Mary & Martha Circle @ Debbie Durden’s home
- February 16—10:30am—Circle One
- February 19—10:30am—Busy Bees Circle



Our annual “Souper Bowl” Sunday is February 3 We are collecting soups, other canned goods and non-perishables for a local food pantry. There will be a box in the narthex where you can place the donated items.

The Craft Group Schedule

February 12—11:30am—Bay Breeze, Hampton
Carpool from church at 10:30am

February 26—11:30am—City Cafe, Mt Zion Blvd
Carpool from church at 10:45am



WE CELEBRATE!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ...

- 10/ Jeff Randolph
- 17/ Lauren Zoeckler
- 17/ Kaylynn LaFoy
- 18/ Hal Banke
- 21/ Barbara Barlow

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO ...

- 10/ Becky & Bob Huie
- 14/ Juanita & Timothy DeBey
- 25/ Sherri & Spencer Frye

*CATCH US ON
THE WEB AT
WWW.PPC-USA.ORG*

<u>THIS MONTH'S VOLUNTEERS</u>	
<u>Nursery Workers</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
03/ Diane Kitchen	Greg Downing
10/ Guest	David Hatch
17/ Mona Steele	Philippe Karka
24/ Dot Pearce	Pat Randolph

Core Values of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church
Radical Hospitality (Romans 12:9-21)
Passionate Worship (John 4:21-24)
Intentional Faith Development (I Corinthians 9:19-24)
Risk-Taking Mission and Service (Matthew 25:14-30)
Extravagant Generosity (II Corinthians 9:6-15)

PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
351 MORROW ROAD
FOREST PARK GA 30297



TO BE REMEMBERED IN PRAYER AND WITH CARDS (new info in bold)

Please notify us concerning updates. Inquiring minds – and prayerful hearts – want to know!

Christian Sympathy is extended to Joan and Tom Murphy in the homegoing of Joan's dad, PPC member, Demester Dunaway on January 14.

Christian Sympathy is extended to Frances Youngblood and family in the passing of her niece, Elizabeth Wood on January 17.

01/22 Dwayne Ballew (Joyce Smith's son) - diagnosed with Crohn's disease

01/15 Demetrius Bolston (Pam Langley's friend) – severely underweight, serious infection

01/22 Kenneth Brown (Joyce Smith's brother-in-law—recovering from surgery for aneurysm in groin

01/08 Pat DeGenere (Jackie Hill's sister) – under hospice care

12/3 Betty Foster – recovering from knee replacement surgery

12/30 Sherri Frye – recovering from bypass surgery

1/03 Jerry Johnson (Nancy Phillips' brother) – ongoing chemo for liver cancer

1/02 Nancy Kemper – treated for high potassium

11/28 Charlie NeSmith – recovering from aorta aneurysm surgery

01/06 Joe Weems (Dot Linderman's son) – beginning radiation treatment for prostate cancer

01/17 Bob Wood and family (Frances Youngblood's brother) – daughter, Elizabeth Wood passed away from ovarian cancer on 1/17, lost their son in August and Bob has serious health issues

OUR HOMEBOUND:

Mary Binkney

Doris Ellis

JoAnn Tatzel

Tye Bryant

Marie Foster

Eddie Upchurch

Joan Cushing

Bert Tatzel

Dot Upchurch

Please refer to the Church Directory for contact information.

To make a prayer request, you may call the church office at 404-366-1851, send an email to se-cyppc@bellsouth.net or click on the prayer request button on our website at www.ppc-usa.org.