



# THE FAMILY

## Evangelical Presbyterian Church

### March 2011

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- 3 Mary Jones
- 6 Kay Sanders
- 8 Timothy Spencer
- 11 Amalia Strnad
- 17 Jackie Mills
- 25 Addalene Leith

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**Kitchen Clean-up for March**  
Nancy Strnad and Kim Holland

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### **Fellowship Lunch Hosts and Hostesses March 13, 2011**

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- Jeff Mills
- \*\*Jackie Mills
- \*Kaye Page
- \*Jeanne Damoff
- \*Sarah Joe Strong
- \*Kim Holland
- Scott Holland

\* Please bring one bag of ice. \*\* Please bring sliced lemons for tea. Each hostess should bring a portion of bread to share. If we have a special function in place of fellowship lunch, the team will be asked to serve in some capacity. Thank you for your help. God Bless. Please call me if you cannot be there. Kim

<b>Financial Update</b>		<b>YTD</b>
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<b>January 2011</b>		
<b>Giving Income</b>	<b>27,412</b>	<b>27,412</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>24,960</b>	<b>24,960</b>
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<b>NET</b>	<b>2,453</b>	<b>2,453</b>





### *From the Music Director*

"I'm Gonna Sing" will be presented by Joyful Sounds and More on Wednesday, May 4, at 5:45 p.m. Following the presentation, there will be a church-wide picnic for all who attend. (Some of the food will be catered, while we will be asking you to help with cookies and brownies.) Awards and recognitions will be given as we close out the choir year. Hopefully we will get to visit with, and get to know the parents of the children who come from Busy Bee Day Care, as we all fellowship together.

"I'm Gonna Sing" is a praise and worship musical. We are presenting to the children that:

1. God, the Father, created us;
2. God, the Son Jesus, came to provide us eternal life through His sacrifice; and
3. God, the Holy Spirit, came to guide us each day.

These principles will be given in song, scripture, and dialogue. The setting of the musical is at a choir camp, a camp quite different from any the children have ever attended. It is fun and exciting to see how they learn to sing for joy, sing in praise and worship of the Lord; and give back to the Lord this wonderful gift of song He has given them.

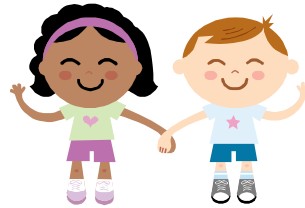
Please join us on May 4, at 5:45, for this presentation. Join us in prayer as we bring the songs, dialogue, and scripture to life. May the gospel of Christ shine through to all who hear and participate in this musical.

In His Service,  
Sarah Joe



Young at Heart will meet Tuesday, March 22, 10:30, in the Choir Room. Following Pastor Craig's Bible Study, lunch will be ordered in from Pic-N-Pay Deli.

A trip is being planned this month for a visit to Mrs. Lee's Gardens near Gladewater. This day trip will include lunch in Gladewater and then seeing the numerous acres of beautiful daffodils. Watch the bulletin, e-mails and phone calls for the day and time.



### *Children's Ministry*

Happy spring, everyone! Things in the children's ministry have been really hopping lately, and I'm happy to share the news that we are in the process of starting a van ministry which is focused on going out into the neighborhoods surrounding EPC and bringing children and adults in for church services. This involves lots of planning and details, so I am requesting prayer from all of you for the Lord to be at the forefront of our efforts, and that his name would be glorified in all that we do. Our goal is to reach the lost for Christ, get to know our neighbors, and be a light in our community. Van drivers are needed! If you'd like to join a two-person van team (teams will work on rotation) for Sunday morning services, please contact me at 903-687-2178. We plan to go out into the community soon for door-to-door evangelism and to hand out van ministry info packages very soon, so if this is something you'd

like to participate in, please let me know.  
Thanks!  
Angie



### From The Youth Ministry

Church Family,  
Discount Card sales have begun! Do not forget to pick yours up and, remember, there is no limit as to how many you can purchase. They make great gifts!  
These cards will help fund two camps that our youth will be attending this year. The first, for Senior High, is called "D3." The "D" stands for *Discipleship* and the "3" stands for the three tracks that students can take whether worldview, leadership, or missions. Last year they took the worldview track and this year we will be taking the leadership track. This weeklong camp is at the end of June and is in Louisville, KY on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. They will hear a number of speakers, the most notable of which is Dr. Albert Mohler (*Culture Shift, Atheism Remix*). They will also experience an exciting time of games with one hundred other teens from across the country.  
The second, for Junior High, is called "The Great Escape" and is held in Florence, MS. This weeklong camp for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders takes place in July, when it's good and hot! The past two years Craig and Jamie have taken our students but this year, assuming I don't find another bone to break, I will be hanging out with our students.  
Pray for our students and for these camps.  
Christ's and yours,  
Ben



In his highly respected book *The Rise of Christianity*, sociologist Rodney Stark drew the following conclusion on how the Church grew against the tide of cultural resistance: "Christianity **did not** grow because of miracle working in the marketplaces (although there may have been much of that going on), or because Constantine said it should, or even because the martyrs gave it such credibility. It grew because Christians constituted an intense community, able to generate the "invincible obstinacy" that so offended the younger Pliny but yielded immense religious rewards. *And the primary means of its growth was through the united and motivated efforts of the growing numbers of Christian believers, who invited their friends, relatives, and neighbors to share the 'good news.'*" [From Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* pp.196-215 (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ) 1996]

In other words, the primary means of growth was relational evangelism.

Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, cites Oxford University's Christianity and Culture historian Alan Kreider who has observed that the Christian Church grew about 40% a decade for the first 30 decades (300 years). What makes this statistic even more astonishing is that beginning with the persecution of Nero (around 65 AD) and continuing until the time of Constantine (almost 300 years), it was dangerous to be a Christian, and Christian services were mostly closed; generally, seekers and inquirers were kept out and only the baptized were let in. This was new information to me, yet it makes sense. If

everyone was let in, the Christians might be reported to the officials and face mistreatment, loss of property, and even loss of their lives. [Keller points out that deacons functioned like bouncers – but don't get any ideas, guys!] Christianity was considered a superstition. It was scorned by prominent people, and Christians were discriminated against in countless petty to severe ways. [By the way, I hear this scenario is repeating itself in places like China, where Christianity is spreading rapidly and yet “under the radar.”] How did the Church grow under those conditions? How did people hear the gospel? Keller states, “You know what the answer has to be: *Individual Christians; individual Church members shared with their friends, relatives, and colleagues. They shared Christianity individually – one-on-one.*”

In other words, the primary means of growth was relational evangelism.

So there's good history and good social-science evidence supporting the conclusion that relational evangelism was paramount to the effective evangelism of the Church in the early centuries. But what do we see in the Bible?

Scripture is clear: growth came as a combination of the personal testimonies of believers to the people with whom they connected on a day-to-day basis, such as family and friends; and from believers inviting others to hear the gospel. This is evident from passages such as John 4:28-30, 39; Acts 8:1, 4; Romans 10:14-17; 1Thessalonians 1:2-10; 2:8, etc. If the historians are correct, then from around 65

AD until the mid-300s, the prevalent method of evangelism was through personal testimonies within individual relationships. And the church grew like wildfire!

We're certainly in a different time and place here in Marshall, Texas, but the gospel hasn't changed, and the sinfulness and spiritual needs of people are just the same. The gospel is the power for salvation to everyone who believes. Let's prayerfully and intentionally proclaim Christ, for the harvest is not yet complete! Reach out beyond the circle of believers that you know. Prayerfully connect with unbelievers and even “nominal” believers (there's no shortage of these in the Bible-belt). Invite them to church; and live faithfully before them, sharing the love of Christ through word and deed.

For the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ,

Pastor Craig

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