

Mike's Musings

Well, the annual meeting is now a thing of the past. There were a few challenges for the Council and some opportunity for introspection for all of us as members of the church. However, I was encouraged by our resolve to "press on toward the goal to win the prize." (Phil 3:14) The budget was passed, new Council members were elected, and the church was "set in order" for yet another year of ministry. I give thanks to God for all who participated in the process for the good of the church and the glory of God.

Whatever bumps we have to face as a congregation – financial, relational, spiritual, or moral – I am convinced that the "prize" is well worth the effort. Do you recall what "prize" the Apostle Paul was alluding to in Philippians 3:14? He hints at it in verse 12 when he says, "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." Of course, he's talking about eternal life – the very gift of God that Jesus died and rose again to acquire on our behalf. Burry's, that is our pursuit, and I admonish us to pursue it with as much passion and determination as Paul did.

According to Hebrews 12:1-2, this prize is worth giving up our sin and our chronic preoccupations -- all those things that may be legitimate or may give pleasure for a season. It's worth "running with perseverance the race marked out for us." That's what Paul was doing when he declared, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I

press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Phil 3:13b-14

As pointed and clear as this message is, it's obviously not an easy road. We are ever and always trying to find a shortcut or substitute to obtain "what God has prepared for those who love Him." I'm reminded of the man who tried to rid his house of mice. He bought a mouse trap but had no cheese. To remedy the problem, he cut out a picture of cheese from a magazine. He loaded the trap with the artificial cheese and went to bed. When he checked the mousetrap that following morning he was quite surprised to find a picture of a mouse in the trap.

There can be no compromise when it comes to the pursuit of our ultimate spiritual goal -- **Christlikeness**. Like Paul, we must resolve "to know nothing while (we are here) except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2) We must be determined to put our confidence in Christ alone and "put no confidence in the flesh." (Phil 3:3) "This is what the LORD says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.'" (Jer. 17:5) With so much to do before Jesus comes again, we must be good stewards of our time, talents, and treasures. Remember, according to the Westminster Fathers, the "chief end of man" is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." All other ground, as the hymn writer so eloquently puts it, "is sinking sand."

So we must become like Christ. Then we must develop personal

intimacy with Him (Phil. 3:10-11). That means we must concentrate on developing our personal relationship with Him. That was Paul's resolve when he declared, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Phil 3:10-11) You see, our ability to live lives worthy of Christ depends on keeping ourselves directly linked to Him.

The Early church (Acts) is a good example of this principle. They began in prayer by focusing their attentions on receiving God's resources for life and ministry from Christ. They were motivated by Jesus promise in Acts 1:8. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Those believers went on to turn the world upside down with the Gospel message.

The landscape is still pregnant with opportunities for us to "run the race" and "press on toward the goal." The question is, who will join us in this quest for the prize? John Maxwell has identified four levels of commitment in this regard: First, those who say, "I'm going to do what I want, regardless of any thought for God." They obviously, will fall short of the prize. Second, are those who say, "If God gives me what I want, then I will give him what he wants." Sadly, these folks do not have a clue about what God has already done for us in Christ. Third,

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Congregational Meeting**Election Results****Elder**

Myron Bonzo (2009-2010)

Deacons

Jay Steinbach (2009-2010)

Tom Weil, Jr. (2009-2010)

Trustees

Trevor Emerick (2009-2011)

Todd Snavely (2009-2011)

Auditing Committee

Kristin Vojtko

Nominating Committee

Dale Pflug

Dan Brenner

Mark Harley

Jeri Yeck

Tammi Kaufman

We are truly grateful for all those who accepted nomination this year. Your willingness to serve Christ in the Church is an encouragement to us all.

To Our Friends and Families at Burry's, We would like to thank you for blessing us so greatly this Christmas season. God is working through so many of Burry's people. It's wonderful and very touching to be a part of such a "Grace-Driven Family." We are going through some very tough times, but it sure helps to know that people do care and want to help in many ways.

Thank you for your love and support. We couldn't do it without you.

All Our Love to You,
George and Lynn Tweed

2009 Sunday School Officers

Tim Dubovi, Superintendent
Matt Weil, Assistant Superintendent
Brian Stuck, Treasurer
Tammi Kaufman, Secretary
Jennifer Young, Assistant Secretary

Beginners Department	Stacie Aland Joy Zahn Jodi Strobel Gena Tokar
Primary Department	Jeri Yeck Melanie Snavely Alyssa Young
Intermediate Department	Hedy Pflug Charlie O'Donnell
Pre-Confirmation Class	Dale Bonzo Charlie O'Donnell
Confirmation Class	Pastor Tom Smith
Junior High Class	Tom Weil, Jr. Joanne Weil
Senior High Class	Carol-Lynn Dubovi Michael Bernd
College & Career Class	Chuck Horstman
Goodwill Class	Pastor Mike Myron Bonzo
Guiding Light Class	Michael Pflug Wayne Harley
Adult Bible Class	Dick Graham John Vild Laurin Bonzo

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Thanks to all of our Sunday School Workers!

December Box Score Averages

Sunday School.....	114	General.....	\$3,370.55
Worship.....	209	Benevolence...	\$1,759.38



(Continued from page 1)

is the group that says, "I will give God what he wants, with faith that he will give me what I want." This is a much more mature attitude, but it still holds a hint of quid pro quo – "I'll do for God, if (or when) He does for me." The heart of a true believer says instead, "I will give God what he wants, without regard for myself." That's putting Christ first and loving Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. My prayer for our grace-driven family in 2009, is that we will seek the path of greatest joy and promised satisfaction.

Will you join me in "pressing on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called (us) heavenward in Christ Jesus.?" Truly, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

See You Sunday!

~Pastor Mike

Dear Grace-Driven Family,

We hope you all feel well. So do Edi and I. We have lots of stuff to do for Christmas and Edi has to have a lot of stuff for school. We miss you and think of you very often. We hope to come over to you one day, and we will try to.

We wish you a Happy New Year with lots of blessings.

With hugs, Elli & Edi Kasper



Flowers

At the Congregational Meeting, the giving of flowers was discussed. It was decided that we will now have flowers in the church for those Golden-Agers whose birthdays reach 80; 85; 90; 95 and up; and for those couples having anniversaries 50; 55; 60; 65 and up.

This means a savings of quite a bit of money and we thank the Golden-Agers for their generous suggestion to do this.

However, it means we won't be enjoying flowers in the Sanctuary every Sunday. If you would like to have flowers in honor of your Golden-Ager for their birthday or anniversary, please contact Joy Zahn. They can be purchased through the Flower Committee at a savings to you.

The Flower Committee

We would like to encourage ALL OF YOU to volunteer to help us with Toddler, Kinder or Junior Church.

Our children are our future, and we need to have some help.

If you would be willing to help us, please see Stacie Aland (Toddler and Kinder Church) or Joy Zahn (Junior Church).

2009 Athletes in Action Super Bowl Breakfast

Saturday, January 31 ~ 7:30 a.m.
Live Via Satellite from Tampa Bay

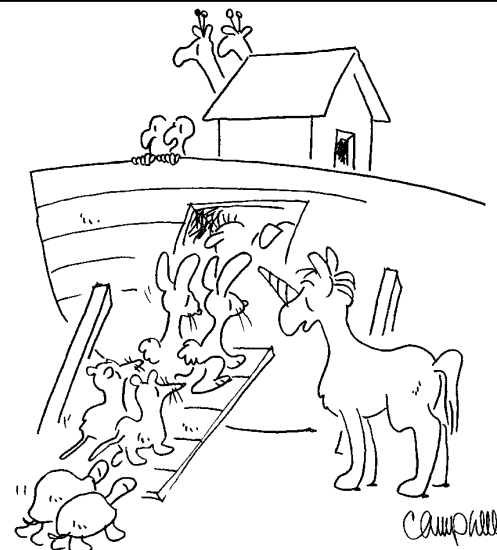
Hosted by Brent Jones, and featuring the inspiring faith testimonies of Bart Starr, Tony Dungy, Anthony Munoz, and Derrick Brooks.

Hear from players on both 2009 Super Bowl teams
Enjoy a great tradition of breakfast & fellowship
See the prestigious Bart Starr Award Presentation

New Community Church

**3100 Wexford Road
Wexford, PA**

Call 724-935-0909 for reservations.



"Be my valentine Be my valentine
Be my valentine"

People In the Pew: Jill Sedoris By Pastor Tom

Wouldn't it be fun to test drive lots of new and slightly used cars? Every week at Butler Auto Auction, Jill Sedoris gets to drive a variety of cars. Jill, who is one of our newest members, works as a sales supervisor at the auto auction in Cranberry. No, she hasn't driven any expensive European sports cars, in case you are wondering, just plain old Fords & Chevys. She says really enjoys her job.

When she is not working, all of her time and energy are devoted to her six year old daughter, Elayna. Along with their cat, Oliver, Jill and Elayna live in the Butler County community of Callery. For fun they enjoy hanging out with friends and family and at this time of year, making snowmen and sledding (they are no relation to Iditarod musher, Rachel Sedoris). Elayna loves to read and play games on her Wii system.

Jill and Elayna came to Burry's at the invitation of her older sister, Julie Bernd. The many children programs and activities here at Burry's were also attractive to them. During an inquirer's class, Jill heard the gospel explained in a way that made sense to her and she put her faith in Jesus Christ. Jill and Elayna enjoy being a part of Burry's Church. Jill is involved with Bible Club where she serves as the orange table leader and attends Chuck's Sunday School class on sharing your faith.

We thank the Lord for bringing Jill and Elayna into our grace-driven family. Neither of them have a favorite Bible passage yet, but as you see the light of Christ in their eyes, I am reminded of Matthew 5:14, *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*



During the Middle Ages, when few people were able to write, many documents were signed with an X. Signers kissed the letter to affirm their sincerity in the same way they kissed the Bible when taking an oath.



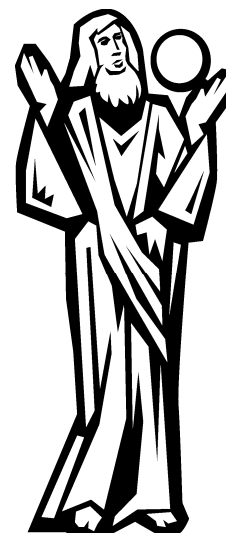
The letter X wasn't selected at random. It was the sign of St.

Andrew, who, tradition says, was crucified on an X-shaped cross. The X implied a sacred promise to fulfill one's obligation in the saint's name.

Second Kings, chapter 5, tells of Namaan, an army commander who had leprosy. A certain prophet of the Lord sent a message to Namaan, telling him to go wash in the Jordan river seven times. Reluctantly, Namaan did so and was healed.

Choose the prophet's name from the list below:

- A. Micah
- B. Elisha
- C. Elijah
- D. Judah



BEING REFINED IN 2009



St. John's "Burry's" Church Youth Ministry

ETC EVENTS CALENDAR

**E.T.C. Youth Meeting
Sunday Evenings
@ 6:00 pm**

**SUPER BOWL
PARTY
February 1**

**SNOW CAMP '09
February 6-8**

**ACQUIRE THE FIRE
"HERE COMES TROUBLE"
May 8-9**

**SSB '09
June 28-July 2**



The E.T.C. wants to thank all of the wonderful people that have dedicated so much of their time and energy into the youth ministry and all that attend. We greatly appreciate you!



New year resolutions seem to be quickly forgotten by many people. I'm guessing that most last about a month, and then gradually get put on the backburner as the busyness of life creeps back in. Optimism, ambition, and motivation can quickly turn to complacency and mediocrity. We tend to be creatures of habit, and it can be very difficult to change our bad

habits and replace them with good habits.

Sadly, I believe that most people tend to focus on the immediate sacrifice or effort that needs to be invested into breaking a bad habit or in adopting a good habit. Though, I've noticed that successful people tend to be driven by the hope of a pay-off rather than a sacrificial investment. Olympic athletes, for example, train for years with the hope of competing for a gold medal. The sacrifice is great, as they turn their main focus toward the Olympics. Everything else gets put on the backburner as they anticipate those few moments of glory. Yet, I also see that these athletes compete for something greater than themselves— they compete for their country!

Paul says in I Corinthians 9 & 10, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize...So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God...Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." I want to encourage you to take a moment to think about your relationship with Jesus. Is becoming like Jesus one of your goals, and are you investing time and energy into making that goal a reality? Max Lucado says, "God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be just like Jesus."

I remember a conference that I attended a few years back. Tony Campolo was the speaker, and I vividly remember him shouting boldly the phrase, "Carpe Diem, Carpe Diem...Seize the Day!" His passion was contagious and his message penetrated my heart that day. Seize this day as an opportunity to become like Jesus! It is my hope that we, as the E.T.C., will make it our resolution to "Be Refined in 2009!"

NINJA PENGUIN



SNOW CAMP '09

When: February 6-8, 2009

Departure Time: 4:00 pm

Return Time: 3:00 pm

**** Early Pack Time: Thursday 9:00 am-6:00 pm ****

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<i>Birthdays &</i>		<i>Anniversaries</i>	
Josiah Dubovi	1		
Christopher Harley	4	David Young	15
Tim Weil	4	Donald Niedergall	16
Butch Tallon	5	Charlotte Vild	17
Arlene Pflug	7	Jen Komara	18
Wesley Sterrett	8	Jim Harley, Jr.	20
Dee Dee Brunner	11	Keith Brenner	21
Tammi Kaufman	11	Emily Bernd	23
Tim Concelman	12	Jessica Blinn	23
Dean Ward	12	Linda Van Arsdale	23
Lynn Concelman	14	Ed Young	23
Richard Young	14	Marg Kaufman	24
Aaron Stuck	15	David & Becky Yeck	4
Andrew Stuck	15	Rich & Linda Goehring	7
Sarah Yeck	15	John & Maryann Gutermuth	17
		Quinn & Heather Metheny	17
		Maggie Lind	25
		Eileen Bonzo	26
		Robert Kaufman	26
		Nikki Ward	26

Missionary News

Our newest supported missionary family, Don and Zoe Peffer, with CrossWorld, have returned to Brazil. They appreciate our support and are sorry they were not able to share personally with us here at Burry's Church. They have sent a DVD that has a presentation of their work in Brazil. Please contact the office if you would like "meet" the Peffers.

Please look for updates on this couple and their Kingdom Work in future Hill-Top News, and keep the Peffers and all of our supported missionaries and organization in your prayers in 2009.



This year's **Pinewood Derby** will be held on **March 28, 2009**, from 2:00 - 5:00 PM, along with the silent auction. The car "weigh-in" will begin at 2:00 PM with the race starting at approximately 2:30 PM. Everyone is welcome to participate, grand-parents, parents, young people, family teams, anyone looking for some good, clean competition.

Anyone wishing to participate this year in the Burry's Church Pinewood Derby is asked to please build a new car and only use the Boy Scout car kits. This will ensure that everyone has an equal chance to win. The entry fee is \$10 per car. This will cover the cost of the car and the proceeds to benefit our youth program.

Sign-up sheets along with the derby rules will be passed in the classes and will also be in the back of the educational building. We will be having several "help" days in February and March for those who may need some assistance in building their cars. If you would like to race and do not have the registration fee, a car will be made available for you to work on.

Please sign up on or before January 25, 2009 so that the cars can be ordered in time. The cars will be available after February 1, 2009. Any questions, contact Mike Bernd at 724-538-5400.

