

Mike's Musings

In my personal study over the past month, I've been focused on Christ's passion. It's been good fodder for our Lenten studies and a good reminder to me about just what price Jesus paid to take away my sins.

It all made me reevaluate an important ministry question: why are so many unmoved by such "wondrous love"? It's true both for the world and for the church. We can sort of understand it in the world. After all, they still haven't named the name of Jesus. They still don't "get it". The gospel has not yet penetrated their hearts and the Holy Spirit has not yet done His work of calling them to repentance. As Steve Wingfield says, they're just doing what's "normal" for them.

And he's right. "Normal" in this world is not "Christian". Normal is when "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (Gen 6:5). Normal is what Proverbs 16:25 observes: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Normal is the condition Paul elucidates in Romans 3 – "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (v.23); "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (vs.10-12)

On the other hand, the "abnormal"

people are those who have found forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ. The abnormal folks are those who "walk in the light as He (Christ) is in the light" (1 John 1:7) Who say with the Apostle Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21) Abnormal people are in the minority having chosen, by God's grace, to walk the narrow road "that leads to life." (Matthew 7:14) And that road, Jesus says, is one that "only a few find."

Have you ever noticed when reading the Bible or singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19), that the authors are often overwhelmed with thoughts of God's holy presence? Like Isaiah who, in a vision, "saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted" (6:1) He was totally humbled at being in the presence of the Holy One. Over and over the Psalmists worship the Lord with words like, "I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever." (Psalms 86:12)

I love the old praise chorus by Mark Altrogge entitled, "I Stand in Awe of You". The words are a powerful and winsome expressions of worship (like many others):

"You are beautiful beyond description; too marvelous for words, too wonderful for comprehension, like nothing ever seen or heard.

"Who can grasp your infinite wisdom? Who can fathom the depth of your love?"

You are beautiful beyond description, Majesty enthroned above.

"And I stand, I stand, in awe of you. . . . Holy God, to whom all praise is due, I stand in awe of you."

I'm not suggesting by these rambling words that we must be in a constant state of emotional ecstasy every time we come to worship or think about God. That would wear us out quickly. I do believe, though, that our hearts should be stirred whenever we really stop and think about Jesus and all He's done to purchase our redemption, all He's done to satisfy our hungering souls; all He's done to shepherd us through this life. Forgive me if it seems redundant, but we don't deserve a bit of it. For all His grace to us, we're still inclined to chose "normalcy" when it comes to living in this world.

God help me to live "abnormally" for Him. Help me to see afresh each day the glory of His grace to me in Christ Jesus, and to sense the power of His Spirit counseling, comforting, and directing me. Throughout the approaching Easter Season, I want to rejoice in my salvation and in my Savior. I want to revel in the truth of the resurrection and be expectant of His soon return. I want to be "filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, each time I remember that I am the unworthy recipient of the greatest gift ever given, by the greatest of all givers — "the

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Spring Bible Conference



Mark your calendars for the 2009 Spring Bible Conference on April 24-26 at Burry's Church.

This year's conference is entitled:

"Being a Person of Influence"

Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Bruce Bickel, from Pittsburgh, PA who is President and Founder of Transformational Leadership Group.

The conference will begin on Friday, April 24, with a covered dish dinner at 6:30 pm and will continue on Saturday morning. There will be a fourth session during Sunday School on the 26th. The conference concludes with Dr Bickel preaching in our morning worship service.

A love offering will be collected to cover the costs of the conference.

Please watch your bulletins and newsletters for more information and for registration forms.



Faith Circle News Secretary, Barb Tuma

The ladies met on March 17, 2009. Devotions were given by Joy Zahn on "Seeing Ahead."



The secretary's and treasurer's reports were given and approved. We received a thank you from the Women's Center.

The Silent Auction-Spaghetti Dinner is on schedule. We decided anyone from Faith Circle or church members can choose to send cards to our Golden-Agers. They enjoy receiving them.

Hedy Pflug closed our meeting with prayer. Dessert was provided by Hilda Pflug.

Please pray for our circle. Thank you!

Soup and Sub Sale

On Saturday, April 18, there will be a Soup Sale fundraiser for Pastor Tom's upcoming mission trip to Kiev, Ukraine. Potato, chicken noodle, vegetable, and wedding soup will be available for \$5.00 per quart, and can be picked up from 1-4 pm on April 18. Complete the enclosed order form and place it in the offering plate by Sunday, April 12th. If you are willing to help make the soup or donate ingredients, please see Eileen Bernd or Elva Harley.

Also, a sub sale fundraiser will be held at the same time as the Soup Sale. This fundraiser is being coordinated by Travis Strobel, as part of a school required 8th grade project for the New Brighton Area School District. The proceeds from the sub sale will be used to waterproof the playground equipment. The cost of each sub is \$5.00. Please complete an order form and place it in the offering plate by Sunday, April 12th.

Playground Work Day on April 18th

If you or someone you know uses the playground, please accept this invitation to come and help prepare it for this summer's activities. Leaves need to be removed from the fence, gravel needs to be raked away from the playground equipment, and the equipment needs to be prepared for waterproofing. The work day will begin on April 18th at 10:00 AM. You can work and then enjoy hot soup and subs or vice versa.

Remember:

***It takes a community to raise a child!!
Please offer an hour of your day to help
prepare the playground for the summer.
The children who use the
playground will be grateful.***

February Box Score Averages

Sunday School	118	General	\$2,960.07
Worship	201	Benevolence ..	\$1,339.88



People in the Pews - The Methenys by Pastor Tom

Some people drive up north to McKean or Elk County to go see black bear (and maybe hunt them) while others have the luxury of seeing a bear from the comfort of their home. Last summer, while sipping their morning coffee, Quinn and Heather Metheny looked out their window and noticed a large black animal nosing around their chicken yard. Upon closer look, they realized it was a black bear. Grabbing their camera, they took a few shots of the bear investigating their electric chicken fencing. You can see one of their pictures and read their story at <http://www.premier1supplies.com/newsletters> (the website of the fencing company).



Quinn and Heather live with their two daughters, Lydia and Ella and dog, Renny on a few mostly wooded acres in the Wurtemberg area next to Ellwood City. Ella and Lydia are home-schooled by Heather. Quinn works as a representative for Waldo & Associates which distributes greenhouse and growing supplies to professional plant growers. Spring is a hectic time for Quinn as his customers are gearing up for the start of gardening season.

Both Quinn and Heather grew up in Christian families in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Quinn remembers trusting Jesus as his Lord and Savior at a young age but having questions as he grew older. His questions about the faith were settled in his mind during his high school and college years. Heather grew up near Walton, NY, and trusted Christ as Savior around age 5. Like her husband, Heather wrestled with questions of faith as she grew up. Things became settled for her when she was a student at Geneva College. Quinn also attended Geneva, but didn't meet Heather until several years later through some mutual friends.

When the homework and chores are done, the Metheny family like games together and enjoy the benefits of the country life such as hunting, fishing, and swimming in the Slippery Rock Creek near their home. The Metheny's love the Lord and each have their favorite Bible passage. Ella and Lydia like the story of the woman at the well in John 4, where Jesus tells her, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (vs.23). Heather's favorite is Psalm 139 which speaks of God's knowledge of us and how we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:17 says, "How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them." Quinn likes the story in 1 Kings 19, how God speaks to Elijah at the cave opening. But God was not in the powerful wind, nor in the earthquake, but he was in the still small voice.

We rejoice that the Metheny family has heard God's gentle whisper, find his thoughts to be precious and choose to worship him with the rest of their grace-driven family here at Burry's Church in Spirit and in truth. Thanks be to God!

Butterscotch Coffee Cake by Julia Shaffer

For butterscotch lovers everywhere!

1 box yellow cake mix
 1 sm. pkg. instant vanilla pudding
 1 sm. pkg. instant butterscotch pudding
 4 eggs 1 cup water
 1/2 cup oil 1 tsp. vanilla
 Topping: 1 cup brown sugar & 1 tsp. cinnamon

Mix all together. Beat 2 minutes. Pour half into greased 9x13 pan. Cover with half of the topping. Pour the rest of the batter and then add the rest of the topping. Bake at 375 for 20 minutes, then lower oven temp to 325 and bake for another 20 minutes. Enjoy!



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salvation of (my) soul.” (see 1 Peter 1:8-9)

I hope each Sunday will find us acting “abnormally” together”, as we gather to worship and praise the resurrected and living Lord.

He is risen! Indeed!
~Pastor Mike



Vacation Bible School

Please keep
July 6-10
open on your
calendars for an
exciting week of
V.B.S. right here at
Burry’s Church!

Guiding Light Class Updates

The Guiding Light Class has a busy Spring Schedule.

Please mark the following dates on your calendar.

Sun., March 29.....Lunch at the Olive Garden

Fri., April 3.....Spring Flower Show
at Phipps Conservatory.
Everyone is invited to attend.

Please meet at the church at 5:30 p.m.

Wed., April 22.....Hartzell School Road Clean-up

Meet at Gale & Joy Zahn’s home at 6 pm

Sun., April 26.....Lunch at Texas Roadhouse

Friday, May 8.....Class Meeting
at Bill and Linda Rahn’s home at 7:30 pm.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Tom Harley on the publication of his first book, Matthew Poole.

The book is available on bn.com (website for Barnes and Noble), iuniverse.com, or amazon.com in paperback or hardback versions.

Tom asks that if you do read the book, please post a review on any of those sites mentioned above. It will help to generate interest in the work.



S.A.N.A.M.I.



Please don't be afraid to ask for help. We have an ambitious group of young people in the E.T.C. that would love to help you! Please contact Chuck at 724-622-4150 if you would like the E.T.C. to help you with a project

S.A.N.A.M.I. (See A Need And Meet It)

“Becoming Like Jesus” has been our theme at E.T.C. this past school year, and I truly believe that many of our young people are being transformed little by little as God works on their hearts. Christ serves as the ultimate example of a caregiver as He put into practice the S.A.N.A.M.I. principle in His ministry. Christ was surrounded by people in need, and He took the time to see and meet their needs as He traveled.

I'm seeing this same attitude of care and service being administered by the

E.T.C. members as they reach out to those in need. In 2009, the E.T.C. has already been blessed with the opportunity to help three families in need with the E.T.C. Deacons Fund that was established with the money raised through the “Bigger & Better Event” and the Christmas Card Mailbox. The fund was created so that the E.T.C. could touch lives through charitable acts of mercy ministry.

Our young people reached out to the first family by providing enough money to pay for a tank of propane to heat their home. We were then able to help a woman who's daughter must undergo expensive treatments at Children's Hospital. We provided them with enough money to pay for parking and some meals during their two-week stay. We then helped a gentleman raise enough money to make his wheelchair lift that was needed to get his wheelchair into his van. Wow, way to go E.T.C.! I'm proud of the efforts that you've made to make a difference, and what a difference you are making as you reach out in the name of Jesus!

We plan to continue to use the E.T.C. Deacons fund as needs arise, but I also want to invite the congregation to contact Chuck if you have any needs in which the E.T.C. can assist you. As the weather warms up, there will be plenty of jobs that need to be done to clean-up, paint, etc... Our young people are ready and willing, so please give them the opportunity to serve you!

May God Bless You,
Chuck Horstman



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

ETC EVENTS CALENDAR

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

**April 17
E.T.C. Skate Night
& Pizza Party
6:30-10:30 pm
\$10.00
(Meet at the Church)**

**May 8-9
ATF**

**TEEN TIME
June 15-August 17**

**SSB '09
June 28-July 3**

**Hunter Ed. Course &
Wild Game Breakfast
August 14-15**

REVOLVE TOUR

**(Girls Only Event)
September 11-12**

Chuck's Chicken
Fundraisers for
the those going to
the event

May 30
June 27



Easter SonRise Service

Saturday, April 11

Steadfast Practice @ 10:00 am

Service Practice @ 11:00 am

Sunday, April 12

Steadfast Practice @ 7:15 am

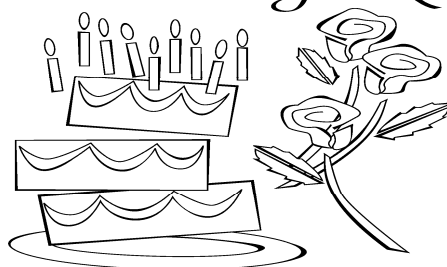
SonRise Service @ 8:00 am

Breakfast @ 9:15 am



**"Father, Forgive
Them"**

April Birthdays & 2009



Anniversaries

Cindy Lind	3		Art Teets	20	
April Donley	5		Mike Van Arsdale	21	
Kathy Murphy	5		Shyann Komara	22	
Kali Ralston	5		Ann O'Donnell	24	
Julie Bernd	6		Jill Sedoris	25	
Darci Goudas	6		Amy Foeks	26	
Kanda Usselman	7		Gale Zahn	26	
Brandi Ward	8	Mike & Carol Dengel	5	Amanda Bable	27
Linda Garlitz	9	John & Chris Yeck	9	Beth Keating	27
Valerie Chenet	10	David & Kay Allen	12	Marc Brenner	28
Lydia Metheny	10	George & Lynn Tweed	12	Raymond Pflug	28
Trevor Emerick	17	Harold & Erla Bernd	14	John Vild	28
Ben Foeks	17	John & Ethel Winich	15	Tim Dubovi	29
Hilda Harley	17	Dale & Marilyn Kryder	18	Jaden Maley	29
Mary Lou Niedergall	18	Bradley & Eva Young	20	Arlene Blinn	30
Jennifer Blinn	19	Dan & Kathy Murphy	24	Carol-Lynn Dubovi	30

Adult Sunday School

Be sure to check out one (or all) of the following Sunday School Classes for Adults:

“Building Biblical Relationships”	Pastor Mike’s class in the Downstairs Hall
“The Character of a Follower of Christ”	Michael Pflug’s class in the Education Building
“Developing the Leader Within You” by John Maxwell	Chuck Horstman’s class in the library

Thanks to everyone who helped in any way for our sale. It was greatly appreciated.

~ Art & Roberta Teets

Laura Pflug wishes to thank everyone for their visits, cards and prayers. Also thanks to Pastor Mike for his visit, and to the Adult Bible Class as well. Her faith, friends, and family are very important to her.

To My Church Family,
My deepest thanks and appreciation for all your prayers, cards and notes of concern during the recent loss of my husband. God has been with me through all of this and has given me a wonderful peace and such wonderful friends. I would also like to thank the Faith Circle for the delicious dinner for our family, relatives and friends.

With Love,
Joan Fichter

To My Burry’s Family,

Thank you so much for all of your prayers and cards and kindnesses during my recent illness. Special thanks to Pastor Mike and Linda, and Pastor Tom for their visits. “We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests.” Psalm 20:5

Deeply, humbly thankful for God’s mercies,
Diane Calderone

