FIRST PRES CHANGING LIVES

FIRSTPRESS

The Weekly Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church at Caldwell, NJ

Sunday, Feb. 11, 2018

Revelation Bible Study Announced for the Season of Lent

The book of Revelation is arguably the most bizarre book in the Bible. With wild and fantastic images of seven-headed beasts, stars falling from the sky, and rivers turning to blood, Revelation has frightened away many readers who do not know what to make of it. Some argue that its violent response to evil is a step backward from the nonviolent ethic found in the gospels. Others dismiss Revelation as pie-in-the-sky escapism which merely endures injustice while waiting for future vindication, rather than working for a more just world. And still others are skeptical because its symbols have so often been used to predict a date for the end of the world—none of which, obviously, have ever panned out.

With all these hazards to be faced in reading Revelation, can contemporary readers find any value in it? While the book has often been misused and misunderstood, many do find it a source of hope and encouragement, offering a vision for a just world. In this study, led by Pastor Todd Shumpert, we will approach it from this hopeful perspective, looking for the messages it holds for our lives today.

John wrote in the form of an apocalypse, a literary genre that was common in his time period. Apocalyptic literature was produced at times when people were suffering, and was intended to provide comfort and hope. Apocalyptic literature assures readers that, although political and economic circumstances seem to be stacked against them, God is ultimately in control. The future is in God's hands, not the hands of the emperor and the empire.

On Tuesday mornings during Lent, beginning February 20, we will try to understand the circumstances of the first readers to whom the document was addressed. We will try to understand the questions they were raising and the issues they faced. Then, we will address the same questions to ourselves. We will look at our relationship to the political and economic structures of our society. To what degree can we Christians, today, be involved in the larger society? To what extent is it necessary to separate ourselves? Can we accommodate ourselves to the culture? Are there times when we must resist? In the end, do we agree with John that the future is ultimately in God's hands?

Tuesdays, February 20 – March 28, 11:00am, in the Church Parlor. ■

HIGHLIGHTS

Jr. Highs & Sr. Highs

Both the Jr. High and Sr. High Fellowship will go off campus today to share a meal and discussion. Both groups will meet up in the church lobby – Sr. Highs at 11:30am, Jr. Highs at 5:30pm

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

This coming Wednesday, Feb. 14, there will be an Ash Wednesday service of worship, offering the imposition of ashes, beginning at 7pm in the church sanctuary.

www.FirstPresCaldwell.org

YOUTH & CHILDREN

Youth Ministry News

Souper Bowl of Caring

Thank you to all who donated to Souper Bowl of Caring last Sunday. We collected 118 soup cans and $262.56 for the Caldwell Food Pantry. Many thanks to Bonnie Chiappetta, Liz Moore and Angie Maxwell for providing us with delicious soup during coffee hour. It was certainly a treat before the big game!

Jr. High Fellowship (6th-8th Grade) - Join us today, February 11th, from 5:30-7:00PM for pizza at Cedar Grill and games in the Youth Room. We will meet in the church lobby at 5:30pm and walk over to Cedar Grill together. Please bring $5 for pizza and a permission slip.

Sr. High Fellowship (9th-12th Grade) - Join us today, February 11th, from 11:30AM-1:00PM for lunch at Cloverleaf and a Lenten Devotion. Please bring $$ for lunch and a permission slip!

February Foundations in Children's Ministry

This February our Sunday School children will spend three weeks discovering some foundations of our faith. Kindergarteners and 1st graders will be learning the Lord's Prayer, 2nd graders will be preparing for Communion, 3rd graders will be learning the 23rd Psalm, 4th and 5th graders will learn the books of the Bible and our middle schoolers will be learning the 10 Commandments. Be sure to join us on March 4th when the children share what they've learned in our Family Worship Service.

Lenten Blaze

All children in Kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us each Wednesday in Lent (February 14th - March 28th) from 4:30-6:15 for a fun time exploring our faith. We will have some fun recreation, crafts, time for music and Bible study! Registration forms are available on the church website or on the Christian Ed desk! The cost for the program is $25. Please contact Susan Jones for more information.

SERVICE TO OTHERS

"Sandwich Night" Hunger Ministry

This month the Young Adults and the Mission Committee will be hosting Sandwich Night. Members of the congregation, along with family and friends, are invited to take part in the fun and fellowship as we continue this ongoing ministry. We will prepare 400 to 450 bag lunches to benefit the families who visit St. John's Soup Kitchen in Newark. The work will begin at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

Monthly Soup Kitchen Gearing Up

This month we will be preparing Sloppy Joes, Pasta Salad and our staples of Hard Boiled Eggs, Salad and Dessert. To participate, you may pick up a warming pan at the front desk in the church lobby and prepare a meal (instructions included). You may then either deliver it to FirstPres, in Fellowship Hall, between 8:30am and 9:30am on Saturday, February 24, or directly to Our Lady of the Valley Soup Kitchen. Call Joyce McGrath, 201-738-6531 to volunteer to serve in person.

ARTS

Music & Poetry – "Fat Tuesday"

Come out this evening and enjoy some great music and some beautiful readings that revel in the celebration of "Fat Tuesday," better known as Mardi Gras. We'll meet at 5:00pm in the church sanctuary to "Laissez les bons temps rouler," or, as you might say: "Let the Good Times Roll!"

"Nunsense" Coming to Caldwell

From February 22–25, in the Fellowship Hall, Pleasant Valley Productions will present the musical comedy "Nunsense." This hilarious spoof tells of the misadventures of the five nuns belonging to the fictional order of the Little Sisters of Hoboken. You may purchase tickets at www.BrownPaperTickets.com – FirstPres members may enter the code "FPCC" for a discount! Performances are Feb. 22, 23, & 24 at 8pm, and Feb. 25 at 2pm.

The Washington and Lee University Singers in Concert

The Department of Music at Washington and Lee invites you to join the award-winning University Singers under the direction of Shane M. Lynch in their concert at 7:30pm on Friday, February 23, in the church sanctuary. Admission is free. Featured in the concert is FPC member, Michael Colavita – a senior at Washington and Lee who grew up in the choir program at the FirstPres. Come and enjoy a wonderful evening of music and welcome Michael home to FPC.

STUDY

A Dialogue About World Religions

Concluding this week, the Spiritual Life Committee invites you to take on the task of becoming more knowledgeable about the faiths of the world and their differences. Loosely guided by the book *God Is Not One* by Stephen Prothero, we will come with our questions and a desire to learn about faith traditions other than our own. We'll meet on Tuesdays at 11:00am in the church parlor through February 13th.

"Lifting the Veil" Book of Revelation Bible Study

Beginning February 20, you're invited to participate in a six-week study on the most bizarre and misunderstood book of the Bible: Revelation. We'll meet each Tuesday during the Season of Lent (through Mar. 28) in the Church Parlor. Classes begin at 11:00am.

EVENT CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY, February 11
Choir Tour commissioning
Church plaza presentation
8:30am – Early Worship Service, Chapel
9am – Confirmation Class, Rm 121
10am – Worship Service, Sanctuary
11:30am – Sr. Highs, Lobby
5pm – Music & Poetry, Sanctuary
5pm – Pleasant Valley Productions, Choir Room
5:30pm – Jr. Highs, Lobby
6pm – *Godspell* Preshow, Gym

MONDAY, February 12
7pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage
7pm – Venture Scouts, Youth Room
7pm – Yoga, Rm 120

TUESDAY, February 13
9:30am – Staff Meeting, Parlor
11am – World Religion Study Group, Parlor
7pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage
7:15pm – Deacons Meeting, Rm 120

WEDNESDAY, February 14
9:30am – Crafting Group, Parlor
4:30pm – Lenten Blaze, Gym
7pm – Ash Wednesday Service, Sanctuary
7pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage

THURSDAY, February 15
Westminster/Pilgrim Choir Tour Begins
7am – Men's Flshp. Breakfast, Caldwell Diner
1pm – Women's Fellowship Board, Crane's Mill
7pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage

FRIDAY, February 16
10am – We Dance Yoga, Choir Room
5:30pm – AA Meeting, Room 120
7pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage

SATURDAY, February 17
8am – Dads With a Mission, Inc., Rock N Joe's
10am – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage

SUNDAY, February 18
8:30am – Early Worship Service, Chapel
9am – Confirmation Class
10am – Worship Service, Sanctuary
11:15am – Church Life Committee
11:15am – Stephen Ministry, Rm 118
11:30am – Meaning In Movies, Chapel
11:30am – Sr. Highs, Lobby
2pm – PVP rehearsal, Gym/Stage
5:30 – Jr. High's – Meet in the Church Lobby

COME SAY HELLO!

On Monday, February 12, we welcome New Jersey native Christine Brunner as the new Office Manager for FirstPres. Christine brings a diverse list of office management skills with her to this position, and we look forward to welcoming her as part of the staff. Stop by and say hello this week.

LOOKING AHEAD:

The Church Office will be closed on Monday, February 19, in observance of Presidents Day.

WORDS TO PONDER FROM STEPHEN MINISTRY:

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." – 1 John 4:11

To find out more about this caring, listening, confidential ministry, call our confidential line at 973-228-0310, ext 235, or speak to one of our pastors.

GREETERS THIS MORNING:

8:30 AM – **Lisa Edwards**

10:00 AM – Bloomfield Ave.
Sue Tannler • Tom Asche
10:00 AM – Westville Ave.
Diane Joy • Lisa Edwards

SUBMIT INFO FOR FIRST PRESS

Please submit your info by 12:00 noon on Thursdays to: todd@firstprescaldwell.org

Please join Confirmation Student Alyssa White for coffee in Room 120 following the 10am service.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT CALDWELL

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OUR STAFF

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Special Thanks to Lynne Stoddard for lending her editorial eye!