



Grapevine

Fall 2009

Women Reaching Women

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me, and I in them, will bear much fruit because apart from me you can do nothing."

Hello Ladies,

What does it mean to live a life fully committed to God? How do we do that on a daily basis? Recently a song called *Uncommon* by Greg Long and Kristy Starling has reminded me to ask these questions regularly. Several verses and the chorus are especially challenging and convicting:

*What if there's something
bigger for me out there
Than the comfort of a life
on this middle ground
I've played it safe but now
I can't help but wonder
If maybe I've been missing out*

*'Cause I look around and see a sea of people
Everybody's moving in the same direction
And I think it's time for me to break away*

*I want to finally take the road less traveled
I want to run away from anything typical
I want the world to see the life I'm living
And call it uncommon*

*What if the right thing was
harder than the wrong thing
But I did it anyway
Standing strong even when
no one else was watching
What if I really lived that way?*

How do we live that way? How do we live a life that is uncommon? Ephesians 5:10 tells us to "Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it" (The Message Bible) This involves knowledge and action. Our knowledge of God is increased by spending time with God praying and studying his word. Action often means stepping out in faith to the unknown or the uncomfortable. I know that when I

become too comfortable God is preparing me for something new! I also have learned that he gives me the strength to do it.

Fall is a wonderful time to try something different. As you read through the pages of the Grapevine you will find opportunities to join one of our Bible studies, to start your own Bible study, to attend the Women's Retreat, to attend the Wednesday night service or volunteer to serve during Faith in Flint. Also check the church website on a regular basis to discover additional opportunities. On Sunday mornings we gather as a community of faith to worship the living Lord. Join us and make this a regular part of your week.

Kim Skaff
Director of Women's Ministry

Promises Fulfilled

Saturday, September 12 - Faith in Flint Workday. Another opportunity to serve our community! All are invited to get your hands dirty and work togetherto exhale and fill our community with the love of Christ that fills us with peace and joy.

Sunday, September 13 - Homecoming Sunday. We will gather for Festival Worship at 9:30am and worship God together. Following worship we will parade up Saginaw Street - led by the Pipe Band - to the river for a picnic fellowship at River Bank Park! (For those unable to parade, transportation to the park and back will be provided)

Monday, September 14 - Working with the Food Bank. We will host a food give-a-way in our church parking lot. We will need about 20 volunteers to help with the distribution from 8:30am to 1:30pm.

Faith Story by Sally Werdell

Recently, I visited the small community where my life began. I was reminded that it was really responsible for the beginning of my spiritual life. Growing up there, very few people did not have a religious affiliation. My parents began my spiritual life at the age of three. For the next 15 years I attended Sunday school and was a part of a youth group called Christian Endeavor. This group included all ages and denominations and held events for youth from other small communities within fourteen miles. I also taught Sunday school, summer Bible study and attended church regularly.

After I left home, I experienced a “dark period” of my life. I had not forgotten my Bible readings or my prayer life. However, I became more of a follower than a leader and many times temptations were very strong. Things that occurred were difficult and I did ask God to guide me and give me direction. I heard him say “why don’t you grow up and face the consequences of your actions.” I felt His presence.

In the late 40’s I went to nursing school. It was there on the first day that I met the man I was to marry. I saw so many miracles and works of God. I also met temptations with some of the old zest and then sometimes with maturity and good common sense. By the time I finished my training I was finally maturing and becoming an adult who loved the Lord but felt so guilty about what my life had been.

I was married in October and God became important in our life. However, at a certain time I was facing a very difficult health problem. I prayed to God and said “please help me I cannot handle this alone, I need you.” I felt the presence of the Lord so strongly and the peace I received has been with me ever since. Three days after my surgery I heard God say “you are going to be fine.” I knew my Savior was with me.

As the years have passed I know that my Savior is guiding and walking beside me. He has often said “you know that is wrong why do you continue to do it?” You see I am a sinner and I must continue to ask for forgiveness. When the dark side of my life reappears I know that God is with me and He fills my life with joy, love and peace. There are so many ways my life at First Presbyterian Church has fed me spiritually with prayer, Bible study, knowledge, service, love and friendships. I know in my heart that God is present with me and in our church.

Wednesdays at First by Lisa Koegel

Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go. . .” That seems to be my repeating phrase day after day. The children hear it many times from getting up and off to school in the morning, to all the after school meetings, sports events, music lessons, orchestra rehearsals, cub scouts all the way through the night with homework, bedtime rituals and a briefing for the next day’s plan. It’s a joy and an honor to raise a family yet at times the demands seem overwhelming and stressful.

The day I look most forward to is Wednesday. The time spent with the Cherub Choir watching the Holy Spirit feed our children through His gift of music and singing. We gather for an intergenerational dinner, where the adults and children fellowship while breaking bread together. After dinner, the children take part in the Bee-Helpful Service program where they are taught to put their faith into practice. The youth take part in a small group Bible study. I head off to the beautiful Chapel for the Contemplative Service. I smell the fragrance of the candles drawing me closer. The sound of the organ and voices softly singing slowly melts the stresses of the week. I take my seat, close my eyes and totally let down and allow the Holy Spirit to wash over me. It’s an intimate time with God.

I feel refreshed and my strength renewed. The class that follows is a time of learning and colorful discussion. It’s a comfort to know that we all have struggles and questions in our faith journey at times, and that we are there for each other in a community of faith. I leave feeling like I’ve had a huge hug from my church family and a midweek reconnection with God. Wednesdays at First has been a great blessing to our family.

Grapevine’s New Look

We are very excited about the new look of the Grapevine and hope that you are also. Please let us know what you think. Thank you to Kelly Rosencrants for all her hard work and patience redesigning the Grapevine. The results are wonderful!

Newsletter Notice

As part of the ongoing mission to reduce costs associated with our paper communications, we will no longer be mailing them out-of-state. To request them, please call or email the church with your email address. If you spend time in a second home you will continue to receive our publications all year. Thank you for your help.

Fall Retreat *Journeys, Detours and Grace*

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11-13

Don't miss this opportunity to explore and reflect together on where we've been, where we are and where the journey will ultimately lead as we wind our ways down our individual spiritual paths. Using Jeremiah 29:11-13 as our Scriptural base, our speaker Marcy Lawless will lead us through three sessions with time to discuss and reflect.

Join us for:

- *Journeys* (Session One), where we will explore our personal and collective autobiographies of grace—where we've gone and where God has intersected us along the way.
- *Detours* (Session Two), looking at the starts and stops, the u-turns and dead ends, the dents & bruises of our crashes and derailments, the changes which have occurred to the lives we had planned.
- *Grace* (Session Three), where we'll rejoice in the 'Amazing Grace' received and search our lives to see where we can be extenders of our Lord's Grace to those around us.

Best of all, we'll be taking this particular sojourn together, as we search our individual paths and see anew God's presence throughout—the Master Planner and Tour Guide who was and is up ahead, leading the way; sometimes behind, picking up the pieces, and always, always, by our side, drawing us close. Our Lord--- leading and cheering and beckoning us to come nearer; sometimes we recognize His presence and sometimes, it is only in the rear-view mirror that we realize He has been there all along.

Join us on the journey at this year's Fall Women's Retreat on **Saturday, October 24th, 8:30am-3:30pm**. The cost is \$30 and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Your presence is invited and encouraged, for it is within the unity of sharing, caring, laughing, crying, singing and praying that we find fellowship with each other in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Marcy Lawless Biography

Marcy currently serves as a member of the Leadership Team of the Network for Presbyterian Women in Leadership (NPWL), is involved in leading women's retreats and Bible studies. She recently chaired women's ministry task forces at both First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa and Westminster Presbyterian Church in Lubbock. She is part of the Lubbock Development Council for the Buckner Foundation and on the Advisory Board for the Talkington School for Young Women Leaders. Retiring in 2004 following a 30-year career which included 15 years at Southwest Airlines and 15 years as a partner to her husband who was president of Texas Tech University and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and of The University of Tulsa. Marcy and Bob Lawless are living in Lubbock, Texas and have four adult children and five grandchildren. Marcy's passions include her Christian faith, her love for the Lord and her relationships with family and friends.

Sarah Circle

The Sarah Circle meets the first Thursday of each month. They will be studying the book of Joshua using a study published by Presbyterian Women and written by Mary Mikhael. Mary is president of the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon. She brings an interesting perspective of Israel during the time of Joshua as well as the present. For times and places, please call the church office or Geri Mayton at 732-7496.

Christmas Luncheon

**Saturday, December 5
11:00am to 1:00pm**

Women's Ministry has begun making plans for our Christmas Luncheon. The tables will be hosted and beautifully decorated by women of the church. More information about this wonderful event will be available in the coming months. This is a wonderful way to begin the Advent season as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

If you are interested in being a hostess, please contact Kim Skaff at 234-8673 or kskaff@fpcf.org.

Spiritual Enrichment Opportunities

When you read the Bible you encounter God. God reveals himself in the person of Jesus Christ to men and women of faith. God longs to be in relationship with us and for us to know him more deeply. In a women's small group Bible study you will come to know God more intimately as you study his word and share your experiences with women of all ages. Please consider joining one of our studies this fall. If there is not a time that is convenient consider starting a small group of your own. With the help of the Women's Ministry team you can do this. Contact Kim Skaff with questions, 234-8673 or kskaff@fpcf.org.

Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman

By Beth Moore

Monday evenings at 7:00pm

Room 129

Beginning September 14

Facilitated by Peggy Anderson

Thursday mornings at 9:15am

Room 211

Beginning September 17

Facilitated by Kim Skaff

Child care provided

The book of Esther is not a typical book of the Bible. In fact, God's name is never mentioned! Beth Moore takes us on a journey through the story of Esther and helps us apply what we learn to our own lives. Esther trusted God and landed a blow that saved her people. This book is a profile in courage and contains many modern parallels for each of us. If you've ever felt inadequate, threatened, or pushed into situations that seemed overpowering, this is the study for you. Just as it was tough being a woman in Esther's day, it can be tough today. Join us as we study God's word and discover treasures that will aid us in our hurried, harried and pressured lives.

A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place

By Beth Moore

Wednesday mornings at 10:30am

Room 129

Beginning September 16

Facilitated by Kaye Hollitt and Carol Hostetler

Child care provided

The consistent theme of A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place is the desire of a holy God to dwell among mortals. We see this dramatically illustrated in the Old Testament story of the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Beth Moore helps us explore the fascinating account of the building of the tabernacle, the significance of its intricate design, its pivotal role in God's eternal plan, the grand fulfillment of its purpose by Jesus Christ and its variety of meanings for your walk with God today. You will be challenged to prepare your heart, like the holy of holies, to become a home for His love and glory. This study was Beth Moore's first in-depth Bible study and has recently been updated.

Romans: The Power of God

Thursday mornings at 9:45am

Room 207

Beginning September 17

Facilitated by Corinne Kage

Child care provided

The book of Romans is a personal letter, sent by a passionate, brilliant, highly-educated, in-your-face kind of man - the apostle Paul - who knew that God had called him to instruct His people in matters of faith and doctrine. Paul's words are powerful, challenging and life-changing for us today. This study will give you the opportunity to look at your own sin and God's unfathomable grace. It will draw you into a deeper relationship with God and a fresh perspective of what God has to say to you.

Grapevine-Women Reaching Women

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