

CONNEXION

A Monthly Newsletter
of

Peters Creek Church of the Brethren


2009

WHY A PRAYER CONTROVERSY?

How often do you pray? Where do you participate in prayer? Have you checked the Bible to more fully understand prayer? Have you read the prayers within the Bible?

I raise these questions since we have been suddenly thrust into controversies about prayers and those who pray within the Roanoke Valley and with the Inauguration of a new President of the United States. Some of the controversy has come because of challenges from those who consider themselves atheists or agnostics. Another part of the controversy has come from persons who have differing Christian viewpoints than those asked to pray at inaugural events, or public meetings. But I really think that most of the controversy comes from a lack of Biblical understanding about prayer.

Prayer in the Bible is presented as prayers of those assembled in gatherings. Prayers were a proscribed act during the feasts and festivals of Israel. National leaders of Israel – kings, priests, and prophets – prayed for the people as they gathered for the crowning of new kings, for the installation of priests, and during the feasts and festivals. The early church also gathered for prayer as a body of Christ. And the early Christians prayed in public at the Temple and at other public sites. Corporate and public prayers are recorded throughout the Bible. And a nation's leaders and the leaders of other religious faiths objected to the prayers of the early Christians – even to the point of trials and imprisonment and death of the Christians.

Prayer in the Bible is also presented as an individual act of piety and faith. Jesus often went out to a secluded place to pray. He told his followers to go to a private place to pray. And we know, of course, that Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples close by when the mob came to arrest him. Even on the

Cross, several of his "words" are words of prayer. There is no doubt that in his words, actions, and attitudes, Jesus taught us to pray. And "The Lord's Prayer" is a model of prayer with both individual and corporate overtones.

Yet, in the past month, prayer and who prays the prayers has become a point of controversy. Prayer has now become an issue of political importance. Until the issue of prayer arose in Roanoke City Council and with those chosen to pray at the inauguration of Barak Obama, most of us did not see prayer as controversial. Most of us have prayer routines that we practiced individually. Most of us participate in the corporate prayers included in our worship experiences. Most of us still do not understand why prayer has become so controversial.

I commend you who have an active prayer life. I want to give special thanks to the Prayer Group that meets in the church and those other groups which meet in homes to pray for our church, for individuals, and for the world. I also want to give thanks for all who share prayers for those on our weekly prayer list and on the prayer chain. Your prayers are heard and answered.

I want to encourage us not to take sides on the prayer issues that have been reported by the media. Rather, I ask us to pray harder for those who reject God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer. There is no better way that I know to prove the power of prayer than to follow Jesus Christ who calls us to pray for our enemies.

Let us pray for one another without ceasing. And let us claim the power of prayer to change people and the world.

Praying for you and with you!



FEBRUARY WORSHIPS

Our February worships will continue to focus on the theme of **"Becoming New with God!"**

Near the end of February, we begin the Christian Season of

Lent. As Christians, we are called to put away old things and become new with God. In Lent, we are called to examine our lives and to prepare to welcome the new life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So while the world focuses on the old problems -- the old ways of thinking and acting -- we Christians focus on becoming new with God and looking forward to the Resurrection.

FEBRUARY 1: SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Scripture: Gospel of Mark 1:21-28

Message: "A New Teaching"

FEBRUARY 8: BOY SCOUT SUNDAY

Scripture: Gospel of John 13:34-35; 15:12-17

Message: "A New Commandment"

FEBRUARY 15:

Scripture: Isaiah 65:17-25

Message: "New Heavens and New Earth"

FEBRUARY 22: COMMUNION

Scripture: Gospel of Luke 22:14-20

Letter to the Hebrews 9:15

Message: "A New Covenant"

WINTER COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 15

Our Winter Council Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 15 following worship and dinner. We aren't certain about the dinner yet, but it will probably be a Spaghetti Dinner served by the Junior High's.

This will be a time to celebrate our life together in 2008 and to look forward to 2009. Items of business will be discussed, and reports given.

This Council Meeting will also be a "Kick-Off" for our year of working diligently at the Natural Church Development Process. Come! Hear about Natural Church Development and the work of the "Vision Committee" as we approach Natural Church Development in 2009-2010.



ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 25 AT 6:00 PM



Our Ash Wednesday remembrance will be a simple meal of soup, cheese, and bread followed by a simple worship experience. The meal and worship will take place around the tables in the Fellowship Hall.

During the worship, we will offer the opportunity for worshipers to "impose the ashes," as well as a ritual of cleansing.

Since this is a meal, we will begin at 6:00 PM, but come when you can. We invite you to also bring a favorite cheese and/or bread to share for the meal. The soup will be provided.

Souper Bowl Sunday



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

FEBRUARY 1, 2009

Souper Bowl of Caring celebrates its 20th year in 2009. At Peters Creek, we celebrate our 14th year of participation with Souper Bowl of Caring.

This year, the Global Food Crisis Fund and Brethren Disaster Fund of the Church of the Brethren have set aside \$50,000 for matching grants for local food banks and soup kitchens. Congregations who raise at least \$500 for a local food pantry or soup kitchen in January and February, 2009 may apply for a matching grant of \$500.

Peters Creek is seeking to raise at least \$500 (and collect 750 food items) during Souper Bowl of Caring for Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank. The Women's Fellowship will match every dollar given up to \$500 as an additional challenge for Peters Creek.

On February 1, youth will stand at the doors with cans marked "Souper Bowl of Caring." All you are asked to do is to drop at least \$1.00 in their cans. And you may also bring canned goods, boxed foods, and other food items for Second Harvest Food Bank until February 8.

Just think, our donation of \$500 (or more) will be tripled to \$1500 when the Women's Fellowship and the Church of the Brethren grants are added!

THE "JOYFUL NOISE" OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8. PROCEEDS GO TO SIGUIENDO DE LOS PASOS DE JESUS, VIRLINA'S MINISTRY TO HISPANICS IN ROANOKE.



Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship has begun the New Year of 2009 with the discussion and planning of a full year of activities.

In the upcoming months, we plan to have a couple of baby showers, Easter Egg making and our Holiday Bazaar along with several other activities for the year.

Take a look at your calendar and mark as a reminder that we will begin making Easter Eggs in mid-March so that you will have ample time to collect your orders for the eggs. We have grown with the number of eggs made over the last few years and would like to exceed the 1,049 eggs that we made last year. It can be done with YOUR HELP.

Join us sometime at a Women's Fellowship meeting. We WELCOME ALL LADIES of the church.

See you



Join us for Sunday School and the worship of your choice!

CHURCH CLOSING INFORMATION!

In the event of inclement weather, decisions about church activities on Sunday will be made by 6:30AM on Sunday morning. A message will be placed on the voice mail and local TV stations will be notified. We also contact radio stations WVTF/WVTR, Spirit FM, WWWW and WSLC/Q99. Our policy for weekdays is that we cancel daytime and evening activities whenever the Roanoke County Schools are cancelled. We also put a message on the church voicemail when the office is closed due to inclement weather.



CAMP BETHEL

All Summer camp information (brochure, forms, and schedules) is on-line NOW! Brochure packets will be mailed by **February 10** to all campers, churches, camp reps and pastors.

Busy Bees...

We have a good selection of dish cloths for sale at \$1.00 each.



QUILTING GROUP

Donated fifty dollars to the Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank.

A donation was made to the Stain Glass Window Fund in memory of Norma King.

At our luncheon on February 4th, we will be celebrating birthdays for Mae Honaker, Clara Walters and Margie Hash.

"A birthday is just the first day of another 365 day journey around the sun."

ENJOY THE TRIP!

Author unknown



The Significance of Lent

Lent is the fourth season of the Christian year. Its length is the 40 days preceding Easter Day, not counting Sundays. This means Lent

always begins on a Wednesday, known as Ash Wednesday.

Lent commemorates Jesus' fast and temptation in the wilderness of Judea Province, which, according to the Gospel, lasted 40 days. Just as Jesus confronted his temptations during these 40 days, Lent helps Christians focus on our most basic need as sinners: forgiveness.

The only way our Lord's forgiving power can become effective in our lives is by our taking the initiative to confront our sins, confess them and repent of them. In short, Lent is a season of penitence.

Some Christians fast during Lent. This denial of bodily comforts can help encourage self-reflection about the need for Jesus' forgiveness.

CHANCEL CHOIR OFFICERS FOR 2009

- President – Missy Carter
- Vice President – Sue Lawrence
- Secretary – Pam Clark
- Treasurer – Mabel Naff
- Music Secretary – Missy Carter

- 1 – Phillip Bailey
- 2 – Minnie Bayer, Carol Looney, Mae Bell Honaker
- 3 – John Montgomery
- 5 – Wayne Carroll,
- 5 – Clara Walters
- 6 – Terri Kelly
- 7 – Virginia Bowles
- 8 – Virgil Garst, Will Fabrie, Sam Cosgrove
- 10 – John Kelly
- 11 – Jack Wimmer
- 13 – Sharon Linkous
- 16 – Vickie Wise
- 18 – Melba Martin, Nathaniel Mau
- 20 – Olen Hylton, Kim Clingenpeel, Margie Hash
- 21 – Aiden Tuck
- 22 – Georgia Coffman, Clarence Wise
- 23 – Mitch Mullens, Owen Halverson
- 26 – Harold Harrison
- 28 – John J. Showalter, Frederick Bruner



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Counters:

Willard Flora and John Montgomery

Deacons:

Doris Epperly and Marie Smith

Fellowship Time:

Harold Craun

Sound System:

Darrell Hungate

Greeters:

2/01 Carol Plunkett and Katherine Mau

2/08 Merle and Rose Heckman

2/15 Trimmy and Betty Lou Carter

2/22 Ray and Pam Clark

Ushers:

2/01 Wes Boone, James Cox, Joel Keith, Joe Kropff

2/08 Ray Clark, Trimmy Carter, Mike Mau, John Montgomery

2/15 Jeff Graffeo, Don King, George Walters, Clarence Wise

2/22 Wes Boone, Trimmy Carter, Ray Clark, Richard Wright

Sunday School Nursery:

2/01 Regina Ball

2/08 Rick Halverson

2/15 Christa Hylton

2/22 Susan Lugones

Worship Nursery:

2/01 Robin Louthen and Bobby Wilson

2/08 Jeff and Melanie Graffeo

2/15 Vickie Wise and Marie Bliss

2/22 Rick and Christi Halverson

Scripture Readers:

2/01 Pam Clark

2/08 Adam Hylton

2/15 Willard Flora

2/22 Wayne Carroll

Children's Story:

2/01 Wanda Atkins

Children's Church:

2/01 Rick Halverson and Linda Pulz

2/08 Rick Halverson and Linda Pulz

2/15 Cathy Keith and Sandi Broughman

2/22 Cathy Keith and Sandi Broughman



Happy Anniversary!

February Anniversaries

9 – Trimmy & Betty Lou Carter

9 – Ken & Janet Otey

18 – Bob & Shirley Goodman

Please notify the church office if you wish to be included in or make corrections to the birthday and anniversary list.

Sarah Ammermann, Sharon Ammon, Pam Brashear, Drucilla Collins, Bob Hardy, Debbie Hartsock, Otha Huff, Nannie King, Ruth Lawhorn, Burt Morrison, Connie Nichols, Kelly Otey, Olive Pauley, Jeanette Patterson, Lester Reed, Jimmy Spencer, Iva Whitson, Wesley York



Please notify the church office if you would like to add or remove a name from the prayer list.

**UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS
FEBRUARY 2009**

DATE	EVENT
2-01	Souper Bowl Sunday
2-02	Men's and Women's Fellowship
2-04	Busy Bees Birthday Luncheon
2-07	Interdistrict Youth Retreat Boy Scout Sunday
2-15	Church Council Meeting
2-16	Deacon's Meeting
2-21	Amy and Jordan's Baby Shower
2-22	Bread and Cup Communion
2-25	Ash Wednesday Meal and Worship
2-28	Tater N' Talent Night



You are invited to a baby shower for Amy and Jordan Mau on **Saturday, February 21** at 2:00PM in the Fellowship Hall.

“GONE COUNTRY”

Mark your calendar and make plans to come and join us for **“TATER N’ TALENT NIGHT”** on **Saturday, February 28**. Dinner will be at 5:00PM and the show will begin at 6:00PM. We will have awards for the most original, best-themed dressed, best couple or group. If you would like to perform in the show, we need your act before February 17th. For more information or if you would like to help behind the scenes, please contact Darrell Hungate at 380-2748.

VALENTINE’S DAY



In the early Christian church, there were three priests named Valentine or Valentinus. Though they didn’t live at the same time, each was said to be holy and each had been martyred for his faith. All three priests were designated as saints. Around the year A.D. 498, Pope Gelasius declared February 14 as St. Valentine’s Day.

Valentine’s Day came to be associated with love, romance and marriage. The day is now so popular that only during the Christmas season do people mail more greeting cards.

No matter how many cards, flowers or sweets you receive this Valentine’s Day, be assured that God loves you with an “everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3, NRSV).

5 Key Areas To Discover Gratitude

1.	Today, I will be grateful for the wonderful Family that the Lord has given to me. (Colossians 3:15)
2.	My Health is an amazing gift from God, and I will not take it for granted but instead choose to be thankful. (3 John 1:2)
3.	I will always give thanks to God for His abundant blessings and for giving me a hope and a better tomorrow. (Psalm 118:28)
4.	My Relationship with others are treasures, and I will remember to thank the Lord for placing others in my life. (John 13:35)
5.	My Future is brighter because of God’s goodness and grace, and I will choose to praise and worship Him today. (Proverbs 23:18)
Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus (I Thessalonians 5:18)	



SHARE OUR COUPONS

In a sermon a while back, I suggested that one way to help one another in this financial crisis was simply to share coupons. Some people responded favorably to this idea and offered to help sort and take care of coupons.

The way it will work is this. First, any coupons that you do not use may be brought to the church. They will be sorted by expiration date, and placed in large manila envelopes marked with the month they will expire. Any one who wishes to look at the coupons may look at them and take those which they need and/or will use.

We will try this for at least 6 months and then determine if there has been enough interest and support to continue this. But we will need any coupons that you do not use to supply coupons for our envelopes.

And if you find coupons for restaurants and fast foods that you do not use, we will also have an envelope marked “Restaurants/Fast Foods” for you to check before you go to lunch on Sunday.

Pastor Jack

WHY ASH WEDNESDAY?

Traditionally, the Christian church has observed the seven weeks before Easter as a time of penitence and spiritual self-examination.



Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, derives its name from the ancient practice of marking the foreheads of worshipers with ashes from the unused palm branches of the previous year. Ashes historically have had a dual significance.

First, they are Old Testament symbols of sadness and humility. Job, in the midst of all his troubles, cried out to God from the ash heap.

The second symbolic meaning of ashes is as a reminder of our mortality. Each of us faces the inevitability of physical death. Our bodies and material possessions eventually will turn to dust and ashes. This is a reminder that we dare not trust in things that crumble. But Lent does not leave us on the ash heap. It begins with Ash Wednesday, but ends with Easter. And Easter proclaims that, through Christ, God resurrects us from our dust and ashes, makes us new creatures and brings life out of death!

