



THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH IN THE ACRES

THE CHALLENGER

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 2

MARCH 2009

Sunrise!

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

To Reconcile: *transitive verb* 1 a: to restore to friendship or harmony
<reconciled the factions>

There is something most beautiful about a Sunrise. All night long, the night has been threatening and the night has had many points of uncertainty. But then things brighten and the sun breaks through. Yes, it's morning! What a blessing it is morning and another day invites us into the great opportunities it offers!!

It is with great joy that I am writing today. On the 8th of February, the church family affirmed their desire for me to serve as the next Pastor of our congregation and, with gladness and much prayer and thought, I have accepted the call to serve as the Shepherd at Church in the Acres!

It feels just like the moment that the sun breaks through. Suddenly that which was unseen becomes clearly seen and the shadows are pushed back to make room for the light. I do feel the power of God's clarity on this important call to minister in this new way for the God that I love and with His people that are so special to me.

Gina and I and our girls are ready to serve and to give back the love that has so freely flowed from the church family at Church in the Acres.

With eternity in mind,

Pastor Greg Dyson

Pastor, Church in the Acres



And you thought YOU were excited!

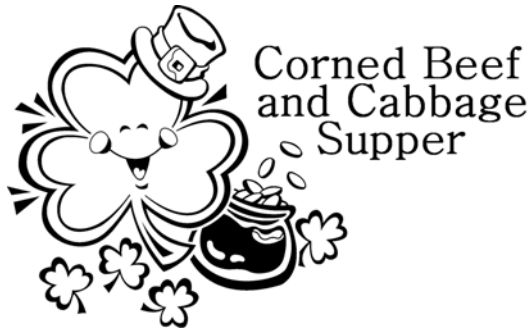
SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Message from our New Pastor*
- *Lenten Prayer Service*
- *Lancaster Chorale Worship Concert*
- *Corned Beef and Cabbage Supper*



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**SATURDAY NIGHT SUPPER FOR MISSIONS
CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE DINNER
SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH,
5 TO 7 P.M.**

Adults \$7.00 Ages 4-10 \$4.00

Prepared by the Missions Team

You may sign up for Eat-In, Take-Out or
Delivery orders (782-2577).

All proceeds will go toward our Mission and
Outreach Ministries.



WITH WILLING HANDS

SERVE. SACRIFICE. SURRENDER.

March is the month for our annual America For Christ Offering. Your gifts support ministries that transform lives, churches and communities across the United States and Puerto Rico—bringing hope to children living in poverty and equipping leaders to share the Good News of Jesus through evangelism, discipleship, congregational transformation and prophetic justice.

Offering envelopes are available in the pew racks and at the Walker Hall bulletin board.

Look for more information in the Sunday bulletins, or at www.abc-afc.org.

“For the love of Christ urges us on...”

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

The Challenger

**will again be a monthly
publication beginning
with this issue, with the
exception of a combined
July/August
Summer Challenger.**

**As always, articles are due
in the church office by the
15th of each month.**

Next Deadline: March 15th

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

On February 8th our Church Members voted to:

- Approve a 2009 budget of \$232,160
- Accept the recommendation of the Search Committee to call Gregory S. Dyson to be our Pastor
- Reinstate the temporarily suspended portions of our Bylaws regarding organization and board and committee structure
- Begin electing officers for 2009 and Board and Committee members, in order to rebuild our structure

A church meeting will be held on Sunday, March 22nd at 4 p.m. for the purpose of voting on additional officers, board and committee members and delegates.

Church Members — Mark your calendar.

LENTEN SERMON SERIES – COLOSSIANS

*Jesus * Judas * Joe*

Jesus Colossians focuses on the supremacy of Christ

Judas Colossians warns against perversions (Satanic and humanistic)

Joe Colossians teaches that the average “Joe” Christian has a duty to God



From now till Resurrection Sunday we'll investigate three big thoughts:

Jesus and who he is.

We'll look at **evil** and what evils were plaguing the church at Colossi and how could they deal with the challenge.

We'll also look at the average joe, **Joe Christian**. What should the average Christian consider his/her duty before God?

March

1 AM – “Spiritual Surgery” - Have you signed the waiver yet? Focus Verse: Colossians 1:11

PM – **“God’s Rule”** Focus Verse: Colossians 1:10

8 AM – “Imitators of Christ” Focus Verse: Colossians 1:12

There will be 2 Baptisms as part of the morning service.

Special Event: Lenten Prayer Service at 3PM – A special prayer service to help us prepare for the incredible work to be done by our Lord Jesus Christ. This Lenten Prayer Service will be an important time of preparation of the heart. Join us for 30 minutes of waiting on the Lord.

PM – **“Get Yours”** Focus verses: Colossians 2:18-19

15 AM – Lancaster Bible College Chorale – Sacred Worship Concert

Join us for a special time of Worship in Song. The Lancaster Team will treat us with 70 minutes of amazing music and song. This concert will be a something that you will not forget. Bring a friend.

Special Event: Fellowship Luncheon – Immediately following the concert we will have a fellowship dinner with the Lancaster Chorale and our entire church family. The Springfield Chinese Christian Church will join us as well for this special morning.

PM – **“Raising Heaven”** Focus verses: Colossians 3:1-4

22 AM – “Death Sentence or Life Sentence?” Focus Verses: Colossians 3:5-9

Special Event: Church Meeting at 4PM including elections (agenda to be posted)

PM – Sermon to be announced

29 AM – Message by Shiloh Bradshaw

PM – Message by Pastor Rich Bonin

April

5 Palm Sunday – INSTALLATION of our Senior Pastor, Gregory Dyson (watch for details)

AM – **“A New Man in Christ”** Focus Verses: Colossians 1:10-11

PM – **“A Time to Heal”** Focus Verse: Colossians 3:13



APRIL 12TH RESURRECTION MORNING: HE IS RISEN!

7AM – Join us for a special SON Rise Service at Eastfield Mall Food Court – all welcome.

Pastor Greg’s Lenten Sermon Series Continues:

9:45 AM – **“Peace with God”** Focus Verse: Colossians 3:15

6:00 PM – **“Make a Joyful Noise in Celebration to God: He is Risen Indeed!”**

Focus Verse: Colossians 3:16

WATCH FOR MORE *HOLY WEEK* DETAILS IN THE APRIL *CHALLENGER*.

OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY

A new updated Church in the Acres Directory is being compiled. This is a booklet listing the names, addresses and phone numbers of all church members and those who attend regularly.

If you are not a member but feel a part of our church family, you are invited to submit your name (and all the names in your household), address and telephone number to be included in the directory. Please type or print legibly, and drop off at the church office or email to info@churchintheacres.org by March 22nd.

The directories will also include a listing of church staff, elected officers, board and committee members and delegates. We hope to have the directories available, one per household, during April, after the boards and committees have organized. This will be a great tool for keeping in touch with our church family.

LANCASTER CHAMBER SINGERS AND CHORALE TO PRESENT A WORSHIP CONCERT SUNDAY, MARCH 15TH AT 9:45 A.M. IN OUR SANCTUARY

Be sure to join us for this very special music and worship experience during our Celebration I service time. We are fortunate to have the Chorale and the Chamber Singers, under the direction of Mr. Robert Bigley, who will present the worship service in it’s entirety on that day as part of their annual East Coast tour. All are welcome; we will also be joined by the Springfield Chinese Christian Church.

We will all gather in Walker Hall for a Fellowship Pot Luck Luncheon following the service. We hope you will plan to stay to meet the members of the Lancaster Bible College choirs and bring a dish to share.



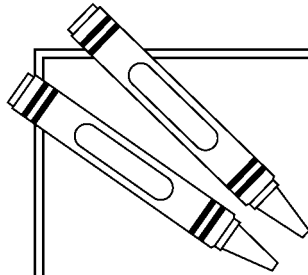
Easter Lilies

Order forms will be available soon for Easter Flowers to adorn our Celebration I altar on Easter Sunday. You give (or loan) plants in memory of loved ones or to honor someone special.

OUR NEW CUSTODIAN

Beginning on March 2nd Ric Norris will be our week-day custodian. If you stop by the church and see a new face, be sure to say a *quick* “hello” and introduce yourself to Ric.

DEADLINE FOR APRIL 2009 CHALLENGER ARTICLES IS: APRIL 15TH



Just for KIDS

A FAMILY OF PRAYER

The book of Acts tells about a man named Cornelius. He was a Roman centurion from Caesarea who worshiped God. Through his encounter with Cornelius, Peter learned that God accepts everyone who fears him and does what is right.

Use the code below to see the example set by Cornelius and his family. Solve the math problems by using the grid. Then use the key to find the letter that matches each answer. Write the letter on the blank.

| GRID | |
|------|---|
| A | B |
| 2 | 4 |
| C | D |
| 6 | 5 |

KEY: a=7 e=8 i=10 o=9 u=11 y=6

"H e ___nd ___ll h___s f___m___l___
 A+C A+D A+D B+C A+D B+C A+B

w___r___ d___v___ ___t ___nd
 A+C A+C A+C B+D C+D A+D

G___d-f___ ___r___ng; h___ g___v___
 B+D A+C A+D B+C A+C A+D A+C

g___n___r___ ___sl___ t___ th___s___ ___n
 A+C A+C B+D C+D A+B B+D B+D A+C B+C

n___ ___d ___nd pr___ ___ ___d t___ G___d
 A+CA+C A+D A+D A+B A+C B+D B+D

r___g___l___rl___." ___cts 10:2, NIV
 A+C C+D A+D A+B A+D



Our volunteers cook and bring a meal to the Springfield Rescue Mission on a Wednesday almost every month. They leave from the church parking lot at 10:30 a.m.

You are invited to participate by

- going with the group
- shopping for the food
- baking or cooking part of the meal
- donating money for the food

To help in any way, please contact Helen Williams at 783-7624.

Answers: "He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly." Acts 10:2, NIV



INTERCHURCH SOFTBALL

Our Church Softball Season is approaching. Anyone interested in playing can contact John DeMaria for all the information at 783-9427.



There's a Class for You!

THURSDAY FAMILY CHRISTIAN LIVING NIGHTS

*6:30-8 PM

We continue to provide and enjoy our all-ages Fellowship, Christian Education and Prayer opportunities each Thursday evening.

Adult Selections:

Becoming a Contagious Christian –

Instructor - Roger Coughlin

Praying 101 – Instructor - The Holy Spirit

Understanding Your Purpose - Instructor -

Pastor Greg, assisted by Erik Martin

Children's Selections: Two Super classes taught by Bev Vautrain, Lee Lovell and Rebecca Bicknell offer our children Christian education, prayer and lots of fun!

Youth Programming (*begins at 6 p.m.):

The Youth, under the instruction of a dynamic youth leadership team, are experiencing life to the fullest at CIA.

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

Each family night ends with a meal! Join us each Thursday. Our **Women's Home Bible Study** group meets each Tuesday evening at Nancy Hand's home. Gina Dyson facilitates this Bible Study.

For information and directions, call Nancy at 783-7197. (Ask about monthly **Scrapbooking!**)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION CLASS

Tuesday, March 10th
from 6 to 7:30 p.m.



Membership
Class

If you have been attending our church for a while and have been thinking about becoming a member, you are invited to join this class.

Please call the church office or email cheryl@churchintheacres.org to attend.

BAPTISM

On March 8th we will have 2 baptisms in our morning service. We will plan another in early April for others who have expressed interest in being baptized. Please call or email the office by March 10th if you would like to be baptized.

MEN'S MINISTRIES

Weekly Men's Bible Study is offered each Wednesday evening at 7:30 at Christ Presbyterian Church, 1597 Allen Street. All men welcome.

Monthly Men's Breakfast Bible Study on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 7 a.m. at Church in the Acres. For more info, contact George LaRoe: glroe@comcast.net. Next Breakfast on March 15th.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP SUPPER at Camp Grotonwood: Sunday, March 15, 5:30 pm

\$13 each or \$11 for 5 or more. Guest speaker, Retired Lt. Detective Valmore Williams of the Boston Police Force. Appetizers and Dinner. Reservations 978-448-5763. See posted flyer at church.



LENTEN
PRAYER
SERVICE

LENTEN PRAYER SERVICE

3-3:30 p.m. March 1st

You are invited to a special prayer service to help us prepare for the incredible work to be done by our Lord Jesus Christ. This Lenten Prayer Service will be an important time of preparation of the heart. Join us in the Narthex for 30 minutes of waiting on the Lord. Our theme this Lenten season is "**Holy Habits**". Devotional booklets by Rich Bimler are available for each family.

FAMILY NEWS PAGE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:
(Our members 60 and up)

- March 9 Gussie Crawford
- 13 Donald Gregg
- 13 Elizabeth Worthington
- 15 Adeline Donahue
- 16 Marilyn Szpakowski
- 18 Doris Provost
- 27 Phyllis Larson

NEW BABY

Willow Beverly Martinez was born on February 18th. Congratulations to proud parents Rachel Beckwith and Devin Martinez, grandparents, Katharine and Daniel Champagne, Great Grandma and Grandpa Bev and Ray Vautrain and Great-Great Grandma Elva McAllister.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:
(Multiples of 5 and 50+)

Doris and Richard Provost, who will celebrate their 51st anniversary on March 22nd.

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Rev. Daniel and Nancy Nicewonger have transferred their church membership to Mission Baptist Church in Locust, NC as of January 13, 2009.

NEW MEMBERS

The Right Hand of Fellowship was extended to Megan Smith and Barbara Lavallee on February 1st—Welcome!

THANK YOU NOTES

have been received from Frances Cray and Elva McAllister for their poinsettias and visit from carolers; from Lee Lovell for expressions of congratulations on his 80th birthday; the Springfield Rescue Mission for our year-end gift, and WNEC for our support of their fundraiser supper for the Alternative Spring Break program.

RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED

Byron Nelson, Beverley Anderson, Gil MacCallum

LAY CARE LIST

Send a card, make a call, say a prayer...

(Most addresses are in the Church Directory. Office 782-2577)

- March 1 Florence Dow
- 8 Hazel Jawan
- 15 Frances Cray
- 22 Phyllis Larson
- 29 Lillian Miller



BABY DEDICATION

Cassandra Lynn Dalinsky, daughter of Melissa and Raymond Dalinsky, was dedicated on January 11, 2009.

OUR SINCERE SYMPATHY TO:

The family of church member **Elizabeth Wallace**, who died on January 31st. Her memorial service was held in our church on February 6th.

The family of Charter Member **Catherine Snow**, who passed away on February 9th. Her funeral was held in our church on February 11th.

Marian Duncan on the loss of her brother, John Girdis, in Dec.

Missionary Rick Barnes on the passing of his father on Dec. 18th
 Marjorie Dickinson Damkowski on the death of her brother, Charles (Bud) Lakin, Dec. 25th.
 A memorial service will be held at Evang. Cov. Church, Apr. 13th.

Church in the Acres (Baptist)
1383 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01119-2614

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*Where Christ is at the center,
the Bible is our guide, and People matter.
Growing Disciples to transform the world.*

Time Valued Material
Mailed February 25, 2009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



The Challenger is a monthly publication of the Church in the Acres (Baptist) except for a combined July/August edition. Articles should be placed in the office drop-off folder outside the office door, the drop-off box on the office counter, mailed, placed in the Walker Hall door mail slot, faxed or e-mailed by the 15th of each month. (Articles may be edited for length.)

E-mail: info@churchintheacres.org *Fax:* (413) 782-6856

The Church Office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, *and* Tuesday through Thursday from 1 to 3 p.m. *Phone:* 413-782-2577

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pastor | Gregory S. Dyson |
| Pastor Emeritus | Rev. E. Gage Hotaling |
| Administrative Assistant | Cheryl Nacewicz |
| Director of Music | Catherine Berry |
| Handbell Choir Director | Jeff Tisdell |
| Celebration II Worship Leaders | Sandy O'Neil, Don Williams |
| Weekday Custodian | Ric Norris |
| Weekend Custodians | Ruth Butler and Joanne Case |