



January 2017
Number 243

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January Events:

Wednesday, January 11
Business Meeting 6:30 pm, Forest Chapel

- Sunday, January 15
- GUM Sunday—Peanut Butter
 - 3rd Sunday Refreshments in Forest Chapel after 11 am Service
 - **Deacons' Meeting 12:15 pm**
 - Refugee Training from 6:00—7:30 pm in Forest Chapel

Tuesday, January 17
Mostly Men's Occasional Book Club,
6:30 pm at Sticks & Stones

Wednesday, January 18
Bible Study: Immigrants in the Old Testament
with Jason Myers, 6:30 pm, Forest Chapel

Thursday, January 19
• Forever 39 11:30 am K&W

- Sunday, January 22
- Cello Recital 3:30 pm, Forest Chapel
 - Leslie-Ann Hix Tommey Ordination, 6 pm College Park Church

Wednesday, January 25
Bible Study: Immigrants in the Old Testament
with Jason Myers, 6:30 pm, Forest Chapel

Sunday, January 29
Deacon Ordination—both Services

Inside:

P. 2-4 *New Years Message*
Kari Baumann

P. 5 *Syrian Refugees*

P. 6-8 *Why We Read,* Will Schwalbe

New Year's Message

Happy New Year! Thank you for being here this morning! I appreciate this opportunity more than you know. I am grateful for the support and the opportunity to share while my divinity school goal is on hold for a little while longer.

I recently read a series of tweets by Julie Rodgers, a writer and speaker on issues of sexuality and social justice **who also served in the Chaplain's office at Wheaton College. She said, "I've been reflecting on the liturgies in my life and realized they're dominated by the news, which is mostly terrible. It makes me feel rage, righteous or otherwise, and I know that will shape who I become. It will make me more angry and less gracious. So I've started recent mornings with life-giving reading. It reminds me there's beauty and hope. And I still have time to despair later on!"**

I relate so deeply to what she is saying here. I, too, have a terrible habit of checking the news on my phone first thing in the morning and letting it shape my day. I also appreciate her view of liturgy, that it goes beyond our **order of service at church. Liturgy is often defined as "the work of the people." Others also point out the historic nature of public service in the word "liturgy," where it can be defined as work in service of God that benefits the people.** Here at church, we might think of our liturgy as the candles, prayers, songs and other rhythms that shape our worship. Besides our music and prayers and reading responses, some of the Sunday morning liturgies I have **noticed here over the years are children's worship, greeting time, Mr. Jerry's candy, Mark and Angela's coffee ministry, and kisses from Penny Chambers.** We also have liturgies that show up as needed, such as the casserole committee, helping hands, or the Angel Tree.

In his book, *Life's Too Short to Pretend You're Not Religious*, professor and author David Dark asks that we pay attention to the liturgies of our lives by pointing out **that liturgy is, "Never more nor less than what we actually do with our energies."** Nationally he calls us to think about our liturgies of incarceration as well as our liturgies of libraries and literacy. I am challenged every time he posts a news story on capitalism, on racism, or on art with **the hashtag "liturgy."** On a more personal level, he encourages us to remember that how we spend our time says a lot about what we believe. How we act helps shape and form our lives as well as creating community.

When Atticus was younger, I recognized certain liturgies of our day: the things we always said before school or after a bath, the songs we always sang. These days our morning liturgies are things like not talking too much before we have coffee, and having breakfast ready for Atticus when he wakes up. We make space for each other as none of us could exactly be considered morning people. In the evening, our liturgies include a dinnertime routine where we try to recount our favorite and least favorite thing about the day, reading in pajamas, and off-key singing (mine). We value literature, music, food, and spending time together.

This definition of liturgy has caused me to evaluate what it is I make time for and what it says about what I believe is important. There are those in this congregation who faithfully serve at GUM, who read with students at their local school, who agitate for change. I have friends who are faithful to the liturgy of picture-taking in a way that I never manage to be. My grandma has the liturgy of card-sending. Think of the person you know who embodies the liturgy of listening, or of gardening, or of making an excellent cup of coffee.

This is, of course, New Year's Day, an important time to reflect on where we are and where we are going. I encourage you to take the slip of paper and write one liturgy of life that is important to you and something that you might like to add. We will take a few minutes to do that and then, if you are comfortable, share during sermon talkback.

Before we start, let me encourage you to consider adding the liturgy of reading stories to your life. Studies show that students who read Harry Potter are empathetic, and more compassionate. They are more welcoming of refugees and more attuned to people who struggle in the world. This makes sense because the seven-book series is about bravely standing against forces of evil - evil that takes the form of prejudice, of torture, of disenfranchisement. I have told Atticus that reading these stories is like practice to know what to do when we

Immigrants
in the
Old Testament

New Bible Study
with Jason Myers

Wed. Nights, 6:30 pm
Jan. 18 - Feb. 22
Forest Chapel

The first two weeks will study Ruth & Jonah.

see injustice in the world. We can be brave like Hermione or Ron or Harry.

There are also studies that show that reading stories is not just for kids. Fiction that is character-based creates empathy for all ages. As Atticus Finch says, we **need to walk around in one another's shoes to really understand each other**, and fiction is an especially important way to achieve that. In an upcoming book, Will Schwalbe points out that reading can further our engagement with the world and with one another. **(That's an assertion that Mike might dispute when my nose is firmly entrenched in a book and he is having trouble getting my attention.)** Now is a perfect time to commit this year to reading stories from another point of view, especially a point of view that is marginalized in our culture. I make an effort to ensure at least every other book I read is about someone who has a different perspective and who has something to teach me. We as a congregation did this over the summer when we read and discussed *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio and the importance of choosing kindness.

As I tell students and parents at my school, reading is the safest way to learn about the world. I encourage you to make reading one of your liturgies this year. We will take a few minutes to write down some responses.

Our text today is from Matthew 25. In this chapter, Jesus, our God who tells stories, tells a few parables. As always, these parables are intended to disrupt our thinking, to subvert traditional wisdom, and to highlight an aspect of the kingdom of God.

In our specific text, Jesus tells the parable of the sheep and the goats. When I was a little girl, the idea I **got from this story was clear enough: Don't be a goat. I used to feed my aunt and uncle's goats when they were on vacation, and let's just say that they are not the most compliant creatures.** The Gatlinburg souvenir t-shirt I received did not always feel like quite enough compensation for dealing with the goats. So, how do you keep from being a goat? Believe in Jesus, accept him into your heart, and you will be one **of God's sheep. Perfect! Check and check.**

Except, that's not what the text says. This parable, which could even be called a prophecy, says something else entirely. Jesus doesn't talk at all about belief or faith. He speaks of action.

As I said earlier, Jesus told parables in order to disrupt or subvert. I am not sure how surprising this was to his audience, though I have to think it was **unexpected in some ways. Jesus' words may not surprise some of you, but I was raised in a church that focused very intently on "right belief" and this story still feels a little bit shocking to me. I don't remember my childhood church focusing much on providing for physical needs such as hunger, thirst, clothing, or shelter for the people outside of our congregation.** Looking back, I wonder if my Sunday School teachers knew that this was in there, that this was what Jesus

said? I wonder if we should have spent more time gathering canned goods and a little bit less time at the flannel board.

It would be wrong of me to imply that faith in God is **unimportant or that theology and belief don't matter. I could perhaps have called this sermon, "Read and Act;"** both are an important part of this journey. I love to read the Bible and to try to apply its messages to my life. Of course our beliefs inform our actions. But right belief, **knowing the "answers," is not enough.**

Nor is Jesus calling us to simply be do-gooders. It is easy to buy a few extra cans, or to write a check. And it makes us feel good. It is much more difficult to do this work **every day, to continue to show up when people's lives don't magically change, when we cannot fix the world's problems.** It is hard to remember the dignity of others, to keep from turning real people, made in the image of God, into object lessons.

There are people in this room who can tell us this, people who have worked with children in foster care, and people who have taught English refugees and immigrants, people who have worked and fought for civil rights, and people who have faithfully visited friends and family in prison. They will tell us that there are no easy answers when it comes to the work that Jesus is talking about. The things that make people poor and hungry, that cause people to be without safe clean drinking water, that cause people to be without homes, these are systems for which there are no easy answers or quick fixes. There are innocent children who are killed without justice. There are mental health crises that go unresolved. There is endless paperwork and bureaucracy.

And yet Jesus is here telling us that each action matters. Each well that we have helped to dig matters. Each pair of toddler pants that was sorted in the fellowship hall for our Syrian refugee family this week matters. Each tube of toothpaste that was purchased for inmates this Christmas matters.

Each of these matters because, as Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, the kingdom of God is being revealed around us in the poor, the sick, and the broken-hearted, if only we have eyes to see. It matters because when we feel that God is absent in the world, it is likely that God is outside of where we thought God would be. It is impossible to hear what Jesus is saying and to imagine that he is only speaking about some far-off future in the clouds. He is speaking, as his mother Mary did, of the here and now, of justice for the oppressed, of food for the hungry, of the humble being raised up. And we are the ones he has entrusted with bringing this work into the world.

This is not work that we are called to do alone. We can and should continue to practice the liturgies that are already in place: gathering food monthly for GUM, opening our building to Girl Scouts and support groups. One of the beautiful things about being in a community such as this is the support you can receive when you find

Continued on p. 4

New Year's Message, continued from p. 3

a “work of the people” that you are passionate about and that you would like to try. Every member is a minister, and that is a gift to all of us. The people of God and the Holy Spirit of God meet us in our places of passion and keep us grounded and from being overwhelmed by the needs we see around us.

There is work to join in, but it is not your work alone. If you find yourself, as I often do, to be unsure about how specifically to help, to feel almost paralyzed with indecision, let me recommend that you simply join in with something that we are already doing here. As strange as it might sound, I believe that action can be an antidote to anxiety much like the safety of our Sunday morning liturgy helps us know which step to take next. Two of our priorities as a church (you can read them in the bulletin) are to serve our community and encourage everyone to be connected. These go hand-in-hand. Please consider the work of the Missions Team - doing, as Atticus did, a lemonade stand for Three Nickels, helping with Out of The Garden, or assisting families at Peck Elementary. On a national level, Sojourners magazine has a Matthew 25 pledge that you can sign and they will send you readings as well as ideas and actions for the coming year. If you are struggling with ideas for supporting neighbors in the margins, this seems to be a great place to start.

Being part of a community with many pairs of eyes can also help us see a difficult truth: the goats would not have neglected Jesus on purpose. They did not see that he was **there. This is one place where I find that reading others'** stories helps me: the more I can imagine a protagonist who is different than me, the easier it is to see the image of God in everyone, everywhere. If we believe that Jesus identifies with those in the margins of society, we have to be prepared to listen to what they have to say, and to change our lives and actions in response. One of the beautiful and difficult things I have found about following Jesus in this world is that there is always more to learn and there are always new places to go with him.

Finally, an aside for those of us who struggle with guilt, let me remind you that this work of God, this work of the people, should never come from a place of guilt. It comes **from knowing and believing that we are God's beloved. In 2nd Corinthians, Paul says that Christ's love compels** him. I have, in the past, taken that as a command to try really really hard to be loved by God, but I am learning to see it as an opportunity to believe in that love for myself and to accept the joy of sharing it with the world.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. This is the liturgy of our salvation. Now is the time to take this liturgy, this work of the people, and follow it to the places that God promises will lead to eternal life.

Kari Baumann
1 January 2017



The GUM Crew preparing a meal at Christmas.

TOTAL KITCHEN REBUILD

The estimate for the kitchen capital campaign project is \$205,000. Why so much? Of that, about 75% goes toward demolition and construction. The most expensive costs are waterproofing, electrical and plumbing –totaling \$50,000. Other big ticket items include the complex range exhaust system with fire suppression, dedicated HVAC, flooring and ceiling. The remainder covers commercial equipment including a Hobart dishwasher, on-demand hot water, stainless steel shelves, dish carts (reduce paper plate waste) and work tables.

HOW TO HELP?

All of the funds for the kitchen rebuild will be raised in 2016-2017 via your generous donations, separate from our regular offering for the general budget.

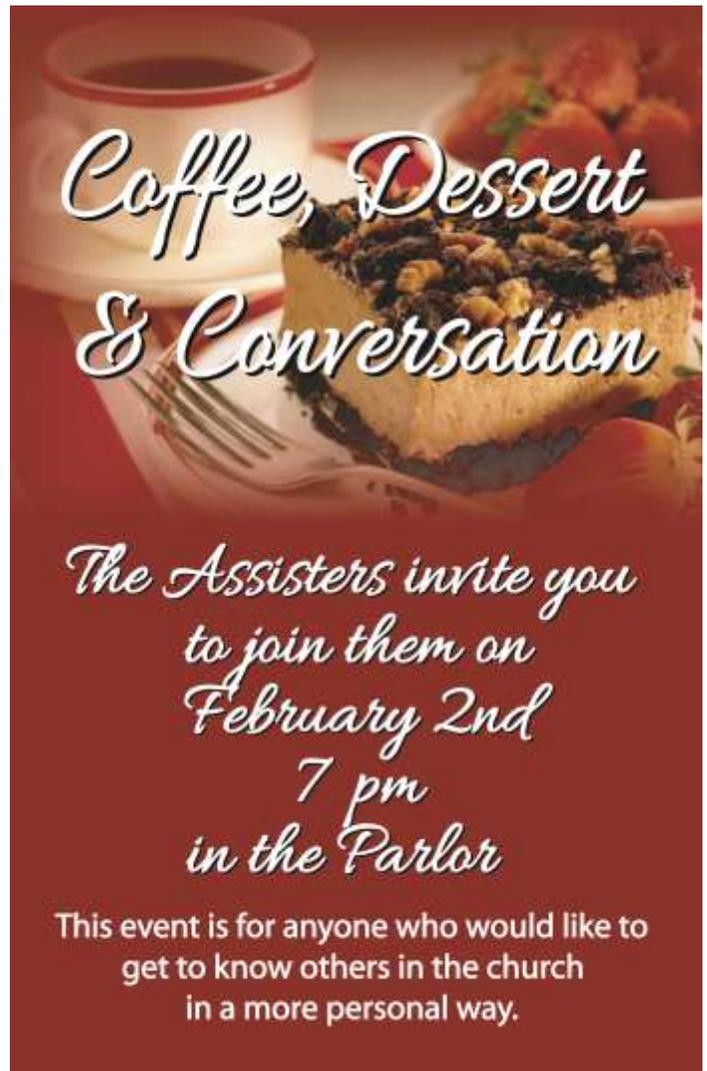
3 Ways 2 Give

For added convenience, we now have three ways for you to give to the church general budget or special offerings:

- Write a check or give cash at one of our Sunday services **or at the office during the week. If you don't have envelopes** with an assigned number (for better record keeping), contact the church office.
- **Set up bill pay through your bank online. It's a favorite** since there are usually no fees to you or the church, and **it's very easy.**
- Pay online with a credit card at: www.CollegeParkChurch.com. Choose the option to cover the credit card fees or let the church pay them.

Finance Update\$

- December was one of the biggest giving months in CP history. Matching offering Sunday exceeded \$55,000. You gave enough socks, gloves and scarves for 125 homeless guests at Greensboro Urban Ministry not only for our Dec. 18th dinner, but also for January! The many Angel Tree needs were met for Peck Elementary, Guilford County Jail inmates and Open Door Ministries. Collected many cans of food. Lovefeast offering of \$693 went to Out of the Garden Project to feed hungry children. Christmas Eve offering of \$3,634 went to **our newly created "Syrian Refugee Fund"** to help two Greensboro families.
- **College Park Church's "community impact" value** of our cash donations, service hours, mission projects and building use by other non-profit groups easily exceeded \$125,000 in 2016.
- Three Nickels Campaign for 2016 totaled \$5,709 for Doctors without Borders, Aid Next Generation Nepal, Watering Malawi and International Rescue Committee.
- The very generous donation from Eva Andrews estate was finalized for a total gift of \$183,876. The committee is investigating uses of these funds, including a possible endowment for
- missions. Also received \$10,000 gift from the estate of Donald White.
- Our aging sanctuary sound system is in much need of repairs and upgrades. Phase one quote is \$12,890. Funds for this have not been secured yet.
- Capital Campaign Update: Our major kitchen renovation is going well and should be completed by mid February. Estimated final cost is \$205,000. Donations received \$83,355. Funds needed \$121,645.
- For 2016 year-end, the good news is that we exceeded our budgeted income by \$22,062! Bad news is that we exceeded our 2016 budgeted expenses by \$25,000. So we finished the year \$2,788 in the red. Income \$471,691, Expenses \$474,479.
- The 2017 budget was approved at our January 11th business meeting. For a copy, contact the church office.
- Offering needed each week to meet budget in 2017: \$6,475 (\$925/day)



*Coffee, Dessert
& Conversation*

*The Assisters invite you
to join them on
February 2nd
7 pm
in the Parlor*

**This event is for anyone who would like to
get to know others in the church
in a more personal way.**

Deacon Ordination

Deacon Ordination will take place on Sunday, January 29th at both the Tessera & the 11:00 a.m. worship services. The following Deacons will be ordained:

- Caroline Joyce
- Sarah Nelson
- Laurey Solomon
- Roland Estwick

Deacons completing their terms in 2016 will also be recognized:

- Ginger Burkhead
- Mark Fleming
- Rachel Hutto
- Lea Ann Rodgers

Why We Read

We all ask each other a lot of questions. But we should all **ask one question a lot more often: “What are you reading?” It’s a simple question but a powerful one, and it can change lives.**

Here’s one example: I met, at a bookstore, a woman who told me that she had fallen sadly out of touch with her beloved grandson. She lived in Florida. He and his parents lived elsewhere. She would call him and ask him about school or about his day. He would respond in one-word answers: Fine. Nothing. Nope.

And then one day, she asked him what he was reading. **He had just started “The Hunger Games,” a series of** dystopian young-adult novels by Suzanne Collins. The grandmother decided to read the first volume so that she could talk about it with her grandson the next time they **chatted on the phone. She didn’t know what to expect,** but she found herself hooked from the first pages, in which Katniss Everdeen volunteers to take her younger **sister’s place in the annual battle-to-the-death** among a select group of teens.

The book helped this grandmother cut through the superficialities of phone chat and engage her grandson on the most important questions that humans face about survival and destruction and loyalty and betrayal and good and evil, and about politics as well. Now her **grandson couldn’t wait to talk to her when she called—to** tell her where he was, to find out where she was and to speculate about what would happen next.

Other than belonging to the same family, they had never had much in common. Now they did. The conduit was reading. We need to read and to be readers now more than ever.

We overschedule our days and complain constantly about being too busy. We shop endlessly for stuff we **don’t need and then feel oppressed by the clutter that** surrounds us. We rarely sleep well or enough. We compare our bodies to the artificial ones we see in magazines and our lives to the exaggerated ones we see on television. We watch cooking shows and then eat fast **food. We worry ourselves sick and join gyms we don’t** visit. We keep up with hundreds of acquaintances but rarely see our best friends. We bombard ourselves with video clips and emails and instant messages. We even interrupt our interruptions.

And at the heart of it, for so many, is fear—fear that we are missing out on something. Wherever we are, someone somewhere is doing or seeing or eating or listening to something better. **I’m eager to escape from** this way of living. And if enough of us escape, the world will be better for it.

Connectivity is one of the great blessings of the internet era, and it makes extraordinary things possible. But constant connectivity can be a curse, encouraging the

lesser angels of our nature. None of the nine Muses of classical times bore the names Impatience or Distraction. Books are uniquely suited to helping us change our relationship to the rhythms and habits of daily life in this **world of endless connectivity. We can’t interrupt books;** we can only interrupt ourselves while reading them. They are the expression of an individual or a group of individuals, not of a hive mind or collective consciousness. They speak to us, thoughtfully, one at a time. They demand our attention. And they demand that we briefly put aside our own beliefs and prejudices and **listen to someone else’s. You can rant against a book,** scribble in the margin or even chuck it out the window. **Still, you won’t change the words on the page.**

The technology of a book is genius: The order of the words is fixed, whether on the page or on the screen, but the speed at which you read them is entirely up to you. Sure, this allows you to skip ahead and jump around. But it also allows you to slow down, savor and ponder.

At the trial in which he would be sentenced to death, Socrates (as quoted by Plato) said that the **unexamined life isn’t worth living. Reading is the best** way I know to learn how to examine your life. By **comparing what you’ve done to what others have done,** and your thoughts and theories and feelings to those of others, you learn about yourself and the world around you. Perhaps that is why reading is one of the few things you do alone that can make you feel less alone. It is a solitary activity that connects you to others.

So I’m on a search—and have been, I now realize, all my life—to find books to help me make sense of the world, to help me become a better person, to help me get my head around the big questions that I have and answer some of **the small ones while I’m at it.**

I know I’m not alone in my hunger for books to help me find the right questions to ask, and find answers to the ones that I have. I am now in my mid-50s, a classic time for introspection. But any age is a good age for examining your life. Readers from their teens to their 90s have shared with me their desire for a list of books to help guide them.

People have always received life-guiding wisdom from **certain types of nonfiction, often from “self-help” books.** But all sorts of books can carry this kind of wisdom; a random sentence in a thriller will give me unexpected insight. In fact, novels and works of narrative nonfiction can do something extraordinary that most self-help **books can’t: They can increase our capacity for empathy** by engaging our imagination as they introduce us to new perspectives.

I also believe that, to paraphrase the Roman lawyer Pliny **the Younger, no book is so bad that you can’t find** anything in it of interest. You can learn something from the very worst books—even if it is just how crass and base, or boring and petty, or cruel and intolerant the human race can be.

I’m not a particularly disciplined or systematic seeker. I don’t give a great deal of thought to the books I choose—

I'll read anything that catches my eye. Most of the time, when I choose what I'm going to read, it has absolutely nothing to do with improving myself. Especially when I'm at my happiest, I'm unlikely to search for a book to make me happier. But it's often during these periods of non-seeking that I've stumbled across a book that has changed my life.

Sometimes these books have changed me in relatively trivial ways at first, but then in more significant ways later. When I was 5 years old, my parents read to me E.B. White's 1945 classic, "Stuart Little," the story of a remarkable mouse born to a human family. The immediate effect was to make me feel that the thing in life I most desperately wanted was a pet mouse. After much pleading, I was given a gerbil for my birthday. (It soon bit me, and I was so upset that I packed a suitcase and ran away from home; I made it 50 yards before I decided to turn back).

Now, when I reflect on "Stuart Little," I realize this extraordinary tale taught me some powerful lessons. One of them is this: **Stuart's human family doesn't care a whit that he is a mouse. It's a tale of radical acceptance—you can be whatever or whoever you are born to be and not risk losing your family.** Every child is in some ways different from her or his parents—even if not so different as Stuart is from his.

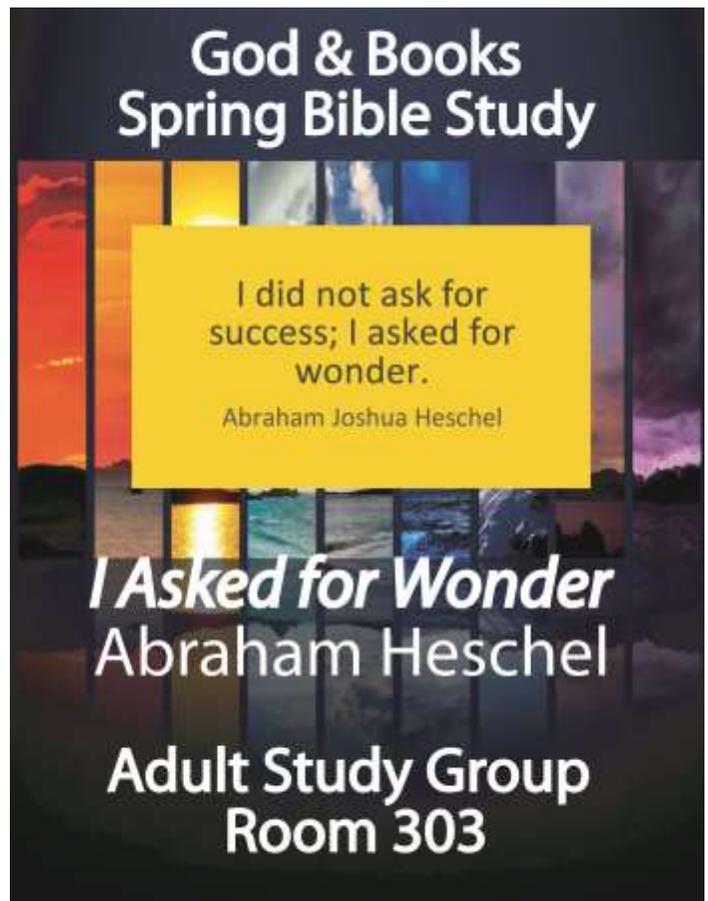
While my parents gave me some of my earliest favorites, teachers guided me to many of the books that would shape my life.

In middle school, we read Julius Caesar's "The Gallic War." **This was the start of my learning a great truth:** History is long, and I was short. Caesar accomplished more than I ever could and had written about it in timeless works that would be read as long as people read. There was no chance I would possibly leave a mark on **the globe that measured up to Caesar's. Not a bad lesson in humility for a seventh-grader.**

In high school, I read "The Odyssey." It taught me a lesson very different to the one my teachers might have expected, yet one that was in a way a corollary to the lesson I'd learned from Caesar: that you should never be ashamed of being mediocre.

Of course, "The Odyssey" is one of the greatest works of all time. But in telling the story of a very flawed hero, it opens up a different lens on greatness. Even Odysseus himself would have had to admit that he didn't do a terrific job getting home. Others managed to come right home after the war chronicled in "The Iliad." It took Odysseus a decade. But he does eventually make it. **Coming home was essential, and what's important is that he managed to do it. Odysseus was superlative at many things, but getting home wasn't one of them. He was mediocre at that.**

The beauty of accepting or even embracing mediocrity is that it helps you appreciate excellence. College introduced me to some of the most astonishing books I've ever read, as it should. **The experience of reading and studying and revisiting a contemporary masterpiece like**



Nobel laureate Toni Morrison's "Song of Solomon" reminds me how thrilling true greatness is, whether in literature or other aspects of life. At the heart of this novel is the migration of a character named Milkman Dead from north to south, the opposite of the 20th century's "Great Migration" of African-Americans from the rural south to the cities of the north and west. I will never forget the images of flight that are present throughout—flight as escape from peril and as a symbol of freedom; flight by foot and through the air. I envy anyone who has yet to read "Song of Solomon."

Entering the workforce brought me to a different kind of book. A wise mentor gave me Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "Gift From the Sea." **This is a book about priorities.** Unlike recent books that focus on decluttering your home, Lindbergh, who had a busy life as an adventurer, pilot, best-selling author and wife of the famous aviator, **shows you how to declutter your brain and your life.** "The world today does not understand, in either man or woman, the need to be alone," she wrote in 1955. 'A random sentence in a thriller can lead to an unexpected insight.'

After decades of work, I've come to believe that the ability to figure out who has your back and who is plotting against you is an essential skill. Thrillers and works of suspense give us the tools we need to try to **figure out whom we can trust.** A recent novel, "The Girl on the Train" by Paula Hawkins, is particularly valuable.

Continued on p. 8

Why We Read, continued from p. 7

on the Train” by Paula Hawkins, is particularly valuable. It features a possibly unreliable narrator who isn’t always sure she knows whether she is telling the truth. Sometimes the person I shouldn’t be trusting is myself.

Books have also helped me through the worst times in my life, and no book more so than Charles Dickens’s “David Copperfield.” My need to figure out a way to cope with my sadness after finishing this novel was a trial run, of sorts, for dealing with the deaths of friends. When, as a young teen, I turned the last page, I found myself sobbing because I thought that was the end of my relationship with David Copperfield, and with Steerforth, and with Little Emily, and with Dora. But I was wrong; it was just the beginning. I think of them all the time, and I talk to them, too—just as I talk to friends who have died and think about them.

Recently, I read a book that is helping me be a better friend: Hanya Yanagihara’s devastating novel “A Little Life.” The story follows the intertwined lives of four men from right after college until middle age. Along the way, we learn about their childhoods and discover that one of them has been the victim of horrific abuse. I don’t think I’ve ever read a novel that had so much to say about friendship, or about the ways we can and can’t help one another, or about the importance of staying present in our friends’ lives no matter what.

I also turn to books to help remind me of things I know but constantly forget. “Wonder” by R.J. Palacio is a novel about a boy with a facial deformity who is going to school for the first time. It has a powerful message delivered by the school’s principal. He exhorts his students to “choose kindness.” Quoting J.M. Barrie, he tells them, “Shall we make a new rule of life...always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary?” An excellent maxim for fifth-graders—and the rest of us.

And then there is “Reading Lolita in Tehran,” by Azar Nafisi. It is the story of a study group for women that the author led in Tehran in 1995, and it reinforced for me and for so many the power of books and literature. Ms. Nafisi writes, “In all great works of fiction, regardless of the grim reality they present, there is an affirmation of life against the transience of that life, an essential defiance. This affirmation lies in the way the author takes control of reality by retelling it in his own way, thus creating a new world. Every great work of art, I would declare pompously, is a celebration, an act of insubordination against the betrayals, horrors and infidelities of life.” Rereading this book and others, I’m reminded that reading isn’t just a respite from the relentlessness of technology. It isn’t just how I reset and recharge. It isn’t just how I escape. It’s how I engage. And reading should spur further engagement.

Books remain one of the strongest bulwarks we have against tyranny—but only as long as people are free to read all different kinds of books, and only as long as they actually do so. The right to read whatever you want whenever you want is one of the fundamental rights that helps preserve all the other rights. It’s a right we need to

guard with unwavering diligence. But it’s also a right we can guard with pleasure. Reading isn’t just a strike against narrowness, mind control and domination: It’s one of the world’s great joys.

By Will Schwalbe

Syrian Refugee Family



College Park is helping one or two Syrian refugee families in early 2017 that are arriving in Greensboro during the next week. College Park has helped settle many refugee families over the years, and our connection most often was through Lutheran Family Services, headed in Greensboro by Cindy Knul. When LFS closed, we lost our pipeline for catching new families. Last year this time, Cindy and Michael talked about beginning to assist new families with resettlement. She recently became aware of some.

We at College Park won’t be `adopting’ any families or making any formal commitment (as we did with our previous resettlement families). But we can offer these new families love, friendship, and some limited material help. Cindy has a talent for identifying new refugees that either just need a jumpstart or who have slipped through the cracks of support.

A new, private Facebook group “CP Refugee Support” has been started and managed by Michael Usey. If you want to be added to this group for many more details, [message him on Facebook](#).

The first family is a mom and dad with five boys, ages 1, 2, 6, 9 and 11. Another family arrives in mid January. We’ll post updates below:

A brief report on Tuesday (20th) from Michael: Cindy, Alice Stewart, Charlie Wilson, Ann, the translator, and I went to the family’s home and met the mom and the two youngest boys. We had a good time. Alice and Ann were able to assess what they needed in

Continued on pg. 9



The Theme for the 2017 Mostly Male Bake-Off is LEGENDS

Immediately following worship on Sunday, March 5, everyone is invited to a simple lunch of soup and sandwiches **in the Fellowship Hall**. Afterwards, we'll sample all the bake-off entries. All are welcome!

Rules for entry:

- Anyone 5 years old or older can enter (non-members are welcome).
- The entries should be ready for judging by 11:30 am on Sunday, March 5.
- All entries should be a dessert of some variety.
- You may use a boxed cake mix, but should not cheat. (Cheating would be buying an already-made cake.)
- Awards will be given for Best in Show, Judges award, Most Creative, Best Looking (dessert, not the baker), Best Tasting, Best Chocolate, Best Non-Chocolate, Super Bowl Award, Muy Macho, Best First-Time Entry, Best Veteran, Weirdness Cup, Fruit Frenzy, Best Pie, **Poison Control Alert, and People's Choice (1st, 2nd and 3rd place)**.
- There are three overall divisions: Kids (ages 5-11), Youth (12-18), Adults (19 & older).
- Each entry costs \$5 to pay for the snappy awards.
- As always, three impartial judges will judge all desserts. Bribes are appreciated.

Syrian Refugee Family continued from pg. 8

the kitchen. The family is from Syria via refugee camps in Jordan. Cindy has lined up an apartment in an area in Greensboro where other Syrian families live. Ann & Alice took mom and the oldest boy to the Goodwill store and got a good table that seats six, and some clothes and **boys' shoes. Lisa Shortt and Alice then took them to Sam's Club for food and essentials.**

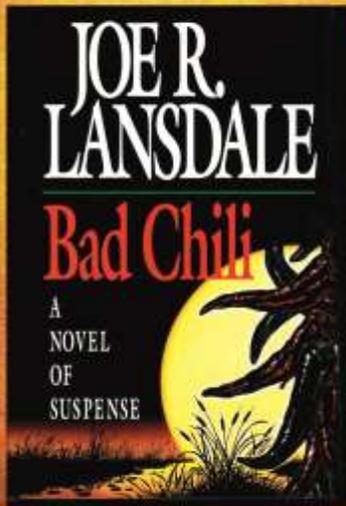
Dec 22nd Update from Alice Stewart: Some great news! The father has been offered a job where another Syrian person has a job, so they can ride together. The family will be moving to a nicer apartment in Greensboro on January 15, so we can help them restart their home in an area that has other Syrian families. Can you imagine how nice it will be for the family to have people close by for support and encouragement, without having to use **the Google translator app! And I'm sure the little boys will find some new friends.** Except for some things like toys and clothes and the DVD entertainment, the family is currently covered for food and immediate necessities to get them through the week of the holiday season.

However, we still have some needs to fill with the target being to help them set up their new apartment. Bring

offerings (physical and/or financial) to the church. Since **we don't want to move things twice, the plan is to store things at church until moving day on Jan 15.** I have done some research on what is needed to set up a refugee family and used that information to create a list for us to reflect on as we receive our many gifts from friends and **family this next week. While I know we don't want to create an unhealthy dependency, anything we can get them started with is something they do not have to use their scarce resources to provide for themselves.** So please be thinking about the things on the list as possible offerings that we could provide by January 15. Anything offered should be dropped off at the church. Regarding duplication: We have ANOTHER family that is due to arrive on January 18. They will be starting from scratch, so we need to be thinking ahead. After family #2, we will take a breather to assess.

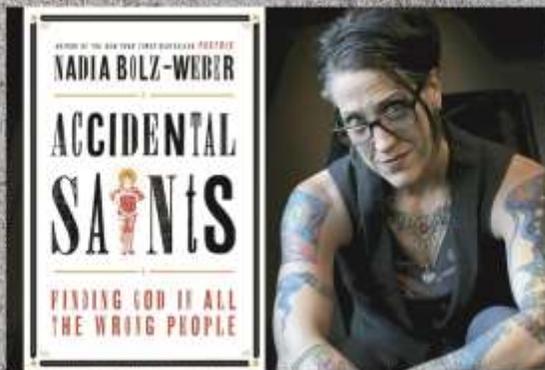
Cash donations are most helpful. Our Christmas Eve service offering is going toward helping these refugees. Or **you can write a check to the church with a "Refugee Support" note or give online (selection missions for type of donation and put "Refugee Support" in the memo area).**

Mostly Men's Occasional Book Club



**Next Meeting Jan. 17
6:30 pm, Sticks & Stones**

WOMEN OF VALOR NEW BOOK



**NEXT MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21
7 PM BEANSBORO COFFEE**

College Park Sunday School Opportunities

Nursery

Birth-23 months (Parking Lot Entrance) Childcare provided by both Preferred Childcare, Inc. employees and College Park volunteers.

Toddlers

2-3 1/2 yrs. (Parking Lot Entrance)

1st, 3rd Sundays—Music & Tone Chimes

2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays—Hands-on Faith Lessons

Children's Sunday School

PreK-1st, 2nd-5th (Children's Library & Youth Room)

1st & 3rd Sundays—Music & Tone Chimes

2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays—Hands-on Faith Lessons

Sunday Morning Youth Gathering

6th-12th grades (Fellowship Hall) For more information:

<https://cpbcyouthchaos.wordpress.com/youth-Sunday-school/>

Adult Study Groups

God in Books—(Room 303)

Class reads & discusses a variety of Christian literature. This spring the class will be reading *I Asked for Wonder* by Abraham Heschel.

Bible 101—(Room 305)

Class is reading the Bible together.

Pathfinders—(Fellowship Hall)

Class explores a variety of faith topics.

Adult 3—(Parlor)

Class uses the Smith & Helwys Sunday school curriculum to guide conversations of faith, Bible and life.

Choir Rehearsal

10:30 am - Sunday morning for 11 am worship (Choir Room)

12:15 pm - Sunday afternoon rehearsal (Choir Room)

6:00 pm—Youth Choir



January GUM Donation:

Peanut Butter (18 oz. size preferred)

Place donations in the wicker basket in the side foyer entrance (beside the bookshelves).



Licensed  Instructors

ZUMBA
fitness
Thursdays 6:00 pm
Forest Chapel
\$5.00 Drop in Rate

Consider joining us at least once (\$5.00) or commit to 5 classes and save \$5.00 (5 classes card for \$20). Brisa, the instructor is fun and inspiring.

Announcements

College Park Website

Our redesigned church website is now very mobile friendly with several new features. To keep better informed about happenings of the church, check out the online



www.collegeparkchurch.com

Collage blog that is updated frequently. And see a weekly **calendar of events**. The “**Library**” is an archive of memoirs, sermons, etc. Give your offering online, read about our latest mission projects or the capital campaign, and share the site as you try to explain our uniqueness to your friends and family.

Book Drive

4th Graders at Erwin Montessori are collecting books to send to Princeville, NC, a community that flooded after Hurricane Matthew. The local elementary school was destroyed in the flood, leaving students without books. Erwin students want to help by making sure Princeville children have books **to read**. If you have gently used children’s books (appropriate for ages 5-10), please donate them to our cause. Erwin will be collecting books until January 27th. Contact Nancy Cravey (nlcravey@gmail.com) to find out more.



Options for Children during the Worship Service

There are several child care Options during the worship service: Nursery (birth—24 months) Room 201 main floor, Toddlers (2-3 yr.) Room 104 lower level, Wee Worship (PreK -1st grade) Room 110 lower level. Your child is also welcome to stay in the service with you. Kids Worship binders are available with activities related to the sermon. Look for the bins at the front and back of the sanctuary.



Alzheimer’s Care

If you have a loved one with Alzheimer’s or severe dementia then you know how hard it is to find a facility that can take care of them in a loving and caring environment. We were fortunate enough to find The Almost Home Group of Thomasville for the **last 10 months of my mom’s life**. Prior to that she had been at a reputable home in High Point for almost 2 years. Our greatest regret is that we did not find out about Almost Home at the very beginning. We are so grateful for everything that this group of **caring people did for my mom that we’d like to share information** about this facility with others. If you are interested or in need of a facility please contact me. My cell phone number is 336-362-4384. PJ Stocks



Women's March on Washington January 21, 2017

Updates: one bus is full and the second and last bus out of Greensboro has 35 seats to fill. Good News- they currently reduced the price per ticket to \$55. That price will go up quickly, so if you want to go, **NOW IS THE TIME TO BOOK**. We need to get the second bus FULL. It is not just for women to go!

Also, those that have bus tickets -please send Angela Brady-Fleming an email that includes your name and cell number. I have some names, but I do not think I have everyone. This will be important when I start sending information on time to gather at College Park, carpooling to the bus station, etc. Email: fleming1301@yahoo.com

Girl Scout Cookie Sale Sunday, Feb. 19



The Brownie Troop that meets weekly at College Park will have a cookie booth set up in the parking lot entrance foyer after the two Sunday Services on Sunday, Feb. 19th.

Please help them out and support their sales.

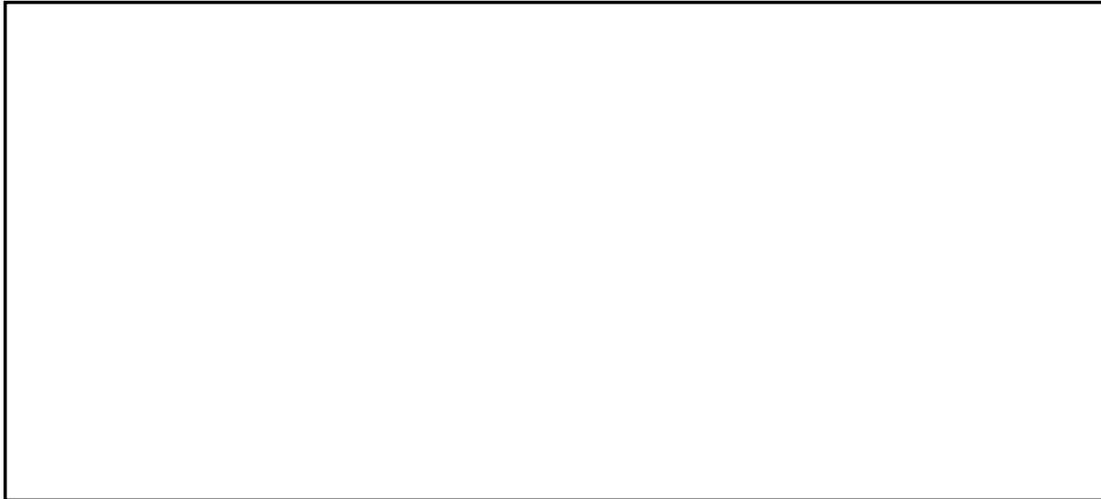
Nate Usey’s Peace Corp Address

PCV Nate Usey
Peace Corps, P.O. Box 766
St. George’s, Grenada, West Indies

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit 245
Greensboro, NC

College Park
An American Baptist Church
1601 Walker Avenue,
Greensboro, North Carolina 27403-2318

Return Service Requested



Looking Ahead—January

- Jan
12 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel
14 Al-Anon Noon, Chapel
15 Sunday Activities, GUM Sunday, 3rd Sunday,
Refreshments after 11 am Service; Deacons'
Meeting 12:15 pm, Youth Activities Resume
16 NA Noon, Chapel
17 **NA Noon, Chapel; Mostly Men's Occasional**
Book Club 6:30 pm, Sticks & Stones; PFLAG
7:30 pm
18 NA Noon, Chapel; Pendergraft Meeting 5:30
pm, Board Room; Bible Study 6:30 pm,
Chapel
19 NA Noon, Chapel, Forever 39 11:30 am at K&W;
Foster Care Chronicles 5:30—9 pm FH;
Zumba 6 pm Youth Rm
20 Al-Anon Noon, Chapel
22 Sunday Activities; Cello Recital 3:30 pm,
Chapel; **Leslie-Ann Hix Toomey's**
Ordination Service at 6 pm
23 NA Noon, Chapel
24 NA Noon, Chapel
25 NA Noon, Chapel; Bible Study 6:30 pm,
Chapel
26 NA Noon, Chapel; Foster Care Chronicles
5:30—9 pm FH; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel
27 Al-Anon Noon, Chapel
29 Sunday Activities
30 NA Noon, Chapel
31 NA Noon, Chapel
Feb.
1 NA Noon, Chapel; 1st Wednesday Night
Dinner FH; Bible Study 6:30 pm Chapel
2 NA Noon, Chapel; Zumba 6 pm, Chapel
Asssitters' Coffee, Dessert & Conversation
7 pm, Parlor
3 Al-Anon Noon, Chapel
5 Mostly Male Bake-Off Noon, FH
Deacons' Meeting 6 pm, Board Room

Church Telephone: (336) 273-1779; Fax: (336) 273-9637
www.collegeparkchurch.com cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net

Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

2016 Total Food Donations = 994 Pounds

Every Member a Minister

Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer
Kerri Gibbs, Pastoral Intern, WFU Divinity School
Darlene Johnson, Sexton
Susie Karczewski, retired and lounging by the pool.
Keith A. Menhinick, Minister to Young Adults
David Soyars, Organist
Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries
Lin Story-Bunce, Associate Minister
Matt Lojko, Deacon Chair
Michael S. Usey, Pastor
Annette Waisner, Office & Media Manager

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