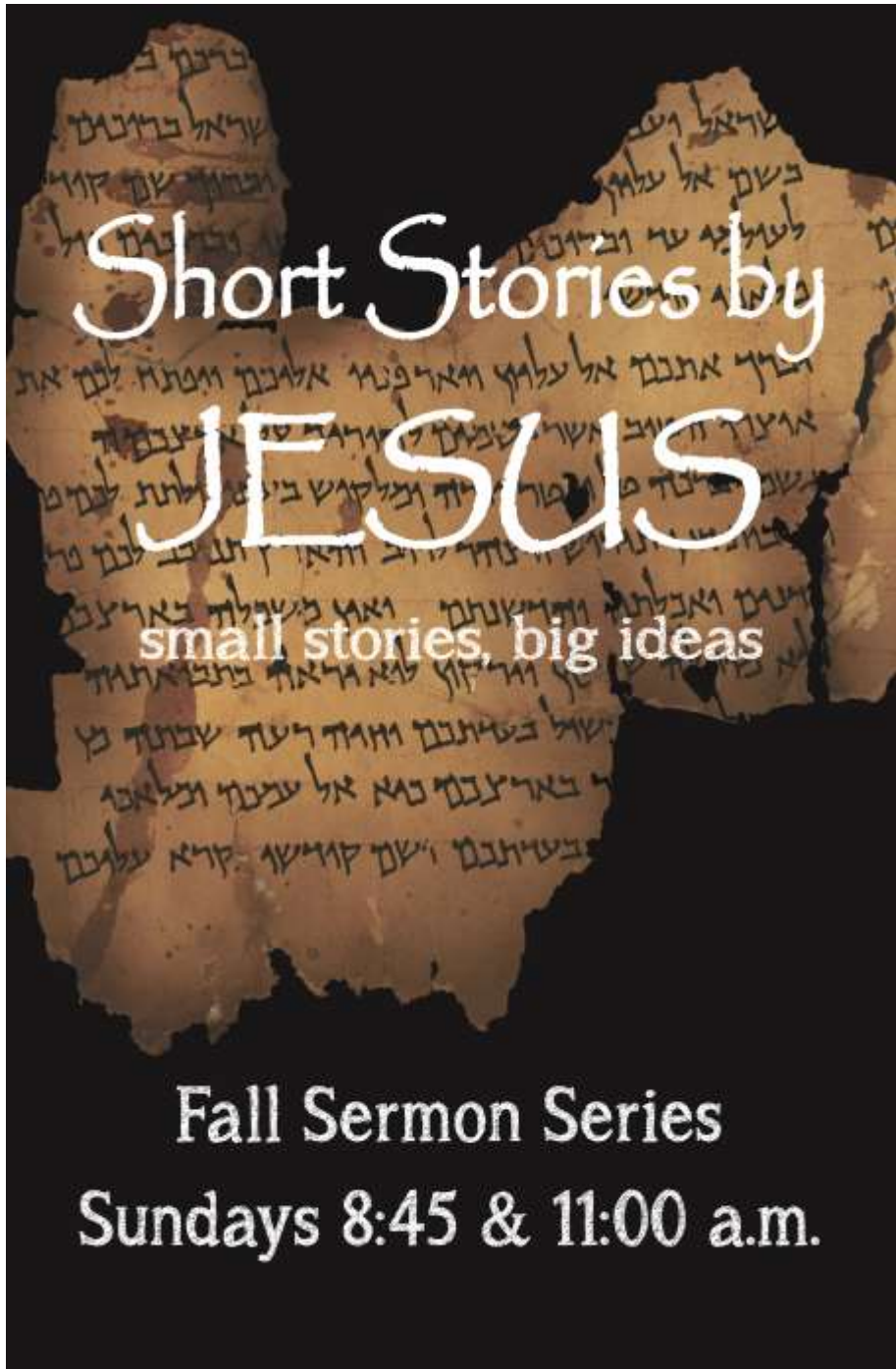




September 2015
Number 229



Before & After

We invite all our folk to write for our fall focus at College Park entitled *Before & After*. For several years we've invited College Parkers to write about different aspects of their lives: Dear 16-Year-Old Me; Kintsukuroi; This I Believe; and others. This fall our series is *Short Stories By Jesus*, and we're asking all our congregants to write part of their story.

The rubric is simple: please write about a time there was a before and after, a time after which everything was different; your life had changed. At age 57, I can easily think of about eight of these moments in my own life. This could be a positive event: birth, marriage, proposal, graduation, new job, a gift, moving, a moment of grace, healing, recovery, an honor, etc. This might be a terrible moment, the like of which comes to all of us: divorce, death, job loss, addiction, moving, accident, illness, trauma, being bullied, a road not taken, whatever. Try to locate where God was in this before and after, if you can, or what role your faith played in it, or how you might understand it now.

Shoot for 750-800 words, which read aloud is about 6 minutes; we can't accept more than 1000 words. If you decide to write, let us know your preferred audience when you're finished: only the church staff, or in the Collage and website, or also in a worship service. We need these by September 20. Please, no guilt if you would rather not, but we'd love to hear from you. As always, call me if you have any questions (336.601.2350), or blast me an email (michaelusey@gmail.com).

Michael

One More Time: Our Protesters



If you haven't yet read the excellent commentaries on the protesters outside our buildings Sunday morning August 23, I recommend you read the ones by Hayley Turner, Joel Rieves, and Sean Olson (which was a letter to the editor, printed in full in the *News & Record* on Saturday, August 29). **Hayley's in**

particular is significant: here is a young woman, having grown up in our church, walking to worship as a college sophomore, being called a whore by the protesters, and yet going on to write a thoughtful and beautiful reflection on following Jesus. **I couldn't be more proud of our little Jezebel.**

I wanted to be with my friends at College Park last Sunday, but I was with my daughter Hannah for a soccer tournament in Asheville (the days for these rare father/daughter trips are truly numbered). Plus, I thought if there were any Sunday that a preacher might become a target at CP, it would be this one. So I bravely volunteered Lin to preach.

In all seriousness, we do have safe church protocols in place for both worship services, beginning with (but not limited to) our two retired Greensboro police captains (Bill and Matt) at the front doors and our two Greensboro fire captains (Ed and Sterling) within most services. Bill and others have been to training on church safety and violence prevention, and are implementing various recommendations. The diaconate will consider a protest protocol at a future meeting. Much like our Safe Children

College Park Needs YOUR Help! Time to Volunteer for 2015-2016

During August of each year, we ask every College Park member and regular attendees to consider volunteering in some way during the upcoming year, according to your talents and interests. Some volunteer opportunities begin Sept. 2015; others begin Jan. 2016. Please review the 2015-16 Participating at College Park form to learn more **about our many volunteer opportunities; we hope you'll go ahead and complete the form, too:**

- Complete the online form: Go to www.collegeparkchurch.com and click the "Participating at College Park" link (will be available in mid-August).
- Fill out a paper form in the bulletin. Return to the church office.

Deadline: Sunday, September 13. Contact the church office (cpbcgbo@bellsouth.net, 273-1779) for more information about any volunteer opportunity.

protocols, our worship services are as safe as we can make them—at least from outside crazies, not from the worship of the Living God.

Relatedly, two Greensboro police officers showed up at 11:00 to monitor the protests on our sidewalk. They were professional and calming, and I wrote the police chief on Monday morning to commend them. They were the very last to leave the premises with me last Sunday at 1:00, staying until the protesters got in their car, which was parked in the UNCG lot. And the police spoke with the counter protester too.

It all began in between services that morning, when Lisa Shortt found me at the promotion breakfast to let me know we had protesters outside. **I didn't believe her at first; I'm sure you know we have an odd and ironic sense of humor at College Park.** Plus, Lisa was smiling when she told me; I love that our many lawyers at our church are so unafraid of conflict.

I told Lin (who was leading the promotion program) what was happening outside, and then found Matt Cravey, offering, **"Let's go get our picture taken with the protesters."** I had spoken to, and had my picture taken with, Westboro Baptist church protesters years before with Matt and Daniel Ingram, when WBC was in Greensboro to protest the "liberal" Southern Baptist Convention meeting here. This morning I went up the back stairs, and sure enough we had three protesters: the father, the son, and the holy videographer. I went out to meet them. As I walked out, they started calling me Spawn of Satan, false teacher, heathen prophet, Father of lies, and other old fashion evil-ish names. I told them, **"Well, that isn't going to shock anyone."** (Actually, I found myself wishing a colleague of mine were there as well, whose nickname among friends is Spawn). **It's** curious to me that men like this try so hard to verbally assault ministers in this manner. They must have a very different idea of holiness than we do. St. Paul himself said he was the worst of sinners (1 Tim 1.15), and this **awareness of one's own darkness is a crucial aspect of** following Jesus. So I stood there unfazed while they went on yelling KJV-sounding names, wondering, do they honestly think this is offensive to me? Do they think this **is news to my congregation that I'm sinner? I offered my hand as I introduced myself.** The protester recoiled and refused to shake it, saying he thought I probably [committed a sexual act] with that hand.

The main guy was yelling right at me, standing a foot from my face, while his colleague videoed this precious moment. His bombast and nearness was disconcerting because it was so relentless. He was hoarsely screaming, you need to repent of this and that (he had clearly read our website); it was a long list. I said conversationally, **"Well, you've got that right. That's what we're getting ready to do in worship--repent."** This infuriated all three, as they all started screaming in earnest. I listened for a **couple of minutes, and finally said, "Well, you're welcome to join us for worship if you come in the right spirit."** Cue a new wave of outrage.

I passed Alison Schwartz going out to them. As she was bringing cold water bottles to them, and later food, she

sweetly asked one of the men, “So is he your partner?” That went over well. Juanita Lojko, with her winsome smile and Southern grace, even got the 10-year-old boy to shake her hand, a small success. (Who can resist her charisma and charm?) Walter Pickard was escorting people past them to ensure no one felt intimidated to walk, and Bill and Matt were overseeing the mini-circus. The police arrived, and I met with them briefly. We knew that the protesters were in their second amendment rights to yell and carry rude signs on the sidewalk—as long they didn’t use a bullhorn or disrupt our service. Honestly, I love this about America. Free speech—even hate speech—should be vigorously protected—even, and maybe especially, when it is unpleasant and hurtful. It is so rare around the world, even today. And the police were deescalating the moment by their presence. By the way, Walter remained by the side door the entire morning, making sure people could enter safely. I love this church.

The worship leaders met in my office as we do each week to pray before the later service. One of us was clearly shaken-up, and, after I prayed, Lin asked if I’d open worship with the same prayer, which I did. Immediately following that opening prayer, I circled back around outside to check on the front of the building. A dozen UNCG freshmen had walked up to our church and the protesters were preaching loudly to them, and the main guy resumed calling me names when I appeared. “You’re welcome to come to worship,” I said to the students, then, turning to the protesters, “You are too, if you behave.” The students looked taken aback, and, sadly, he succeeded in dissuading 10 of them not to enter our church. This was among the saddest consequences of their presence that Sunday morning. However, two black students walked right past the protestors, and entered anyway; I heard one them say, “This isn’t the first time I’ve been yelled at by protesters.” Those two worshipped with us that morning, while the other ten left—which sounds like the end to a Jesus story.

We were considering 2 Cor 4 that morning, and my sermon, prepared without knowledge that these protestors would be yelling as I spoke, underscored the

reality of what I was asserting. [The following paragraphs are an excerpt from last Sunday’s sermon, which were be strangely apt.]

Then a word of hope for those who have that world is too much with us: We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. A reminder that God will with us no matter happens, or what our limitations are—and with God we will make it. I’m in no way suggesting this describes us physically. ISIS is beheading Christians in the Middle East, not here. The Christian faith is illegal still in many parts of the world, Christian worship banned, and Christian churches forbidden. There are persecuted Christians worldwide, and many of us remember them in our prayers. But we are definitely perplexed, amiright? And we have questions: What’s going on around us? How exactly do we follow Christ? Why are we who love God not a more powerfully a force for good in this lovely, broken world?

Some vocal super-conservative brothers and sisters feel like they are they actually persecuted here in North America, but this is a fiction. You are not persecuted just because you cannot force others to believe what you believe. Yet the intolerance of extreme right wing Christians against the poor, against LGBT persons, against immigrants, against women, against public education has nearly destroyed the Christian brand. Speak to any non-Christian person and ask them their opinion of Christians, and way, way too many will describe us as people are the very antithesis of all Christ lived, taught, and died for.

It is in this very real sense that this Pauline passage applies to us. And I promise that if any of us here dare to live as outrageously as Jesus did, the world will not praise us until we are dead. Tell anyone that you believe in the weirdest stuff imaginable—that Xenu the Galactic dictator unleashed billions of thetan souls on earth, or that you believe in Tarot cards, crystals, or astrology—and they may not bat any eye; but say you are trying to follow Jesus, and they might slowly back away while holding tightly onto their wallets.

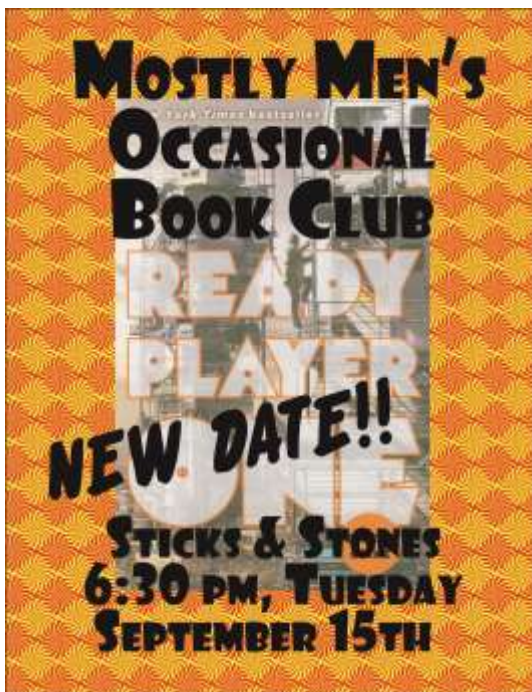
At the end of our service I reminded us of three things. First, that this was a demonstration of an amazing right in America, free speech, and we should value it even when it is hatred focused on us. It’s easy to value free speech in the midst of harmony. Yet it proves itself to be genuinely free only in vitriolic disharmony, and even in the face of hatred. Secondly, I reminded us all of Paul’s words in Romans 12.14: “Bless those who curse you; bless



and curse not.” I recommended that, if they exited by the protesters, they should merely say, “God bless you.”

Lastly, I suggested that this was an excellent moment to speak with our children about how we follow Jesus, why we accept all people, and to acknowledge what work was left to be done. I know some of our children were confused, and a couple upset when they understood the hostility expressed. Yet it was a key teachable moment about our faith. **If you haven’t yet sat down and discussed this incident and how Christians are challenged by Christ to respond to it, please do. Being honest with our kids about how we are committed to taking Jesus’ hardest saying, “Love your enemies” seriously, even though it is extremely difficult sometimes—even for adults—should be a lifelong conversation we have with our young.**

Relatedly, I know that many of you were concerned that the protesters had a 10-year-old boy with them and were obviously nurturing him to hate. This bothered me to no end, until our own Dr. Melissa Floyd-Pickard offered the following. She said (based on sociological research) that some children raised in settings where they were taught to hate instead grow up to become strong advocates for the very group they were taught to despise. In fact, she has colleagues in her department who defied expectations (one was raised among the Klan and yet is now a **passionate advocate for those he’s been previously taught to reject**). **I hadn’t heard this, and it gave me comfort.** Afterwards, I realized too that this protest had dislodged the sense of safety that some of our LGBTQ members had in our worship and buildings. **I don’t normally care for the language of privilege, but talk about heterosexual privilege: The whole incident was sad, but no more than a curiosity to me. Yet it had clearly shaken some of our gay brothers and sisters, perhaps because it echoed the deep shaming many had received in religious contexts earlier in their lives. But the protester’s nefarious plans to disrupt holy worship here had not succeeded; Keith Menhinick, for example, was on fire with the gospel-spirit**



as he led in worship. **God’s wild spirit burned in his voice and his presence, and we all felt it.**

One of our newer members sidled up to me afterwards **and said, “Well, ah, I’m kind of new to church thing, and I think I need more of this Jesusy spirit, because I was angry and let them know.”** I told him this was perfectly fine, because that Jesus fellow was furious too when **people try to exclude others from God’s love.** And I heard (but did not see) that another one had said to the lead protestor, after the protestor had called his wife a whore **as she was walking into worship, “If you put one foot on our grass, I’m going to kick your sorry [backside] all up and down Aycock Street.”** Which made him a hero to not a few. And, really, what kind of Christian calls any woman such a name? They particularly targeted women, calling daughters, mothers, girlfriends, and wives **“whores,” Jezebel, and the like, which was extremely unpopular both with them and with the men related to those women. The protesters were lucky to escape with their teeth intact. This cements my firm belief that, at its core, the anti-gay movement in America is deeply misogynistic.**

On a positive note, I heard support from ministers from all over in the hours following. Rabbi Fred Guttman said **he’d have come to worship had he known. The Revs. Julie Peoples and Paul Davis left me genuine but funny notes of concern (Julie claimed that the protesters would have come to her church, CUCC, had they been able to figure out how to enter their confusing parking lot).** Dr. Ed Sunday-Winters from Alabama, Dr. Jeff Paschal from Guilford Park Presbo, the Rev. Kim Priddy from FBCG, the Rev. Monica Citty-Hix, Dr. Jim Luck, and lay leaders from First Lutheran, Westminster, and Beth David and many, many other wrote me and the church in support. I even received a thoughtful note from former members **Eric and Brandy’s new church in Juneau, Alaska,** Northern Light United Church, and their pastor, Dr. Phil Campbell. He wrote a sweet to note to say they had prayed for us in their morning worship. He said, **“Although we are saddened that you have been subject to a hateful protest, we are grateful for the reason for it – your proclamation of inclusive love in Greensboro! Please know that your sisters and brothers in faith from the opposite corner of the country stand with you in solidarity and in thanksgiving for your witness.”** These and all the words from friends near and far were pure grace.

I also heard from pretty much every College Parker who was sad that they had chosen this particular Sunday to miss worship. **See, you never know what you’ll miss each and every Sunday at College Park.**

Once again I am proud to be a part of College Park Church. Who would have ever thought welcoming everyone to worship and serve God would be considered so radical? You were simply amazing last Sunday: blessing those who cursed you, bringing them food and water, inviting them in, being angry, but yet not acting on it. Should we be targeted again, I know we will do the same.

Michael

Just Goes To Show We Still Have Battles To Fight

As many of you probably know (or saw, if you are a UNCG student), there were anti-gay protestors outside of my church this morning.

Since I was walking to church from my dorm, I had to walk right by them, and when I read what their signs said I was filled with anger, frustration, pain, and sadness. They saw my face (let's be real, I gave them a look that said "go to hell") and proceeded to tell me that I "had that Jezebel" in me and that I was a "whore" and "dressed like one, too." Let's all take a minute and laugh at the absurdity of someone calling ME, of all people, a whore.

I walked into my church parking lot with teary eyes, not because their words stung me but because their words made me hurt for them. How can someone profess to follow a religion built on love and acceptance of the ostracized and go around spewing hatred and intolerance? How can they call themselves Christians? I'm pretty sure being a decent human being is a prerequisite to being a part of most religions (though unfortunately, lots of people don't get that).

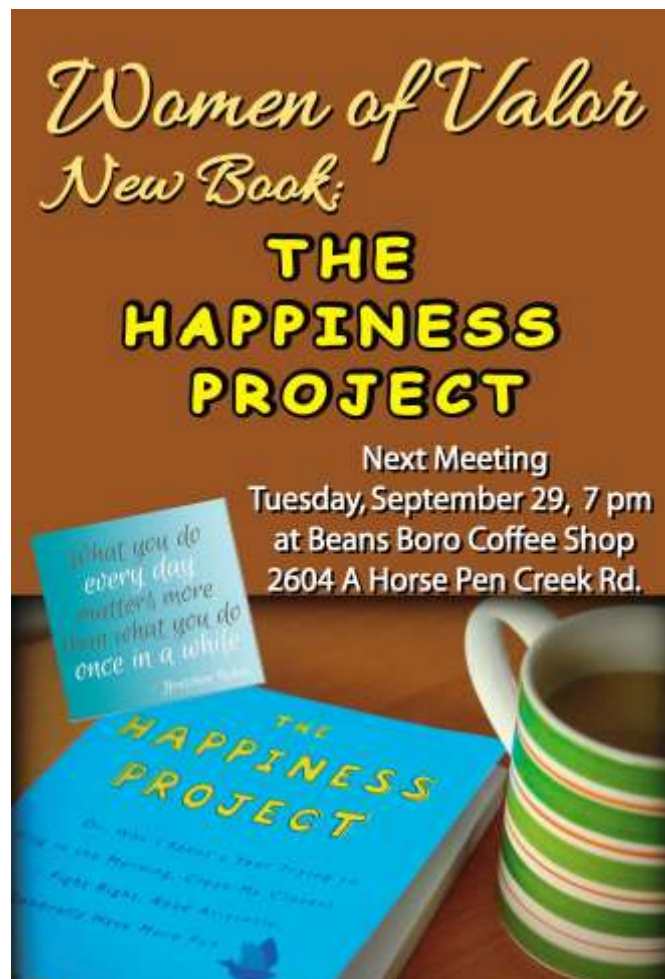
Well, jerks, there are a few things this whore has to say to you:

You will not change me. I believe in God and in Jesus just like you do, and I know I am right for spreading love to all people and not hatred. To my LGBTQ brothers and sisters, I love all of you people. And I don't mean the whole "I love you but not your sin" thing because that's crap. I love you as beautiful children created by our loving God.

You will not hurt me. There is nothing you can say or do that can harm me when I have the love of God on my side. I am not afraid of you, but I do pity you.

You are wrong. Sorry. Jesus loves everyone, and that doesn't mean "everyone except the people who are different from you..." You can't decide who gets God's love and who doesn't. Spoiler alert: that's God's job, and I'm pretty sure it's mentioned a few times that he loves all of his children. Also, scripture doesn't justify your hatred, so stop quoting that stupid passage in Leviticus. A) The bible was written by PEOPLE, so it is *gasp* fallible on occasion B) You're misusing a tiny passage to justify the persecution of an entire community and C) You can't pick and choose passages from the bible to skew until they're unrecognizable just to fit your idea of religion and faith. That's not how this thing works.

I hope you allow the love of Christ to enter your lives. I sincerely do. I hope that someday, something happens that will change your perspective and you will realize just how wrong you are, and you will let yourself be made new in the love of God. God loves you too, and while I can't bring myself to say that I love you, I do forgive you. You know not what you are doing.



PE Equipment Needed

Peck Elementary School is in need to PE equipment. If anyone no longer needs jump ropes, balls, etc., please contact Tammy Shaney. She will pick them up. Phone or text: 336-340-3593 or email: tammyshaney@gmail.com

For me, this was a wake up call. I've heard about protestors like this and read about their hate-filled shouts, but never before have I been so closely involved. Though it was unsettling at first, I feel so immensely blessed to be a part of such an incredible church community. I felt so much love and such a powerful connection to my church family today during the service. You are an amazing bunch of gay-people loving, Jesus following weirdos, College Park.

Who knows? Maybe some college kids saw it and **thought "Dang, that church is getting protested... LET'S GO THERE!"**

I love you people.

Hayley Turner
23 August 15

Commentaries on the Protesters

Dear Pastor Usey,

I was sorry to learn of the protest of College Park Church. Two of your former parishioners, Eric and Brandy Scott who have relocated to Juneau, shared the troubling news during our service yesterday. We remembered your congregation in prayer.

I know Eric and Brandy miss your vibrant congregation. They have told me of your important ministries of justice and hospitality. I am glad that in us, they have found a church home here.

Northern Light is a union of More Light Presbyterian and Reconciling United Methodist congregation. Although we are saddened that you have been subject to a hateful protest, we are grateful for the reason for it – your proclamation of inclusive love in Greensboro!

Please know that your sisters and brothers in faith from the opposite corner of the country stand with you in solidarity and in thanksgiving for your witness.

Grace and peace,

Phil

*Phil Campbell
Pastor, Northern Light United Church
407 W. 11th St.
Juneau, AK 99801
907-586-3131*

*John Wesley Iliff Senior Adjunct Lecturer
in Ministry and Social Justice
Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO*

Hi Michael,

Just wanted to tell you that you and all the good folk at CPBC have been in my heart and on my mind this week. I can't decide if I should say that I'm sorry to hear about the protestors, or way to go! It feels as if there are a couple of ways to take all of this and live with it. I can only imagine what all it has stirred up for folks there - including you. I just finished reading Philip Newell's book *The Rebirthing of God*. I've spent so much time over the past several years thinking about the power of both hate and love. I do remain hopeful that love will indeed have the last say.

I'm grateful for the many ways that the CP community taught love to Reid and Lesley-Ann. They are kind, compassionate and loving people. Much of that is traced to the love they both received and were taught at CP.

So keep doing the good and holy work that you are doing there. Keep giving voice to the love of God for all people. Keep preaching that we are ALL created in the image of God. Keep on in the midst of protest and hatred. And as you are caring for the community at CP, don't forget to tend your own soul. That's important work as well.

Love and blessings to you!

Monica City-Hix



This baby's turning 60
Let's celebrate
Ginger's Birthday!!!

Saturday, September 26
Hamilton Lakes Swim & Tennis Club
800 Montpelier Dr., Greensboro, NC
6:30 to 9:00 pm
Food, drinks, fun!!!
Regrets only 336-978-0439

Impromptu Talent Show at 7pm
Bring your songs, poems, stories
& anecdotes to share
Microphone and keyboard available



No gifts please, feeling generous? Donate to Out of the Garden,
donation envelopes available at the party or www.outofthegardenproject.org

Come Volunteer!

Food Reclamation from area schools will begin next week at First Presbyterian's kitchen M-F 1:30-2:30 daily. After the food is re-packaged it will be delivered to GSO recreation centers and Boys & Girls Club. If you would like to be a part of this important mission to chip away at food insecurity, and have a flexible midday schedule, please consider going to the OOTGP website and sign up under food reclamation (via the genius website). Roland and Sarah will be volunteering Wednesday, September 9th and we need a few more folks to sign up, please join us! If you cannot attend, please consider signing up for another day to support this ministry of Don & Kristy Milholin and feed the hungry.

NC's Own Westboro Baptist Church

Yes, beloved, these people are protesting my church. Why? I'm not really sure; I wanted to ask, but they wouldn't stop preaching at me long enough for me to get a word in. So, I just took the picture, laughed and went on my way.

You might think that this would end there and it probably should. But I've never been the object of a protest before and I'll admit, it left me a little rattled. I mean, it's one thing to see these jokers on television, or even to drive by them while they spew their bile at whoever they happen to hate at any given moment. But, it's a little different when it's you they're calling "filth" and a "stench in God's nostrils". I spent most of yesterday trying to process this before I remembered something Chris Hardwick said: "Comedians make jokes about horrible things because, as humans, this our defense mechanism for trying to process those horrible things and gain power over them." Now, calling me a comedian might be stretching things a bit and I don't have a show like Hardwick to work this stuff out. On the other hand, I am a smart ass with a blog. So, let's get processing! A little earlier, I said I didn't know why these douche canoes decided to picket our church, but that's not exactly true. Sure, I couldn't get a word in edgewise when I first saw them, but one look at their sign told me exactly what their problem might be: **We're a welcoming and affirming Baptist church. Really? That's the best you've got? Hell, it's no secret that we're cool with folks who are LGBT+; it's plastered all over our website and we held an anti-Amendment 1 rally a few years ago. Seriously, if you going to go to all the trouble protest someone, do your homework. There are so many other things we do and/or believe that would drive these guys crazy. Like the fact that we don't use the KJV exclusively, teach from books other than Bible now and then, "encourage" doubt by allowing members to ask questions, occasionally have secular music during service and, perhaps worst of all, allow women in positions of leadership. I'm sorry, fellows, but this was just lazy activism.**

I'm not sure exactly who they are or where they're from because, when I finally got a chance to talk to them, they wouldn't say. All they'd cop to was that they weren't local. Whether that's because they've been threatened with violence or are afraid someone might show up and protest at their church (as so many people have done to those trolls at Westboro Baptist Church), I couldn't say. But, it seems to me that if this is the case, you might want to reconsider your message.

Interestingly, these folks staged their "protest" right beside a sign that reads, "Where loving God means loving people." And, when I say "right beside", I mean that literally: they were like 10 feet away from it. So, let me get this straight, you're spewing hate in God's name while standing next to a sign that references a passage from the Bible? Sadly, the irony of it all seemed to be lost on them. Of course, that reference wasn't taken directly from

the Authorized King James Version of 1611, so maybe they were confused.

Their sign lists Hebrews 12:8 as a reference for their claim that people who are LGBT+ are nothing but bastards. But, let's look at that passage and see what it says: "**But if you don't experience discipline, which happens to all children, then you are illegitimate and not real sons and daughters.**" Hmm, nothing about gay folks in there at all. To be fair, though, when I finally got a chance to have a bit of conversation with our visitors, one of them said that they weren't just talking about homosexuality, but "all sin": fornicators, liars, thieves, porn watchers like he "used to be" (that's what he said, I'm not questioning his honesty there), etc. In other words, we're all bastards. And, while this does seem to echo Will Campbell's "Gospel in 7 words", he forgets the most important part: yes, we are all bastards, but God loves us anyway.

I have to say, however, that just talking to these guys was exhausting because they couldn't say three words in row without it turning into a sermon. And, the hostility? It came off of them in waves. But, I'm proud of my church family, because they didn't let those ugly signs and the toxic theology get to them. Our pastor invited them in for breakfast and offered them some water (for a heathenous false teacher leading us all straight to hell, he's not a bad guy). And, one of the ladies who prepared breakfast took some food and water out to them; they wouldn't touch it, though. Maybe they were afraid some "gay" might've gotten on it, I don't know. Of course, it probably didn't help that when she took out to them, she tipped her head at one of them and sweetly asked the other, "Is he your partner?"

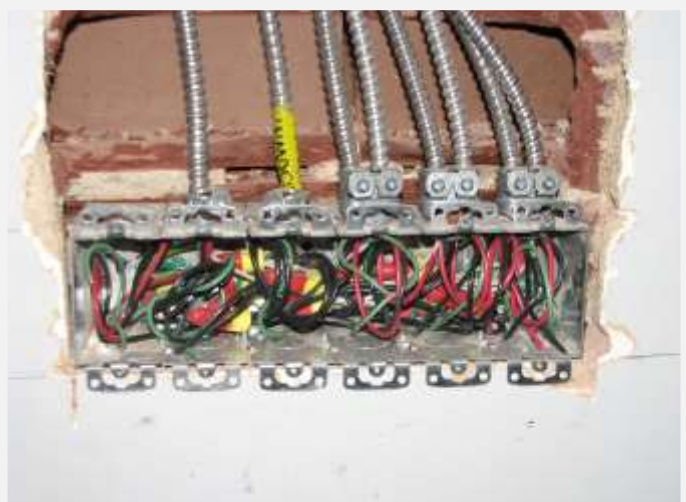
I find it interesting that these people were quoting the Bible and "calling out sin", but seemed to be completely ignorant of Matthew 7:1-2. You know the one that says, "Don't judge, so that you won't be judged. You'll receive the same judgment you give. Whatever you deal out will be dealt out to you." Or, James 4:12, who said "There is only one lawgiver and judge, and he is able to save and to destroy. But you who judge your neighbor, who are you?" Funny how that works, huh?

I'm not sure what their endgame was, but I suspect that, on some level, they hoped that all their preaching, sign-holding and Bible-waving would cause us all to see the error of our ways and we'd fall to our knees and ask God's forgiveness. Or, failing that, maybe some college student would hear their "message" and turn from the life of depravity that they had been living. Yes, because nothing brings a person to God quicker than the knowledge that God "hates" them and wants them to burn in Hell for living the life God created them to live in the first place. That is such a compelling argument. Okay, this thing is getting a little out of hand, so I'll close with something my son, Parker, had to say about the whole thing: "If you have protesters outside your church, completely unprovoked, you must be doing something right." That's the way I'm looking at it, anyway.

Joel Rieves

Chapel Renovations

Chapel Renovations continued in August. Here is the progress:



Letter to the Editor

Sean Olson's letter to the editor of the Greensboro News & Record on the protesters:

On Sunday morning, I went to church – late, so I didn't get my wife's text: "There are protesters here." Two men and young boy holding signs urging to "Repent" and informing that "Homosexuals are bastards in need of a savior." When I went in, they called me a sodomite. They called a 19-year-old college student, a young woman, a **whore**. All because we are "welcoming and affirming." Spoken plainly, that means that our church welcomes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) parishioners just as we would anyone else. My church has made it a mission to make LGBT people feel welcome in our community. We hosted a rally against Amendment One. Some of our ministers and leaders, as well as a good number of our parishioners, are gay. I suppose that such **ideas are dangerous to some. I seem to recall that Christ's** ideas were themselves dangerous – they were, indeed: They got him killed.

In the end, I'm glad I live in a country where people can stand outside of a church they disagree with and voice their opinions. And these people seemed harmless, though I do think calling a young woman going to worship service a whore lacks the couth with which my mother taught me that a gentlemen ought always comport himself.

My church handled it classy. Last Sunday was Promotion Sunday, when we have a breakfast for the children of the church. My friend, Alison, took the protesters plates of **food. Of course, it's ironic: We have a breakfast** welcoming the kids and pledging to help them in their search for Christ, and outside there is a message of divisiveness. Where would Christ have been?

The answer to that heady question is in the refrain of a song we sing from time to time at College Park Baptist Church: "They shall know we are Christians by our love, by our love."

Sean M. Olson
Greensboro

Parent Meet & Greet
September 20

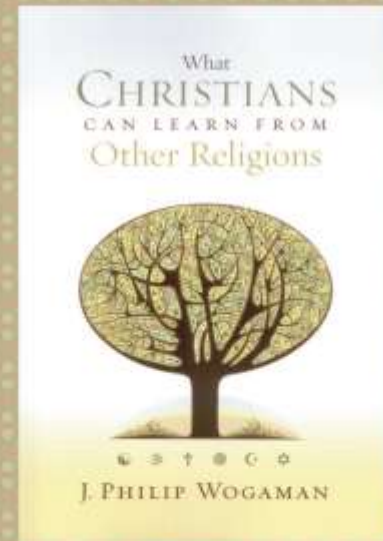
Parents of children through 5th grade are invited to join us in the Fellowship Hall during Sunday School to learn more about children's programs at College Park and for doughnuts and coffee.



God in Books

Sunday Mornings in the Fellowship Hall

9:45 - 10:45 am



HELPING HANDS

Helping Hands Ministry Team

We are doing the things we love to do in warm weather: lawn mowing, hedge trimming, gutter cleaning, trash removal, etc. The point is the Helping Hands team wants to hear from you about projects that we can take on that can help our members. We will be expanding on a suggestion presented by Brian Carden recently to compile **our own "Angie's List" of handymen (church members or others), electricians, plumbers, etc.** that can be a reference source for our members. If requests are outside our level of expertise or manpower, we will be glad to offer advice and direction in tackling the project.

Team members: Wayne Jones, Tim Lowrance, Donna Gregory, Caryanne Story-Bunce, Joel Rieves, Sterling Suddarth, Jenny Ward-Sutherland, Jerry Elkins, Kevin Short, Mike Kirkman, and Ronnie Brannon.



*Sunday October 4th
1:00 arrive, 1:30 eat
Bring a Dish to Share*



**New!
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 Collage blog that is updated frequently by **Annette**. 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**. Mark File. **PS: Don't** share the address for the archive location of the old website : www.old.collegeparkchurch.com. **It's only temporary and all important info has been transferred.**



www.collegeparkchurch.com

Thank You's

College Park Baptist Church

On behalf of the board of directors of PFLAG Greensboro, I would like to thank College Park for allowing our **organization to use your church's facilities during this past year** for our monthly chapter meetings. Many members of your church have been very helpful to us as we have transitioned from our previous meeting space to the current space at your church. We enjoy our meetings at College Park **and we believe that your church's central location is very convenient for people who attend our meetings.**

Sincerely,

Jim Baulding, Treasurer
PFLAG Greensboro

I wish to thank all my church friends & family who continue to send their cards, thoughts, and prayers of love my way. Your love gives me the strength I need during this particular phase of my life. May our God continue to bless you all.

John Dickey



**College Park
Women's Retreat**

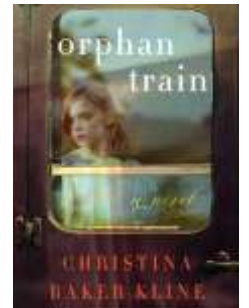
Women of College Park, please save the date for the annual **women's retreat, Oct. 9-11** at Blowing Rock Conference Center in Blowing Rock, NC.

Thank you to all past participants for feedback on last year's retreat. The retreat planning committee has taken your suggestions to heart and is planning a great weekend for College Park women. The cost will be less than \$150 each and will include all meals, lodging and a retreat facilitator. Details to come on carpooling and housing options. A link will be sent out for the signup genius site once plans are finalized. No action is needed now, except to save the date.

<http://www.brcccenter.org/>
Margaret Bell: margaret@inhousemedia.us,
Monica Harrison: wmonica1976@aol.com

Return Used Books

Please consider returning church book group books to the front office or foyer area (especially the last two Women of Valor choices). We can get used book store credit. There have also been requests to gather a few sets for local school use. (If you wish to keep them, no pressure, but if they are merely languishing on a bookshelf at home, kindly consider returning to CP.)



Announcements

Ultimate Frisbee

Ready to get out and run? Join us for Ultimate Frisbee Monday nights, 6:00 pm, at Lake Daniel Park (corner of Radiance and Mimosa). No experience necessary. Bring a red shirt, a white shirt, some water and you are good to go! You will learn as you play! Or just bring a chair and relax and chat with your friends and watch the game. Find us on Facebook at "College Park Frisbee."



ZUMBA® Classes

NEW DATE & TIME! Wednesday nights (except 1st Wed.)
5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Cost: \$5.00.

Exercise Bikes Needed

Erwin Montessori is looking for used exercise bikes to start a Read and Ride program (readandride.org) next school year. If you or someone you know has a bike that can be donated, or questions about the program, please contact Nancy Cravey. Tax receipts can be provided for any donations and pickup can be arranged.



September GUM Donation:

Canned Applesauce (any size)

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



4 Ways 2 Give



For added convenience, we now have four 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 Annette in 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 at either church service with a credit or debit card via tablets available for use (church pays fees).
- Pay online with a credit card a www.CollegeParkChurch.com. Choose the option to cover the credit card fees or let the church pay them.

5G Prayer!

Well, not exactly. But the Prayer Team would love to be part of your prayer network. On the Prayer Team bulletin board, across from **Michael's office, you'll find prayer request cards.**

Write your prayer request and leave it in the **envelope.** We'll add it to the weekly list of concerns the team holds up in prayer.

Also, you are always welcome to use the Prayer Room, inside the third-floor classroom next to the choir room. It's a peaceful place to pray, meditate or simply be still to listen for God.



Wednesday Night Schedule

5:30-6:15 pm Zumba (except 1st Wednesday night), FH
5:30-6:15 pm Dinner (1st Wednesday night only)
6:15 pm Prayer & Announcements

Preschool: (ages 3 yrs old)
6:15-6:45 pm Angel Choir (Choir Room 304)
6:45-7:30 pm Toddler Room with Childcare in Preschool Room 104

Children: (Grades 1 - 5)
6:00-6:30 pm Tone Chimes, Sanctuary
6:30-7:00 pm Choir, Room 304

Adult & Youth:
6:30-7:30 pm Adult Handbells
6:30-7:30 pm Bible Study In Fellowship Hall
7:30-8:30 pm Adult Choir Practice (Choir Room, 3rd Floor)
* Childcare is provided in room 104 from 6:15—8 pm.

About Meditation

Sunday afternoons 4:00 pm in the Parlor.
Everyone welcome.

General Budget Update 8.30.15

YTD Giving:	\$159,867
YTD Budget:	\$181,363
Difference:	-\$21,496

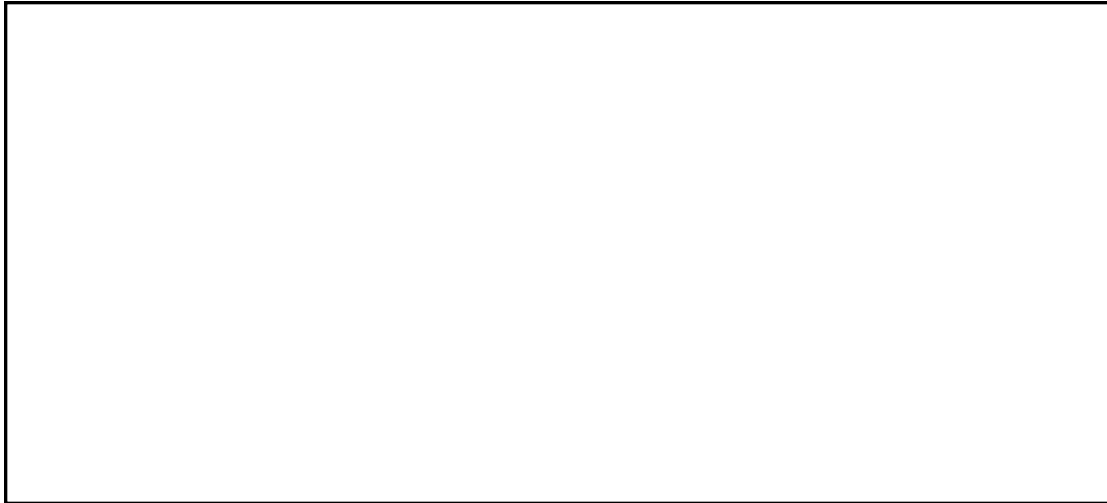
Capital Campaign "Access for All" Financial Report as of 8.30.15:

Donations needed to complete the final two projects: Chapel & Kitchen \$392,000
Cash balance available for next two projects:
\$204,496



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

Return Service Requested



Looking Ahead-September

- 1 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 2 1st Wednesday Dinner 5:30
Wednesday Night Activities, 6:30 pm
- 3 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 4 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 6 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 7 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniel
- 8 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 9 Zumba 5:30 pm, FH
Wednesday Night Activities
- 10 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 11 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 13 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 14 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniel
- 15 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Pendergraft Meeting 5:30 pm, Parlor
Mostly Men's Occasional Book Club Meeting
6:30 pm Sticks & Stones
PFLAG 7 pm, Youth Room
- 16 Zumba 5:30 pm, FH
Business Meeting 6:30 pm, Wed. Activities
- 17 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Forever 39 11:30 am, K&W
Narcotics Anon, FH
- 18 Melissa Floyd-Pickard Meeting 8:30-11:30 am,
FH
AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 20 GUM Sunday, 3rd Sunday—refreshments on
playground at noon
Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 21 Frisbee 6pm, Lake Daniel
- 22 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 23 Wednesday Night Activities, Zumba 5:30 pm
- 24 AI-Anon 10 am, FH
Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
Pendergraft Meeting 5:30 pm, Parlor
- 25 AI-Anon Noon, FH
- 27 Sunday Activities
Meditation 4 pm, Parlor
- 28 Frisbee 6 pm, Lake Daniel
- 29 Narcotics Anon Noon, FH
- 30 Wednesday Night Activities, Zumba 5:30 pm

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

Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

August Food Donations = 117 Pounds
2015 Total Food Donations = 748 Pounds

Every Member a Minister

Ginger Burkhead is 18 with 42 years of experience this month.

Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer

Brian Carden, Minister to Senior Adults

Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship

Darlene Johnson, Sexton

Keith A. Menhinick, Wake Forest Pastoral Intern

David Soyars, Organist

Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries

Lin Story-Bunce, Associate Minister

Andrea Turner, Deacon Chair

Michael S. Usey, Pastor

Annette Waisner, Office & Media Manager

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