Circuit Rider

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
714 Herbertsville Road
Brick, NJ 08724

October, 2008

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

How Do You Prepare To Come Into the Presence of God?
Exodus 19

For many generations the Israelites had lived as slaves. Now Moses has been used by God to lead them from their captivity to a new life. What will this new life look like? How will they live? What will guide them on this new path?

As they leave Egypt they find themselves trapped against the sea with the army of Pharaoh approaching. There seems to be no escape and then God delivers them through the water to safety. Now as this mass of 2 million people move across the desert they find that they need water. Water is a necessity in everyone's lives. It is not too unreasonable to think that they complained to Moses for something to drink. God made the bitter water sweet so they could drink it. Then they complained about the lack of food. So God provided quail and manna for them to eat.

The people seem to expect Moses to solve all their problems. It is difficult for us to imagine the mindset or culture that was established through generations of slavery. The people were probably not very educated. Not much was written down if anything of their history. Everything was passed down through oral traditions and most likely songs. Music allowed them to remember who they were and where they have come from. For years they had been told what to do and now they were free and did not know what to do. They were lost and confused.

I believe God was trying to change their culture, their way of thinking. God was going to reveal to them His nature and character and His desire for who they could and would be. They would learn to trust God. They would learn how to relate to each other. He would give them Ten Commandments to guide their life together.

As they approach Mt. Sinai, God speak to them through Moses. He tells them to prepare themselves. God will be revealing Himself to them on the mountain. A thick cloud will cover the mountain and God will speak to the people. They are not to touch the mountain. They are to take three days to prepare themselves for coming into God's presence. They are told to wash their clothes, refrain from any sexual activity, and to consecrate or sanctify themselves.

Washing their clothes makes sense as you want to make yourself presentable to God. When we worked with the children in Uganda they would first wash themselves and put on their best clothes before they came to greet us. I can remember a time when going to worship you would have your Sunday best to wear. I am not sure why God told them to refrain from sexual activity beyond the fact that God did not want them to have distractions while coming into His presence. When He told them to consecrate or sanctify themselves, I wonder as well as what that looked like? How did they set themselves apart for coming into God's presence? Did they pray? Did they sing songs about God? It is an interesting task to think about what they did for these three days before God revealed Himself on the mountain.

How do you prepare to come into the presence of God? How do you prepare yourself to come to worship on Sunday mornings? Have we lost the mystery and awe of who God is? Is it possible that we have taken advantage of coming into the presence of God? Are we treating the worship of God as something common?

I want to challenge you to think, reflect and pray about how you prepare to come into the presence of God.

See You In Worship,

Pastor John

The Message I Was Going to Deliver

How wonderful it was to be with you for those three Sundays in August! As I came to that last one (24th), I had planned for some time before joining you to deliver a message entitled "Empowered by the King." For those of you who were able to be with us on Sunday, 17 August, or who may have listened to that message ("On Business for the King") by means of the website, you'll recall that I ended that sermon by highlighting the tasks that King Jesus has given us, his subjects, to do while he is away for a time. He has clearly instructed us to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20) of people everywhere while we are his witnesses in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Well, the follow-up message that I had intended to deliver was to point us to the one our King has provided for us to empower us to accomplish these eternally important tasks: the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that he would send someone to "guide [us] into all truth," to "tell us what is yet to come," and to "[take] from what is [Christ's] and [make] it known unto [us]" (John 16:13-14). Twice during his last extended teaching time with them, our King said to the disciples then and there (and to us disciples here and now) that the Holy Spirit is "the Counselor" (John 14:16 and 16:7).

If there is one thing that a counselor is supposed to be able to do, it is to help the "client" figure out how to "make it on his/her own." Well, guess what? The Counselor is all about that, and what he wants us to realize is that "making it on my own" means relying on him for wisdom and strength to figure out what to do and to have the power to do what needs to be done in each situation that we face. He is particularly able to supply all the personal qualities ("fruit" as they're called in Galatians 5:22) that make us attractive and effective witnesses for our King while also enabling us to accomplish the task of making disciples as Jesus explained so well, "…[Y]ou will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you…" (Acts 1:8).

Is the Holy Spirit in control of our lives? Is he the one from whom you and I are drawing our strength and in whom we are finding the wisdom we need to live life as our King wants us to live it? Let us take these words of instruction from Paul (Galatians 5:25) to heart as we allow the Holy Spirit to live the life of Jesus through us as we love with Jesus' love all who come across our paths:

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

{Thank you so much for allowing me to serve among you for those days in August! I was blessed.}
--Frank Brown, Interim Senior Pastor (10-24 August)

Youth Director Musings

Hello everyone!

Fall is here, school is here, and a life of activity is back at our church, as many of you are already well aware. Some of you may not know, but part of my fall schedule is getting back into chapel with St. Paul's Christian School. Our school provides quality education from a Christian worldview and provides chapel once a week for our students to have a time of worship, a time to be taught in Scripture, and a time to discuss their faith in everyday life. Over the past two years, our teaching and discussion times have centered on various topics, but primarily the books of Genesis and Exodus – the history of our beginnings as a human race and as a people of faith in the true and living God.

I was blessed earlier this year at one of our school programs when a parent came up to me and told me about how her child was coming home and sharing the things that were taught at chapel. It is great to know that these young people are taking the Word of God home with them and sharing it with their families. Not only that, but these children are being grounded in truth from such a young age – chapel is for all students from 1st grade to 8th grade, and they are being encouraged in their faith in the classrooms as well!

I am reminded of something the Apostle Paul said to a younger disciple named Timothy: "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that *from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3.14-15, *italics mine*). Timothy was taught in God's Word since childhood, and it is able to give him the wisdom he needs to walk with Christ by faith. I encourage you to teach young people about what God has to say to them about life and faith in Him; and not only that, but to be grounded in the truth of God's Word for yourself as well.

This fall, we're going to change things up a little bit and take a few weeks to look at what it means to know God. I hope also to have some more guest speakers than I have had in the past, which I believe will help broaden their perspective as they see faith displayed in more people that they would not have otherwise known. Please keep the ministry of St. Paul's Christian School, its students, its staff, and our chapel time in prayer as we move into this new school year.

God Bless, Matt

Sunday School: Grades 9-12

It is our desire to have Teenagers participating in Sunday worship as part of our church family. We want to encourage young people to engage in the worship of God and to participate in the community life of our church. In light of this, we are encouraging our youth (grades 9-12) to attend Sunday morning worship in the sanctuary. To this end, we will not be offering our Sr. High Sunday school class this fall.

Counselors Corner

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. How many times have we heard that quote or have even spoken that quote? The other day, some friends were talking about celebrities and their appearance. One person thought this one woman was very beautiful, the other thought she was average. They began to dispute the fact. I said "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". They stopped, looked at me and started to laugh. Not at me, but themselves for getting so passionate about someone they didn't even know. Also, they agreed that the statement is true.

The dictionary defines beauty as: "Pleasing and impressive qualities of something pleasing and impressive to look at, listen to, touch, smell or taste. 2: Fine examples: something very good, attractive, or impressive of its kind.".

How do you define beauty? Is it just the outward looks of a person or the inner person who exemplifies godliness? The word beauty is used thirty one times in the Word in many different references.

Proverbs 4: 9 talking about wisdom says: "She will place on your head a garland of grace; she will present you with a crown of beauty." It goes on to say in verse ten: "Hear my son, and accept my sayings and the years of your life will be many."

So what is my point? Today we are inundated with images of beautiful people. Our children are given the message that you must be beautiful and fit the image. As a result we have eating disorders among girls and boys. As Christians let's remember what really makes us beautiful – our love for one another and for the Lord.

It isn't wrong to want to look your best, but the emphasis needs to be on our hearts and our treatment of others. Remember the story Matt told a few weeks ago about Punchinello? Let's stop putting dots or stars on people and remember our Creator made us uniquely and wonderful. We are valuable and precious in His sight. Ask the Lord to help us see others as he sees them. Donna Ridge

29th Annual VARIETY SHOW

Broadway Comes to St. Paul's

St. Paul's Music Ministry will present their 29th Annual Variety Show on Saturday, November 1, at 7:00PM. All of our choirs (children, youth, and adults) will be participating in another great time of fun and fellowship. There will also be many solos, duets, groups, and instrumentals. Our theme for this year is *"BROADWAY"* but there will also be a Variety of Pop, Jazz, Gospel, Country, Classical, and more. There is sure to be great music to interest everyone! For 29 years we have been presenting this great time of music and fellowship for St. Paul's and the community. Please invite family and friends to join us for another fun evening with St. Paul's talented musicians

Prayer Help Needed

We are in need of someone to type the Intercessory Prayers for the bulletin on the 4th Sunday of each month. This would require you to collect the prayer cards from both services on that Sunday, and have them typed and sent to the office, no later then Wednesday. Also, if we need a fill-in for months with 5 Sundays or when someone is away. If you would like to take on this job, or have any questions please call Judy

Senior Joy

Senior Joy will meet on Thursday, October 9TH at 12:30 PM. Bring a sandwich,
Dessert will be provided**.** Matt Kay will be showing slides of his trip to the Philippines

Greetings,

I wanted to remind you of the opportunity to join me in prayer for the country of Sudan this Wednesday, September 17th, at noon, Eastern Time. All you have to do is dial 800-868-1838 (within the US) and 404-920-6368 (if you are calling internationally). When asked for the code enter 176685#

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I'm claiming the promises of God found in Haggai for the people of South Sudan. " 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty" "'From this day on I will bless you.' "

There will be a prayer for each country where WGM is working over the next 30 days. A prayer for the country of Kenya will be on Friday, September 26th. Join in this concert of prayer daily to make an impact on the Kingdom.

Also please be in prayer about the need for an MK (missionary kid) teacher for 3 teen brothers whose parents work at the Memorial Christian Hospital in Werkok, South Sudan. Needed from January through May 2009. Strong math skills will be a plus. Contact me or WGM's World Connection Ministries Department (765-671-7228) if interested in finding out more had a good trip to the hospital in Werkok last weekend with two other missionary colleagues. We were able to assess the needs and will be offering advice and assistance. Here is a picture of one of the women who came to the hospital on Saturday for medical care. What a privilege to be able to offer help and hope!

Shalom,

Joy

Get a Free Family Portrait!

You do not need to be a member to take advantage of this offer! We will be taking pictures for a new pictorial directory this coming fall and winter. Every family (members and non-members alike) that has a picture taken will receive a free 8x10 family portrait as well as the opportunity to purchase other pictures.

Mark your calendars for November 20th and 21st from 3-9:30pm, November 22nd (10am to 5pm) and January 6th and 7th from 3-9:30pm. Look for more information in the bulletin and Circuit Rider as we get closer to these dates.

You're Invited to a Premier Designs Jewelry Show

Friday October 10 – 7:00 PM
At St. Paul's UMC in the Youth Room

All Profits are to benefit Child Flood Victims in Iowa

It is called the 500 year flood, a flood of historic proportions that hit Iowa in June of 2008. When the flood waters came, people had to leave their homes and most did not have any warning. They did not have time to pack any of their belongings or even to save their pets. In the area of Cedar Rapids most cannot afford flood insurance. Many people are still living in shelters and F.E.M.A. trailers, and many have been forced to abandon their homes.

There will be door Prizes and fun smiles to greet you!

For each nonperishable food item you bring you will receive an extra door prize ticket. All food collected will be donated to St. Paul's UMC Food pantry to aid local families.

For more information please contact Lisa at

The Christmas Store

The Christmas Store is looking for gently used children's books and knitted hats, mittens and scarves for December's Christmas store. If you would be willing to knit any of these items, patterns are available. Also needed are combs, bars of soap, washcloths and toothbrushes, which may be place in the marked box located in the Narthex

The Christmas store will be meeting at St. Paul's on Tuesday, November 4th in the Library. Contact Bery for more information.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Dates to Remember
October 7 Executive Board 7 PM

Tuesday, October 21th
Dinner 6:00 PM & Auction 7:00 PM

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Sunday Morning Bible Study

Adult Bible Study for Fall, Winter and Spring of the 08-09 season. We meet in the library during the first service. We will continue with the harmony of the gospel as our study. Please come and study with us as you will. In Christ, Bill

Sunday Afternoon Adult Bible Study – "The Rock"

"The Rock" (a foundation for families) Adult Bible Study will be starting a new study called Making the Most of Marriage. Its a video-based, 7-week study by Dr. Kevin Lehman (A intro can be found at www.sampsonresources.com) We will be starting on Sunday, September 28th.

Our group meets at 1pm on Sunday afternoons, and we take turns hosting gatherings. Kids are welcome, so its a great opportunity for fellowship as well! Feel free to contact Brian or Diane or Laura or Scott for more info... the more the merrier!

Positive Healing Support Group

Starting September 11th at 7:00pm in room 6 I will be facilitating a support group for women who have been physically, emotionally, mentally or sexually abused. We will be using Healing for Damaged Emotions by David Seamans. We will also be using the workbook. You can go on amazon.com if you would like to see the book. For more information you can call me at the office at 732-458-2080 x16

Wednesday & Thursday Evening Bible Studies

Pastor John will be leading an adult Bible Study on Wednesdays at 7pm in the youth room. The study will be on the 10 Commandments. This Thursday evening (9/11) at 7pm we will start a new study lead by Janice on the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in the counseling room opposite the office. Also the Pastor's Notes Bible Study lead by Bill will start meeting again in the Library at 7pm on Thursdays Call the office for more details.

DISCOVERING GOD'S WAY OF HANDLING MONEY

"Everything in the heavens and the earth is yours, O Lord." I Chronicles 29:11 (LB)

Today people are saving less money than they used to. Since 1984 personal savings has decreased from 10.8% of personal income to -1%. (U.S. Department of Commerce) People today are spending more then they are making. Many people are experiencing financial challenges. They are facing growing debt, little or no savings, inadequate income, and no plans for their financial future. . Others are financially sound, but suffocating materialism has robbed them of their spiritual vitality. They are not spending their resources in eternally significant ways.

The Bible has the answers to these financial difficulties – it contains more than 2,350 verses dealing with money and possessions. In fact, Jesus Christ said more about money than almost any other subject. Financial matters are addressed throughout Scripture for both spiritual and practical reasons.

Beginning October 12th at 9am we will be having a Sunday morning bible study entitled, "Discovering God's Way of Handling Money." in the staff lounge. The course will run for 8 weeks. Tom will be leading this teaching. Come out and join us as we learn together Biblical principles we can practically apply to our lives today. Please call the office to sign up. The cost will be $10 per person for a study guide. If you cannot afford the study guide one will be provided for you.

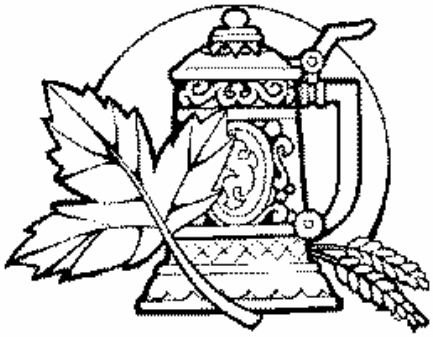
Monday Evening Men's & Women's Bible Study

Study of Hebrews (14 weeks)
Starting Monday, Sept. 15th
7:30-8:45 PM

We will gather in Sanctuary, then women will meet in one classroom and the men in another for an in-depth study. Call for more details: Rich & Heidi or Fran

October Dinner

Octoberfest

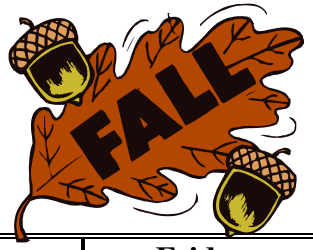


When: September 20, 2008
Where: Norcross Hall
Time: 6:00 pm

For the kids
Chicken Fingers, Mac & Cheese

The Kitchen Cooks

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
October 2008



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Weekly Events & Meetings - - - > **9:00 Sunday School** **9:00 Trad. WorshipService** **9:00 & 10:45 Childcare- Rm 1** **10:10 Fellowship – Norcross Hall** **10:45 Contmp. Worship Service** **6:30pm Vortex** **8:00 Alcoholics Anonymous**	**7-9AM Before Care** **12:30-6PM After Care** **6:00PM Cub Den Pack 19** **7:00PM Senior High Youth** **7:00 Bible Study Hebrews**	**7-9AM Before Care** **12:30-6PM After Care** **7:00PM Junior High Youth** **7:30 Safe Place – Rm 10** **8:00pm Men's Basketball**	**6:00AM Men's Breakfast** **7-9AM Before Care** **10:00 Ladies Share Grp-Penrods** **10:00 Quilters** **11:00 Staff Meeting** **12:30-6PM After Care** **4:30PM Cherub Choir** **6:00 Handbell Choir** **6:30 Volleyball** **7:00 Adult Bible Study**	**7-9AM Before Care** **12:30-6PM After Care** **12:30-6PM After Care** **5:30 Father/Son Basketball** **6:00 Women's Bible Study** **6:30 Alcoholics Anon. – Rm. 6** **7:00 Boy Scout Trp 33** **7:00 Carol Choir** **7:00 Celebration Choir** **7:00 Bible Study – Pastor's Notes** **7:00 Bible Study – Luke** **7:00 Women's Support Grp** **8:00 Chancel Choir**	**7-9AM Before Care** **9:00am Bulletin Team – Lib** **6:30pm Praise Team – Sanctuary** **8:00 OC Anonymous - Lib**	**7:00AM Men's Disciple**
			1	2 2:00pm Agape Home Schoolers 6:30pm Girl Scout Trp 1310	3	4
5	6 7:00 pm Council Ministries 7:30 Trustees	7 7:00pm UMW Exec Mtg	8 7:30pm Lydia Circle CATALYST	9 12:30pm Senior Joy	10 6:00pm Jewelry Show to benefit Iowa Girl Scouts	11
12	13 7:00pm Finance SPCS Closed	14 10:00AM Deborah Circle 12noon Rebeccah Circle 7:00PM Miriam Circle	15	16 2:00pm Agape Home Schoolers 6:30pm Girl Scout Trp 1310	17	18 8:00am Men's Breakfast 6:00pm Fellowship Dinner
19 HOT POTATO LUNCH	20	21 6:00pm UMW Mtg. & Dinner Auction	22 7:30pm Christmas Band Rehearsal	23	24	25
26	27 7:00pm Jewelry Show Pickup 7:30pm SPRC	28	29 7:00pm SPCS High School Info Night. 7:30pm Christmas Band Rehearsal	30 6:30pm Girl Scout Trp 1310	31 8:00pm Variety Show Rehearsal	November 1 7:30 Variety Show IT'S SHOW TIME!