

The P.C.R.C. Press

"I PRESS ON
TOWARD THE
GOAL TO WIN
THE PRIZE FOR
WHICH GOD HAS
CALLED ME
HEAVENWARD IN
CHRIST JESUS"

PHOENIX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

September 2011

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

*Seek to
please*

*Shift your
prayer life
from "Please,
God" to
"Please God."
Take the
comma out of
those two
words when
you pray,
and transi-
tion your
praying from
asking God
for things to
asking God
for the pleas-
ure of God's
pleasure.
—Homiletics*

Someone who cares



It's easy to become discouraged when we pause to consider the needs all around us. So many worthy causes and pressing concerns require action. What can one person with limited resources accomplish?

Theodor Geisel (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss) said, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

We're most effective and fulfilled when we put our God-given talents and resources into areas he has uniquely shaped our hearts to be passionate for. Passion is the key. If you want to make a difference, find something you care a "whole awful lot" about and then dive in.

A clean slate

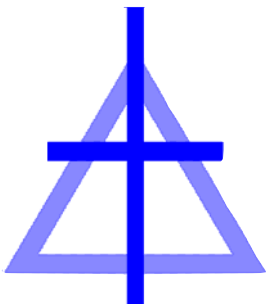
One of the best things about heading back to school is the chance for a fresh start. A new year, new teachers, perhaps even a new school offer students the opportunity to try a little harder and do a little better than the year before.

Praise God that he allows us to always start over. Jeremiah writes that the Lord's mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23a). With God's help, we can begin each day with a clean slate and a new attitude, determined to make some changes for the better.



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A daily reminder

Make this bookmark to remind you that God is with you every day.

What you need:

- An old calendar
- Scissors
- Cardstock
- Glue stick
- Pencil or marker
- Stickers
- Hole punch
- Ribbon or yarn



What you do:

1. Cut out the first line of squares from an old calendar, including the days of the week along the top.
2. Cut the cardstock into a rectangle a little larger than the calendar section.
3. Glue the calendar section onto the cardstock.
4. Write "God has plans for me" (Jeremiah 29:11) on the bookmark.
5. Add stickers or other decorations on the back.
6. Punch a hole on one end of the bookmark.
7. Loop some ribbon or yarn through the hole.



PUZZLE

GOD'S PLAN

When we ask God for guidance, he will show us his perfect plan for our lives.

Directions: Use the shape code to the right to write out Jeremiah 29:11, NIV.

plans

know

and

for

hope

I

not

declares

give

to

prosper

harm

have

the

LORD

you

future

a

"

.

Answers: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV)

**May you
hear God's
voice in
your heart,
know His
touch in
your life
and feel
His love in
each day.**

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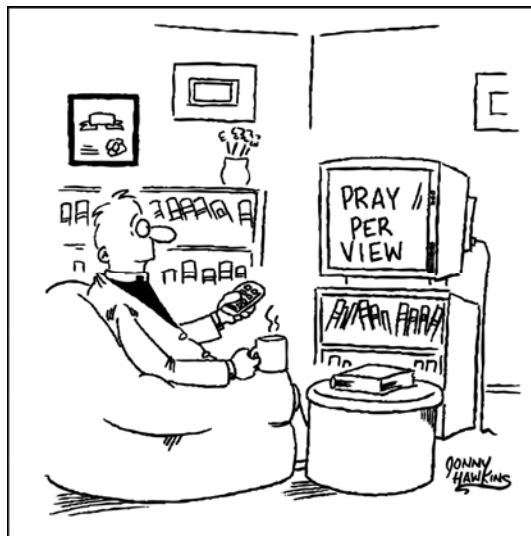
Editor:
Marsha Frieling
Deadline for copy: the third Sunday of each month.



From a bulletin in Arlington, VA

**Hymn:
"All People That on Earth Do Swell"**

There must've been a successful bake sale where these people dwell.





The Ingredients of True Community

Part III Philippians 2: 19-30

His (Paul's) response to the leadership crisis in Philippi is to send two of his friends to them to address the situation. In these two friends we see the ingredients of true community.

The first is Timothy. What you'll notice about Timothy is that he doesn't get sent to Philippi to help resolve their issues because he has such great credentials in teaching and leadership. It's not that he has more skills. The one qualification that makes Timothy the perfect person to visit them is his character: he has a servant heart. He is completely unselfish. His main goal is not to focus on his own interests, but that of Jesus. Timothy lives his life in complete contrast to the teachers in Philippi.

With just a few short words, Paul adds Timothy to the list of examples that he's been using to teach the Philippians what servanthood really is. He began with Jesus, quoting a marvelous hymn in chapter 2:

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Then in chapter 2:17, he gives his own testimony, talking about how he is being poured out like a drink offering, which is an incredibly vivid picture of suffering for Jesus. And then points out Timothy, who truly takes an interest in their welfare and is focused on Jesus in everything. It is the faith and character of Timothy that makes him eminently qualified to deal with the unbalanced leadership in Philippi. They are out for their own gain and advantage. Timothy is all about Jesus and only Jesus.

So the first example of community is Paul's friend Timothy. His second example of community is his friend Epaphroditus. We know a fair bit about Timothy because we can read about him in other places in Scripture. But this is the only place in the Bible where we read about Epaphroditus, so we know nothing of his background.

Timothy and Epaphroditus provide the perfect set of gifts for a hurting church. In Timothy, we see someone who embodies Truth in a beautiful way. Because of his character, he is the perfect person to model what it means to have the mind of Christ, to counteract the craziness that's going on in the church. Timothy doesn't just know the Truth of Jesus, he lives it.

Well, if Timothy embodies truth, then perhaps we could say that Epaphroditus embodies love. Specifically, he represents Paul's love for the Philippians. Going back to the idea of community, that we are one strange herd, brought together into unity in Jesus, Timothy and Epaphroditus give us a beautiful example of what it looks like to help foster beautiful community. They embody the two ingredients that help the church function at its best: truth and love. Let's close our message by taking a closer look at just who Epaphroditus was and how he demonstrated strong Christian love.

Epaphroditus seems to have been sent to Paul by the Philippian church. They were so concerned about Paul's condition in prison, that they sent someone to go and care for him on their behalf. If, as we believe he was, Paul was in Caesarea, then the journey from Philippi took more than a month, most of it by ship. This was no small commitment of time and money. We know that it was a challenging journey because Paul tells us that Epaphroditus became so ill on the way that he almost died.

(Continued on page 7)

*(The above article is Part III of a sermon provided by the CRCNA website.
Parts IV - V of Rev. DeRaaf's sermon will appear in the next two issues of our newsletter.)*

Smart phones - Amazing little devices



I love my smart phone! After using a smart phone for a while, I'll admit it would be very hard to give up. The productivity and convenience these little machines offer is amazing. Having access to the Internet, email, maps, calendars and a myriad of other resources gives me the freedom to get out from under my laptop! The following are some examples of things a smart phone can do:

Bible - I have the complete Bible (in several languages and versions) with me everywhere I go and it fits in my pocket. I can read the Bible myself or I can have it read to me. Even more, I can take notes and share those notes with other people.



Music - I have a lot of my favorite music stored on my phone so I can listen to it anywhere. If I want more music I can do a little search and download what I want. Picture this, you are listening to the radio or the

music in a store when a song comes on that you like but don't know anything about.

To find out more about the song, I just let my smart phone listen to the song for a little while and it will retrieve the information about that song.

Maps - I have a whole world map in my pocket. From the map program, I can view satellite image maps, topographical maps, street maps, weather maps, transit maps, and even traffic maps. If I want to track where I'm traveling, no problem, with the press of a few buttons, the map will keep a track of my location complete with some useful statistics. My smart phone also acts as a GPS navigation device with voice turn by turn directions.

Tools - I have a calculator, bubble level, bar-code scanner, language translator, and a stopwatch! One of the most useful tools on my phone though, is the camera. The camera allows me to take pictures and videos then save them or upload them to the Internet. When I get really geeky I can make my phone act as a web-cam and view it on my computer. Another tool

(Continued on page 7)

So — you think you know everything?

- *February 1835 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.*
- *In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.*
- *Our eyes are the same size from birth, but our nose and ears continue to grow.*



	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Nursery AM Service</u>	<u>Little Lambs Preschool</u>	<u>Little Lambs Elementary</u>	<u>Library</u>
	4th	Barb & Sandy	(no classes)	(no classes)	Beth
	11th	Mandy W , Lynola & Nicole	Amanda VH & Courtney	Florence	Betty
	18th	Jill, Amanda K & Mary	Andrea R & Jenna	Kate	Ruth
	25th	Gina, Carol & Sara M	Rebekah K & Ethan	Caitlin	Florence
	<u>October</u>				
	2nd	Deb, Mandy W & Kristen	Raquel & Breanna	Sheila	Marie
	9th	Elaine, Mary & Lynola	Mandy A & Courtney	Jenifer	Marsha
	16th	Andrea R, Gina & Caitlin	Sara M & Amanda K	Rebekah K	Beth
	23rd	Jill, Carol & Amanda VH	Kate & Ethon	Jenna	Betty
	30th				Ruth

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back

By Todd Burpo with Lynn Vincent

To say heaven is for real is a marvelous part of a Christian's statement of faith. Yet, sometimes, as a reflection of our depravity, we doubt and make our faith statement into a question: Heaven is for real? This reminds us that Satan still seeks to wage war against our God and Savior. Throughout Scripture we are given glimpses of heaven. Sometimes this is presented as a vision or sometimes as a description of a special visit. Old Testament writers Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel vividly write of their visions. Perhaps more familiar to us are the New Testament writings of Paul's Damascus road experience [Acts 9]. Subsequently Paul writes of a certain man who was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible things [II Corinthians 12]. And, in Revelation John testifies in great detail to everything he saw that is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The New Testament is replete with references to what God's chosen ones can expect heaven to be. We are presented with descriptions of heaven as the dwelling place of God (Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter). Jesus frequently told His followers about heaven through parables. But there are few recorded instances of people being given glimpses of heaven and then presenting what they saw for those of us still living.

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL written by the Rev. Todd Burpo presents the gripping story of this pastor's son having a critical surgery from which few thought he would survive. In 2003 Colton Burpo was 3 years and 10 months at the time of his operation for a burst appendix. His health—his life itself—was so precarious that no one could be sure if this were to be the moment of death. He survived the surgery with what appeared to be a miraculous recovery. All glory was given to God by this solidly yet humble Christian

family. About four months after the surgery Colton started making spontaneous remarks about his conversations with Jesus during his visit in heaven. Without coaxing Colton would describe heaven with complete correlation to Scripture. Additionally Colton's descriptions added



details that in no way contradicted teachings of the Bible. As the months went by and occasional conversations unfolded, parents Todd and Sonja began to realize that something extraordinary had happened to their son during that traumatic surgery experience. Not wanting to lead or color Colton's remarks, they kept this to themselves. Along the way they continued to compare Colton's remarks about his conversations with Jesus on that visit to heaven with a study of the Scriptures. Colton would

say: "Jesus told me...". Sometimes Colton would make reference to something he saw but on which the Bible is silent—but even these would be within possibility.

One experience was particularly poignant. As a five-year-old Colton was on a trip to the store with Sonja when he darted into the parking lot traffic. His mother proceeded to grab him and begin scolding him about the dangers. To which Colton replied, "If I die then I would be with Jesus again." That left the parents wondering just how to deal with a child who has absolutely no fear of death. Another time, Colton was asked do you know why Jesus died on the cross. He answered, "Well, Jesus told me He died on the cross so we could go see His Dad."

Through the following months and years Todd and Sonja sought to verify what was unfolding in their son's observations. He would speak as an eye witness in describing his heavenly experience with



FROM THE BOOKSHELF

(Continued on page 6)

Labor Day - September 5

Some might believe that certain jobs — pastor, missionary, bishop — are holier than others. But in his classic book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence tells of performing even the most common, tedious tasks as holy service to God: “I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of [God],” he wrote. “It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God.”

No matter your field of work, remember that any task done in God’s name and to his glory is holy.

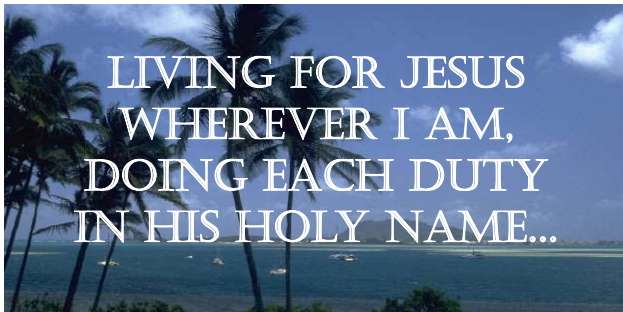


Annual Fall Potluck Luncheon September 11



Please bring either a hot or cold meat, a side dish or salad to share with the church family.

DESSERT will be provided!



LIVING FOR JESUS
WHEREVER I AM,
DOING EACH DUTY
IN HIS HOLY NAME...

(Continued from page 5) **Bookshelf...**

complete humility and without guile. Todd says that he “is not one of those preachers who camps out on extensive end-times prophesy” but he was intrigued by these occasional glimpses into what our heaven experience will someday be. Todd and Sonja waited seven years before going public with this extraordinary family story seeking to watch how this all came together. In many ways this is still a typical Christian family with typical experiences. But, in other ways this is a family which has had their ups and downs of health crises but with these memories of a special way in which the Lord has strengthened their faith and witness. The recurring thought comes to the reader: God asks each of us, “And what did my Son do for you?”

This book is written by the Rev. Todd Burpo, a Nebraska pastor, and the editor is Lynn Vincent, a staff writer for *World* magazine. Both have excellent credentials for integrity. Todd and Sonja are frequently asked how this entire experience has changed them. Todd immediately replies, “I continue to preach and teach only what I find in Scripture.” We know that Scripture is complete and sufficient for our salvation. But this certainly gives us all a lot to ponder. This is a great discussion starter.

--review by Dan F. Bloem

HEAVEN IS FOR REAL by Todd Burpo with Lynn Vincent
[published by Thomas Nelson Inc. of Nashville; copyright 2010].

Forgiveness is a beautiful form of forgetfulness - a heaven-sent absentmindedness.

IF YOU HAVE ANY TIDBITS OF INFORMATION, ADDRESS THEM TO THE CHURCH MOUSE & PUT THEM IN THE NEWS-LETTER / C. MOUSE MAIL SLOT (AFTER ALL, I CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.) (The identity of the Church Mouse is a secret.)

Psalm 23: The Lord is my shepherd, and that's all I need to know!

Church Mouse reporting for duty...

Know Your Hymns

- Dentist's Hymn Crown Him with Many Crowns
- Weatherman's Hymn There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
- Contractor's Hymn The Church's One Foundation
- The Tailor's Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy
- The Golfer's Hymn There's a Green Hill Far Away
- The Politician's Hymn Standing on the Promises
- Optometrist's Hymn Open My Eyes That I Might See
- IRS Agent's Hymn I Surrender All
- The Gossip's Hymn Pass It On
- Electrician's Hymn Send the Light
- Shopper's Hymn Sweet Bye and Bye
- Realtor's Hymn I've Got a Mansion
- Doctor's Hymn The Great Physician



For those who like to surpass the speed limit:

- ~ 45 mph God Will Take Care of You
- ~ 65 mph Nearer My God to Thee
- ~ 85 mph This World is Not My Home
- ~ 95 mph Lord, I'm Coming Home
- ~ 100 mph Precious Memories

Lord, give me a sense of humor. Give me the grace to see a joke. To get some humor out of life, and pass it on to other folk.

—Your Church Mouse

(Continued from page 3) True Community...

So the Philippians sent Epaphroditus to Paul to encourage him. Now, after he has been with him for a while, Paul is sending Epaphroditus back to the Philippians, likely carrying this letter with him.

(Part IV, next month)



Remembering 9/11



(Continued from page 4) Webmaster...

I like is a little program that let's me offer remote assistance to computers from my phone.

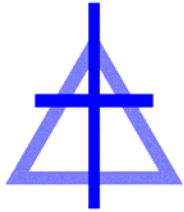
Fun - From my phone I can access all of my social networking profiles, play games, read news, browse the Internet and locate ice cream shops nearby me!

My smart phone will do all of this and more, all the while being sized small enough to fit in my pocket. Oh ya, you can make phone calls with it too!

Your Webservant,
Paul Winn

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

Phx Christian Reformed Church
2438 East Earll Drive
Phoenix, AZ 85016





In addition to our regular services and study groups, mark your calendar for...

September

Monday, Sept. 5th - Labor Day
Sunday, Sept. 11th - Potluck Luncheon,
Patriot Day, Grandparents Day
Sunday, Sept. 18th - Classes Start
Friday, Sept. 23rd - First Day of Autumn



October

Reformation Day,
Trunk or Treat

