



JANUARY 2012

Reflections on the Journey of Faith

What a delight it is for me to see all of the children engaged in various activities at Providence. I see them at worship and at Sunday school and during the week at children's play group. I see them at large events such as Vacation Bible Camp, the Easter Eggstravaganza and at various CROSSing Paths events. Having worked directly with children and youth for the first eleven years of my ministry, and having supervised staffs that have had the responsibility for oversight of children's ministry, I don't really need to remind myself that, with this congregation, we have a rare and wonderful opportunity to celebrate and enjoy the children at our church. This joy comes with tremendous responsibility. **We are entrusted to provide for our children's spiritual welfare.**

A classic book in the field of children's spirituality is *Will Our Children Have Faith?* written by John H. Westerhoff III. In it he argues that a child's faith is just as whole as an adult's faith. His metaphor of a tree sets the stage for a good discussion. He talks about a

small sapling, while much smaller than a full-grown tree, is as much a tree as an old redwood. Or as David Csinos, in his book, *Children's Ministry That Fits*, states, "...the faith of a child — even that of an infant — is as whole and real as the faith of an adult. Children have real and living faith."

I believe he is "spot on" in his assessment of children's spirituality. Too often we can get stuck in some of the older modes of thinking about children and spirituality, as if children are born as a blank slate and it is our job to simply write on the chalkboards of their hearts. We know, however, that children are already observing their environment from birth. They have been created by God and are already spiritual beings. They have a relational consciousness.

Robert Coles's book, *The Spiritual Life of Children*, was a big influence in my understanding of children's spirituality. When I look into the eyes of your children and grandchildren during the Time for Children in worship, it is evident

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WHEN I LOOK
 INTO THE EYES OF
 YOUR CHILDREN AND
 GRANDCHILDREN ...,
 IT IS EVIDENT TO ME
 THAT GOD IS
 ACTIVELY INVOLVED
 IN THEIR LIVES.

to me that God is actively involved in their lives. They have a relationship with God already and are asking important questions about their lives. They are keen observers about what is happening in their environment. Research shows that they can often be more keenly aware of their environment than we are.

All adult members of the church need to be concerned about the physical **and** spiritual welfare of children. We have seen a few public examples recently where the welfare of children was not carefully protected. We know the people who violated these children will be held accountable.

Jesus knew the importance of children in our spiritual development. He said, *"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."*

Jesus also warned what would happen to those who do not heed his words. Jesus said to his disciples, *"Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble."*

We have had a written Child Protection Policy for several years, and we follow it. It is important to look after the physical welfare of our children. We are also called to look after their total development that includes their faith formation and spirituality.

We are a part of our children's spiritual environment. They are looking to us for love and leadership. What are we teaching them? When was the last time you spoke with any of the children of the church? They are God's special gift to us and they are the future of the church.

How many of them can you call by name?

Faithfully,

Mick

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Burns
 Pastor



Bringing a new idea to life!



Have you ever thought about building community through singing favorite hymns?

What about sharing our faith through music?

Fifth Sunday Hymn-Sing evenings are being planned for 2012 and everyone is welcome!

The first Fifth Sunday is January 29 at 4:00pm, just before the Annual Meeting, which will begin at 5:00pm.

Cindy Carlton and Gayle Schlenker will provide support as you suggest your favorite hymns (Traditional or Contemporary), spirituals, Taize songs, mission trip songs, camp songs and all!

We will meet in the Parlor, and rock the church a little!

Thank You
with hearts

My family and I thank the Providence Community for your care and support following the passing of John. There has been comfort in your visits, meals, calls, shawl, quilt, prayers and remembrances of John. Your kindness and thoughtfulness continue to be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Barbara Hassell





KidsQuest



Kid Connection begins its winter term on January 8 at 10:00am. We return to the Old Testament and the unit, "A Garden, A Tower and God's Amazing Power", exploring the Creation Story, Noah and the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. Please take a moment to thank our teaching teams, large group leaders, music leaders, nursery helpers, Worship KidStyle leaders and the many volunteers who support our active and lively children's program.

Copies of "31 Days of Prayer" are available outside the classrooms and on the table by the Kids Quest bulletin board. January is a good time to look inward and reflect on Scripture and prayer as a family.

As we move into 2012, I hope you will mark your calendars for the coming events posted at the right.

Leigh



Upward Basketball
Every Child Plays.
Every Child Learns.
Every Child is a Winner!

Play begins:
January 7, 2012
Volunteers and fans
always welcome!

www.providenceupward.org

LOOKING AHEAD ...

Easter Eggstravaganza
Saturday, April 1

Vacation Bible Camp
July 30-August 3

Flower Guild

The flower chart for 2012 has been posted on the brick pillar in the Commons Area hallway, facing the doors into the Fellowship Hall. When you sign up to donate flowers, please be sure to add your e-mail address or phone number so that the office can contact you about the message you would like to have included in the bulletin announcements for your chosen Sunday.



YOUTH CORNER



Sexuality is about more than just sex.

Did I grab your attention? This spring I'll be leading a class for parents on teenage sexuality because it's not just about sex. What does it mean to raise a child into a sexually healthy adult? Is it about when it's ok to start having sex? Is it about being in healthy relationships? Is it about being comfortable in our own skin? Sexuality is about all of that and more.

Sexuality is about:

- ◆ Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- ◆ Self esteem
- ◆ Understanding power in relationships
- ◆ Decision making
- ◆ Friendship
- ◆ Desire
- ◆ Commitment
- ◆ Intimacy
- ◆ Assertiveness
- ◆ Body image
- ◆ And more...

We'll spend some time thinking about how our faith informs our decisions on sexuality, what a healthy relationship looks like, how to have an honest conversation with your teen about sex (without one of you dying of embarrassment!), and other intriguing topics. Next fall we will be having Jr & Sr High Sexuality retreats. This class will be a great intro to the topic for parents.

The church has a lot to say about many things, but often our sexuality is not one of them (or if it is, it is reduced to one or two hot button issues). This class is an open invitation to have a conversation about sex and how we can help guide kids through a tricky issue that is both everywhere and nowhere. Parents of tweens and teens, I hope you'll join us!

Happy New Year!

Mary Ellen

GOOD NEWS DEADLINES

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>DEADLINE, 2012</u>
FEBRUARY 2012	JANUARY 15
*MARCH	FEBRUARY 12
APRIL	MARCH 15
MAY	APRIL 15
*JUNE	MAY 14
SUMMER	JUNE 17
SEPTEMBER	AUGUST 15
OCTOBER	SEPTEMBER 16
NOVEMBER	OCTOBER 15
*DECEMBER	NOVEMBER 4
*JANUARY 2013	DECEMBER 9

SUBMISSIONS TO KATHY KNORR
AT OFFICE@PROVIDENCECHURCH.ORG.
(DEADLINES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.)

*NOTE EARLY DEADLINE.



MISSION

Hypothermia Sheltering Program

Providence continues to support the Hypothermia Sheltering Program this winter. We have hot meals planned for the second Wednesday of the month through March 2012.



The Mission Committee provides the supplies; you add your hands to offer nourishment and hospitality for the body and soul. The January, February and March needs are: Bag lunches, Hot Meals (evening) and Breakfast Foods.

Please contact Mary Lee Di Spirito to find out how you can help.

Operation Share-A-Coat

We are still accepting donations of winter outdoor wear as the Hypothermia Shelter Program continues through March 31. Good Clean men's and women's outerwear and underwear continue to be needed. Warm hats, scarves and gloves. (Please keep the gloves together by putting them in a plastic zipper bag.)

Thanks to all who have previously left your warm clothing for some of our neighbors needing this help.



Hello, Providence Friends.

I surely hope you had a blessed and Joyful Christmas! I did. The January newsletter goes to press before I can make a full report to you about all the wonderful gifts left on my branches. Watch the February newsletter for my review of my visit to Providence in 2011.

The Littlest Tree





MISSION

Thank You
with hearts

Christmas Adopt-A-Family Program

Providence has brought much joy and happiness to more than 25 families this Christmas season. Final information will be published in the February Good News.

A number of families were added to the Christmas delivery list, thanks to your generous response. These are in addition to the 20 families served at Thanksgiving. Some of you provided food and others found some very special Christmas

gifts for our neighbors referred for this assistance program. Many of our Providence members and friends provided both food and gifts.



On behalf of the families receiving our assistance, a big THANKS for your generous hearts and spirit.

THE MISSION COMMITTEE

HYPOTHERMIA
SHELTERING
PROGRAM

OPERATION
SHARE-A-COAT

THE LITTLEST TREE

GRATITUDE FOR
BLESSINGS



Christmas Cards for OAR

Below is a brief message from Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources (previously known as Offender Aid and Restoration) – a ministry to residents at the adult detention center and their families:

The Christmas Cards were indeed welcome this year. Thank you, Providence, for helping our residents have a better Christmas celebration this year. All the many cards helped to bring joy for so many.

OAR of Fairfax

Christmas Joy Offering

Watch the Sunday Bulletin for the final reporting on how we offered help to our retired church personnel and students at our Presbyterian Ethnic Colleges.

Thanks to all who responded so generously.





\$10 PURCHASES
A NET AND SAVES
5 LIVES!

NICKELS 4 NETS
IS A PROGRAM OF
PC (USA)'S
HEALTHY
WOMEN,
HEALTHY
FAMILIES
MINISTRY.



**At the January 2011 Annual Meeting,
Providence set an ambitious goal
for January 2012 . . .**

**To raise \$10,000
to purchase 1000 mosquito nets
to save 5000 lives!!**

**All U.S. currency is welcome – not just nickels.
Think quarters, bills, & CHECKS 4 NETS!!**

**Please help us meet our goal and
thanks for your support!**

Computer C.O.R.E.

We will be starting new classes toward the end of January! This has been a very successful mission of our church. Please consider volunteering to teach (if you know how to use WORD and EXCEL and have prepared a resume ... you are ready!), or to donate a used home computer to CORE.

c o m p u t e r
C.O.R.E.

CORE's Mission is to help low-income adults acquire the technological and life skills they need to pursue career aspirations.

Most jobs now require some degree of proficiency in computer skills. A significant percentage of low-income adults do not have the skills that are prerequisites for gaining more meaningful employment, and Northern Virginia's businesses need more skilled workers. Computer C.O.R.E.'s training program addresses these needs by providing training in computer skills, personal development, and job search strategies. In addition, Computer C.O.R.E. gives free computers to its graduates so that they may continue learning and share computing access with their families.

CORE's Vision is a world where all people will have the skills and confidence to pursue their dreams, reach their full potential, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

If you could spare one or two hours per week and you don't mind being thanked profusely every single night you teach, please let us know by calling Gayle or Hank Schlenker.



MUSIC & ARTS AT
PROVIDENCE
PRESENTS

Danielle Talamantes
Soprano

Sunday, January 22, 2012 – 7:00 pm

Providence Presbyterian Church

9019 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA

– subject to change –



Tickets In Advance \$20
(Students/Seniors \$10)
(At the Door \$25/\$15)

To reserve tickets, call
Providence Presbyterian Church
(703) 978-3934, ext. 30

Tickets held at Will Call

www.providencechurch.org

Where Life and Faith Connect



A NEW YEAR'S PSALM

At a silent retreat I recently attended we were given the question "Who am I?" along with Psalm 129 by Nan Merrill in her book "Psalms for Praying." (The words "Love" and "Beloved" are her words for God.) Say these words to yourself and you will feel joy and love and acceptance ... and praise for who you are.

Lift up your hearts to the Most High!

Let the earth ring with songs of praise!

Be glad, O people of the Light!

Let your life be impregnated by Love's gifts.

Discover in the Great Silence

the mystery of who you are,

and be true to yourself.

For wherever you dwell,

there is beauty;

Infinite Love is everywhere.

Know that the beauty hidden within your soul,

is seen by the eyes of your heart.

Let the still small voice of the Beloved

guide you by day and

comfort you by night;

Then will you be blessed and, in turn,

you will be a blessing to the world.

May the new year of 2012 find us: loving ourselves a little more (we too are examples of incarnational Love) and admitting the Beloved into our daily lives a little more, blessing us as well as others.

—Ann Kulp

YOU DID SAVE A LIFE!

BLOOD DRIVE RESULTS

Scheduling for the most recent blood drive went from "gloom and doom" the Sunday before to GREAT on the day of the drive, thanks to Mick's and Mary's persuasive announcements.

We successfully donated 28 good units. This brings our total good units produced by our drives to 2,966, all of which goes to the citizens of our community.

The Red Cross staff kept things moving at a reasonable rate and there were no unusual delays for those in attendance.

These blood drives would not be possible without the support of our loyal members and friends who are willing to give a little time to make this outreach possible. It costs the church nothing except the use of Fellowship Hall for one day, three or four times a year.

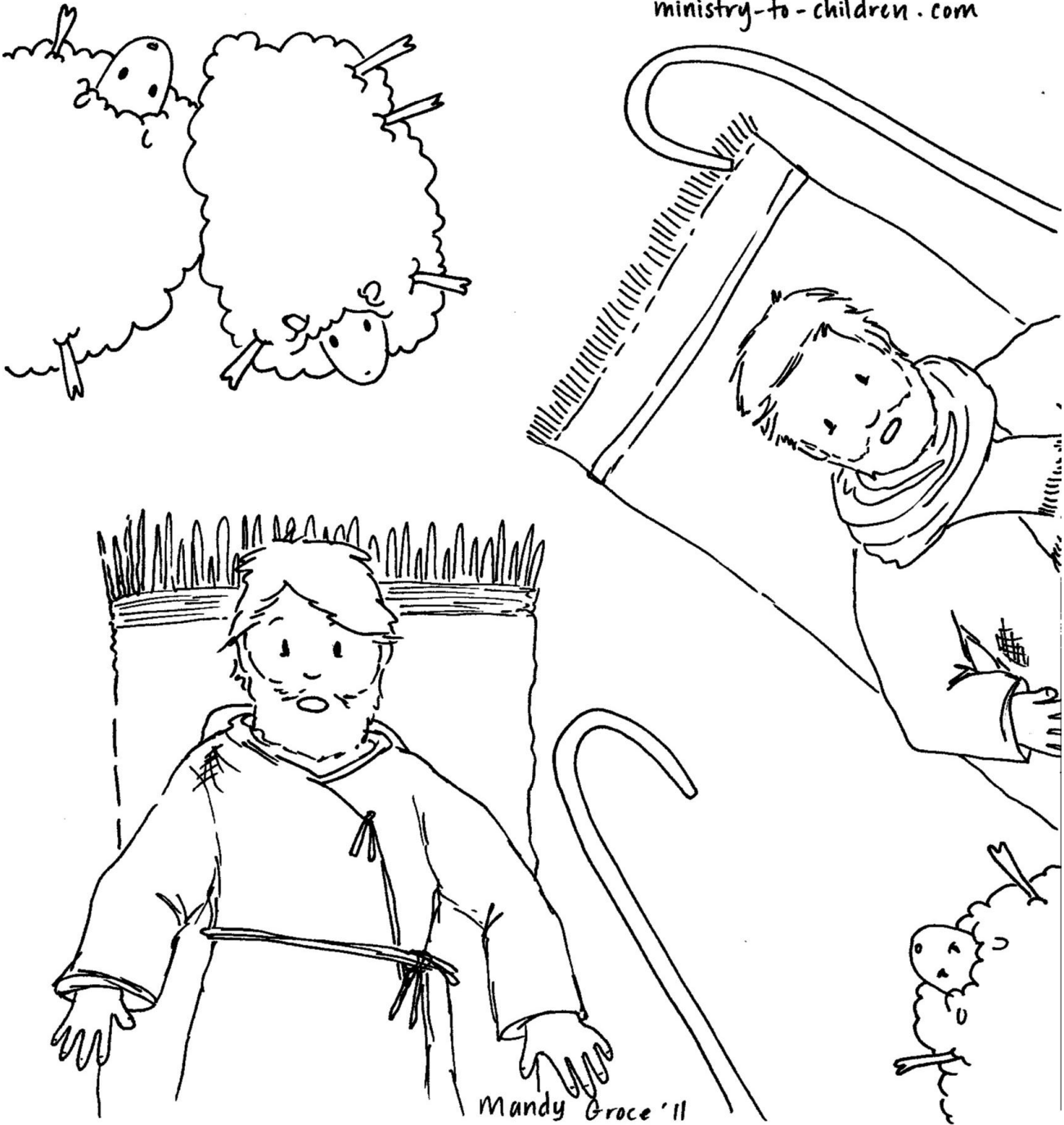
"Thank you" to all involved. Our next drive is scheduled for May 8, 2012.



KIDS PAGE

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

ministry-to-children.com



Mandy Groce '11

Providence Presbyterian Church
9019 Little River Turnpike
Fairfax, VA 22031

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January 2012

Psalm 91:4: ... and under his
wings you will find refuge

Worship New Year's Day

10:00am, Sanctuary

(The Nursery will be available;
there will be no Worship KidStyle)

Worship

Traditional, 9:00, Sanctuary

Sunday School for All Ages

Traditional, 11:00, Sanctuary

Contemporary, 11:15, Fellowship Hall

Communion: January 8

Upward Basketball begins

January 7, all day

Contemplative Prayer

January 16, 7:30pm

Music & Arts Concert

January 22, 7:00pm

Fifth Sunday Hymn-Sing

January 29, 4:00pm

Annual Congregational Meeting / Supper

January 29, 5:00pm



Providence Presbyterian Church

9019 Little River Turnpike

Fairfax, VA 22031

703-978-3934 Office

www.providencechurch.org

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Joe Moss, Business Administrator

Kathy Knorr, Executive Secretary

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