Yesterday morning I walked out my front door and noticed immediately that everything had changed! Instead of an occasional bird chirping in expectation of spring; there was a cacophony of sound cascading down from the trees in my neighborhood. I smiled. No one else noticed except God and perhaps the birds.

I thought to myself, “God loves birds.” I wondered where that thought came from. I almost opened the Audubon Society App on my iPhone to try to identify all the different songbirds chiming out their melodies, but I did not. I decided to enjoy the moment, to live in the moment. Again the thought came to me, “God loves birds.”

I thought of Jesus’ words in Matthew’s gospel, “Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

God loves birds!

Where was all this coming from? I realized that I was worried about the world: the struggle for liberation of people oppressed by governments or religion, the ramifications of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and the failure of their nuclear power plants.

And, I was worried about many other things: the church and the coming debt retirement campaign, my mother’s failing health, our children (even when things are going smoothly, we seem never to stop being parents who care about our children and grandchildren). We juggle so many things in life.

Years ago I attended a week-long leadership seminar in Barrington, Illinois, at Willow Creek Community Church. Bill Hybels, the founding pastor, was preaching a sermon at the closing worship service. At the time, I thought it was trite and pithy. I even told people so! He kept saying, “God loves birds!”

How ironic that now I find tremendous comfort in the simplicity of that phrase.

Jesus said,

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—even you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:25-33
SENNON

The Session of Providence Presbyterian Church met Tuesday, March 8, 2011 and:

† celebrated the wonderfully successful Upward Basketball Program end-of-season festivities, the program’s impact on so many youth and their parents, the commitment of volunteers who made the program possible, and the particularly tireless and talented program leadership team that brought it all together;

† discussed preparations for the new 11:00 am Traditional Service that begins on Palm Sunday, and expressed excitement over the opportunity to also further enhance the church’s other Sunday programs;

† listened to a presentation from Elder Allan Jones on plans for the upcoming Capital Campaign and the opportunities the campaign provides to celebrate the church’s many new programs and the ongoing faithful service of so many made possible by these gifts;

† expressed sincere gratitude to the Deacons for their wonderful and especially sensitive support for the Upward Basketball end-of-season celebration, recent funerals, the New Member’s Class, and their tireless efforts in so many other areas;

† received news of a generous gift to purchase and install removable hand-rails at the steps in the Sanctuary in memory of long-time member Laura McDowall;

† approved The Rev. Mary Rodgers’s request to take sabbatical leave in May, June, and July, 2012 enabling her to complete her application for grant funding and moved to review at a later date sabbatical goals consistent with requirements outlined in Presbytery guidance;

† approved a motion from Property and Communications & Growth committees to install information displays to enhance communications with members and visitors;

† agreed to form a working group to look into the creation of a PPC endowment and to provide recommendations on enhancements to memorial gift and directed giving processes;

† received a description and demonstration of a new web-based tool extended to Providence at no cost, designed to strengthen members’ connections with each other, and to enable small group growth and interaction;

† moved to apply a generous bequest from long-time member Bob Grove to complete repairs above the front porch’s plenum and so enable other porch work to proceed;

† received a demonstration of an on-line event management tool that is now available to committees to simplify and improve registration, and to enable the option for on-line payment when desired.

The next meeting of Session will be April 12, 2011 at 7:30 pm in the Parlor.

Reflections continued from page 1

As we look at our world there are many things to be concerned about indeed. As we approach the season of spring and move through our Lenten journey together, we are reminded of a God who loves us.

When you hear the birds sing this Spring, remember that God loves birds!

And are you not of more value than they?

Faithfully,

Mick

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Burns
Pastor
We have just completed another amazing season of Upward Basketball. Many volunteer hours were given to make this program possible. One part of this program is the half-time devotional. Member Rob Faber sent me his devotional one day and asked that I look it over. When I did, I emailed Rob back and asked if we could publish it in the Good News. He agreed. I am thankful for all the devotion presenters. What follows is just one member’s devotion given to the parents of youth and the youth playing basketball. – Mick Burns.

Through The Lens

My name is Robert Faber and I am a member of this church. I am also on the Upward Sports Leadership Council here.

During half-time at the Upward games, we like to take a few moments to offer some thoughts on the spirituality of the people here at Providence. I’d like to talk about it from my perspective: through the camera lens.

I’m sure all of you have a world of responsibilities you are trying to deal with and you have very busy lives, especially in this part of the country. Sometimes it’s difficult to really enjoy things with all that pressure. I’d like to ask you all to take a moment and try to see it as I do with my camera.

Occasionally, people ask me if I am a professional photographer. In the true sense of the word, I must answer no, as I don’t hire myself out. I usually answer that question with “my photography is my passion”. Ansel Adams once said: “Sometimes I do get to places just when God’s ready to have somebody click the shutter.” This really hits home for me. I think God has given me a gift of an ever changing canvas, full of great beauty and feeling. I feel as though I have a time machine of sorts in my camera. In a most literal way, it freezes time. It captures not only a single moment but a single perspective. Have you ever stared at a picture for a while looking at each detail trying to imagine what each person is thinking at exactly that moment? It can be a very powerful experience.

Sometimes it can be a real challenge to pull myself out of the action and find that moment that is just right, one that is full of emotion and can drive our imagination. Next week when I take the team photos, I will hopefully, amidst the chaos, be able to capture a moment – some moment.

Through my involvement with the Upward Sports program here at Providence, I’ve come to realize a joyous truth. Here in this place, with this program, I am able to see God’s plan. I see it in all kinds of things. Here are a just a few:

- In the way the referees stop the game to help a child learn the right way to dribble, or when they yell out “hands up” rather than call a foul or “take the shot” when the clock is running down.
- The way the coaches care about the children. Their devotion to the encouragement of a child vs. the status quo badgering we so often see at sporting events.
- The proud parent who cheers for their child, then cheers just as loud for the other team.
- The activity of this place in the morning with children laughing and running all around. When amid that chaos of children running and laughing, a group sits listening intently to a coach’s words or a ref’s instructions.
- The way God’s light shines through these windows and highlights a group of players.
- The joy of a youngster when they finally get that basket; the joy of a team mate when someone on their team makes a basket.

We’ve built something good here. Not just this wonderful gym, or this building; not just this program; not just the outreach to families looking for a spiritual connection to sports; we - all of us - have built a foundation in each of these kids that will stay with them when times get tough. They will know that God’s plan isn’t always going to church on Sunday. That he is all around us; even on a basketball court in the middle of a game.

Let us Pray: Lord, help us to see your work and know our role in your plan. Help us to feel your light when we are in the midst of our tumultuous life. Guide us to your way and help us to stay true to your design. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Rob
During April we focus on Jesus’ desire to develop relationships with his people.

First of all, when people bring their children to Jesus for his blessing, the disciples initially want to block them from taking up Jesus’ time. Jesus says no, let the children come to me. He goes on to say that those who come with the faith of a child will enter the kingdom of heaven. This is pretty powerful: children under the age of 12 were not paid much attention in those days.

Second, Jesus calls Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector; he was despised, viewed as a traitor, scum of the earth. Zacchaeus’s wealth did not make him happy or at peace. He had heard of this Jesus who treats tax collectors with dignity and care, and he wanted that. Jesus not only accepts Zacchaeus, Jesus goes to Zacchaeus’s home to share a meal. This act of Jesus transforms Zacchaeus; he repays people what he stole from them and gives significant money to the poor.

Finally, Jesus dines with Mary and Martha. Martha is very busy working to make his stay at their home perfect. Mary, on the other hand, sits at Jesus’ feet listening intently to every word. This is significant to us as residents of Northern Virginia. We can get so caught up in our “to do” lists that we forget the important things in life: spending time with God first and foremost through prayer and Bible study; spending time with our families; spending time in the fellowship of other followers of Jesus. We still have to do our “to do” lists, but that will not lead us to salvation. Spending time with the Lord has eternal value. Serving others and putting them before ourselves has eternal value.

We want to teach this to our children, so they do not get so caught up in the busyness of activities that they fail to do what is most important. We also have to model this for our children. Ouch! Daily, or at least almost daily, being in God’s Word. Praying for our children and praying with our children. Demonstrating that we trust God with our entire life, especially during the painful times. Giving God the glory for our accomplishments. Holding every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Our source of truth is God’s Word. The ideology of the culture blows in the wind and changes based on what is popular. Popularity does not equal truth. Morality does not change. Integrity does not change. What is right and what is wrong do not change. What is good for us and what is bad for us do not change. The Word of God is our plumb-line, by which we measure all things. Our children need to know that God wants the best for their lives. And God gave us a guide book—the Bible. God wants a relationship with each one of us and God will show us the way to fulfill our God-given purpose. God loves us with an everlasting, forever, unconditional kind of love.

The One Great Hour of Sharing FISH banks will be collected Palm Sunday, April 17, and Easter Sunday, April 24.

Serving Him who Saves,

Holly
**Lenten Devotionals for Families**

Lenten Devotionals for families may be found on the table beneath the KidsQuest bulletin board outside the church office.

The theme is from the Exodus of God’s people - “Let My People Go”. We see how God freed God’s people from slavery in Egypt after the 10 plagues, the tenth being the Passover, while by the blood Christ shed for us on the cross, we are set free from our slavery to sin. We are no longer under the oppression of sin in our lives but have been set free by the grace God lavished upon us in the sacrifice of God’s son, Jesus, on the cross and ultimately through his resurrection which defeated even death. We are created to live eternally in fellowship with God, our Creator. “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” John 14:6.

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**Easter Eggstravaganza**

Kid-friendly activities, Easter Egg Hunts for age groups

Preschool through 6th grade, and lunch

Date: Saturday, April 16
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Place: Providence Presbyterian Church

**Invite Friends and Neighbors**

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**CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER**

April 18, 3rd Monday, 7:30 pm in the Parlor.

This month begins a four-part series on Lectio Divina. “Divine reading” is an ancient practice of praying with scripture to develop and enhance a personal, intimate relationship with God in contemplation.

- Part 1: Lectio (reading)
- Part 2: Meditatio (thinking)
- Part 3: Oratio (speaking)
- Part 4: Contemplatio (contemplating).

As Paul says in Romans 10:8: “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.”

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**Dear Providence Family,**

I cannot tell you how uplifting it was to receive your many expressions of care and concern during my recent surgeries and recovery. The calls and letters, and the delicious meals lifted my spirits and made Kathy and me appreciate again what a wonderful community we have here at Providence.

**Joe Moss**
First off, Congratulations to Mary Ellen and Rob Moss on the birth of their beautiful, healthy baby girl, Elizabeth Jane. She is just gorgeous… and Providence Church rejoices. This explains why I am writing this month’s contribution to the Youth Corner.

When I became one of the Youth Elders, I thought this would be the perfect assignment for me. I would get to work with kids (and what’s better than that?! … and Mary Ellen would be the “person in charge.” What a deal. I can do my job by following Mary Ellen’s lead. Yes, great job! Mary Ellen knows everything about everything that is concerned with a successful and FUN youth program like the one we have at Providence. So, life is good … and then Mary Ellen goes on Maternity Leave. What? Sharon Miller, the other Youth Elder, and I are left to keep everything running as smoothly as is possible. Mary Ellen did a great job preparing us for the next two months, but there are always surprises.

Youth Sunday was awesome, wasn’t it? The youth of this church always come through with a terrific celebration each March, and this year was no different. They left no door unopened, and they did it all themselves. Sure, there was great adult supervision: Annette Young headed up the effort and was supported by Arwen Norman (music) and Beth Oliver/Carmen Roberts (props). Thanks so much, ladies! But it was the teens who wrote, directed, painted, composed, critiqued, rewrote, practiced, and laughed their way through a wonderful and meaningful worship service. You guys are just FANTASTIC in my book! (Look for pictures throughout the pages of this issue, like the one over there at the end of this article.)

Next up is the Youth Rummage Sale and Pancake Breakfast to be held on Saturday, April 9th. Please mark your calendar – and remember that if you have items to donate, you may bring them to the church April 3–7 between 5:00-7:30 when the youth will help you unload your treasures. All donations, with the exception of tattered/broken furniture, computers, and undergarments, are greatly appreciated. Sharon Miller is working hard to coordinate all the pieces that work together to make this a successful fundraiser.

This is a HUGE event, and Sharon needs all hands on deck.

On April 16th, five senior highers will be leaving for a Holy Week mission trip to Tyronza, Arkansas. This trip has turned out to be a true work of the Lord. Let me tell you how it came to be.

There was a mission trip planned by the Mission Committee of Providence to Knoxville, TN, and the youth were going along to make it a multi-generational effort. Due to several different circumstances, the trip was canceled and the youth were left with no mission to serve. On a suggestion by Mary Ellen, I sent a “blind” email to Hosanna Industries in Pittsburg, asking if they could use our kids during Holy Week. (Our youth spend a week at Hosanna every August, and love the people there and their purpose.) I pushed “send” and said a little prayer, and went off to teach.

When I returned later that afternoon, I was surprised to have already received a response back from Hosanna. According to the email, they were so excited to hear from me at this time. They were trying to plan a trip to this tiny town in Arkansas where there was a church that badly needed renovation. And get this! They were in desperate need of more workers during the exact dates that our kids are on Spring Break! Talk about divine intervention. This was the mission trip that was meant to be. Thanks to Frank Van Fleet and Toby Fitzkee for agreeing to go along with the five youth and their chaperone, Hillary Nebhut. We are still looking for a couple more willing adult volunteers. Here’s your chance to do good deeds for others in need and spend a great week with a great group of young and young-at-heart!!! Let me know if you’re interested.

Thanks to all of you who jump in whenever you see a need…and if I can answer any questions, please let me know!

(Mary Ellen, you are truly missed!!!)

Peace with you and your families!

Jane Millward, Youth Elder
NEWEST MEMBERS

Please welcome ...

Doug Ericson grew up in Fairfax, VA. He left the area for college and work, returning here six months ago. He works for the Department of Homeland Security in Information Technology Security. He enjoys computer activities (programming, video games, etc.), hiking, boating, fishing, bike riding, running, watching sports and reading. He has an infant son, Paul. Doug joins Providence by Reaffirmation of Faith.

Scott Gordon & Alicia Henning have been in the Fairfax area for nearly 4 years. Scott is from Cleveland, Ohio and Alicia, grew up in Texas and Georgia. Scott, a Sr. Health Care Analyst with Booz Allen Hamilton, enjoys hiking, gardening, travel and following sports. Alicia is a legal and policy consultant who spends her free time hiking, reading, gardening and traveling. They join Providence by Letter of Transfer from Trinity Presbyterian Church in Arlington.

Glenda Martin, as a native of Minnesota, is a life-long Vikings fan. She has lived in Alexandria the past 13 years; she works in the Communications Center of Fairfax County Federal Credit Union. She enjoys taking road trips, knitting, as well as reading and writing. For the past 5-1/2 years she has worked at Mount Vernon Estate, and has dabbled in archaeology, spending a summer digging and excavating on Shuter’s Hill, at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. In the near future, she plans to pursue a master’s degree in History. Glenda joins Providence by Reaffirmation of Faith.
NICKELS 4 NETS

As we flip our calendars to April, our thoughts turn to...April showers? April Fool’s Day? No, the biggest issue is Tax Day, which occurs on April 18 this year. If you’ve been sorting through mountains of W2s and 1099s, maybe you’re pondering where all your money went.

Consider a lowly $10 bill. You can use it to purchase one movie ticket (for the early matinee), two Subway sandwiches (if you order the sale subs) or about three Starbucks Venti lattes. But, what if you really want to maximize the value you’re getting for your ten bucks? Then you should lose the lattes and forego the fast food. (Your waistline will also thank you.) Ten dollars will buy a mosquito net that can protect five people from malaria in Africa. And if you can show proper documentation, you can even take a tax deduction next year! (Consult your accountant for details.) Support Nickels for Nets! Add your donations to the N4N hut located across from the kitchen!

YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE

The next Blood Drive at Providence is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2011 in the Fellowship Hall. Appointments will be from 2:30 - 7:30 pm. Sign up in the Commons Areas on April 17 & 24 and May 1 & 8. If you have questions or are unable to sign up at the church, contact Elden Wright.

Thanks to all for your continuing support.
MUSIC & ARTS AT PROVIDENCE
Presents
A Duo Organ Recital
Friday, April 15, 2011 at 8:00 pm
FREE. No tickets required —
donations welcome

The next MUSIC & ARTS AT PROVIDENCE presentation will be a delightful and unique Duo Organ Recital. Dr. Theodore Guerrant, Organist-Choirmaster at St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church in Washington, DC, Associate Organist at Saint Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Hyattsville, Md., and Staff Coach Accompanist at the University of Maryland School of Music, will join our very own virtuosic Providence organist, Jane Moore Kaye, to present compositions for two organs. “Gloria,” the magnificent Lively-Fulcher tracker pipe organ of Providence, will team with a fifty year-old continuo-styled chamber instrument designed by the world-famous Dutch organ builder, Dirk A. Flentrop. This organ-on-wheels is voiced softly, with three ranks of pipes on one manual, and is customarily used at the University of Maryland to accompany Bach cantatas. Its Wedgewood-colored case is reminiscent of harpsichords built during the Colonial Williamsburg era.

For additional information, tickets for our subsequent two season performances, and a copy of the MUSIC & ARTS AT PROVIDENCE 2010-2011 Concert Series brochure, stop by the Music & Arts table in the Commons Area. You may also purchase advance Will Call tickets by visiting www.providencechurch.org or by calling the church office at 703-978-3934.

Please support MUSIC & ARTS AT PROVIDENCE by attending this and the two additional superb events of our fifth concert season!

The Music & Arts Committee
Clean-up day, April 2, 2011:

A church clean up day is scheduled for Saturday, April 2nd from 8:30 am to noon. If you could spare just a couple hours sometime during this time frame, it will go a long way to sprucing up the church. If a job interests you but you would rather work at another time, please contact Bertha McClintock. Jobs to be done include:

Exterior Painting:
- Windows - finish painting, and clean paint from windows already painted

Interior painting:
- Two walls in room 201b, one wall in 201a – Upper Williamson
- Lobby walls (wallboard only) in Upper Williamson

Landscaping:
- Clear brush and vines from picnic area
- Spread mulch on Elizabeth Lane, Meditation Path and the area in between
- Move rocks outside back entrance to new locations
- Edge and weed where necessary

Other projects:
- Cement in metal posts on front hill (drill holes in posts for hanging wire)
- Rug cleaning at back entrance and in Fellowship Hall; we have a rug cleaner

Other jobs to be identified before April 2nd.

“Adopt a Spot”
Looking for a few more good Men, Women & Children

The first impressions visitors have of our church are the grounds. The property committee has established an “Adopt a Spot” program that is very successful in helping to keep the “curb appeal” of Providence on track. Those who “adopt a spot” are asked to maintain your adopted space at your own pace on a time schedule that fits you. We still need a few areas covered, so if you, your group or family is interested in “adopting a spot”, please contact Bertha McClintock to determine what would be right for you.

Please look for the “adopt a spot” map located on the Property Committee bulletin board in the Commons Area. You will be able to see the areas still in need of adopting and those who have volunteered to date. Thank you!
**HYPOThERMIA SHELTERING PROGRAM**

Members and friends of Providence responded in a big way to the Hypothermia Sheltering Program conducted from December 1 to March 31. A variety of groups prepared and served delicious meals, and also prepared more than 400 food bags for residents at the Bailey’s Crossroads Community Shelter. Thanks to all who helped our homeless neighbors during the cold weather.

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**SHARING BRINGS JOY.**

**To Others, to God, and to Us.**

One Great Hour of Sharing: Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through One Great Hour of Sharing to share God’s love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that helps people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities.

Recognizing that the hope we have in Christ is lived out in our hope for one another, we respond with gifts that help our sisters and brothers around the world find the hope for a brighter future.

The OGHS Offering supports the Presbyterian Hunger Program (36%), Self-Development of People (32%) and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program (32%) PDA is active here and abroad and particularly has a focus on Haiti, Japan and was one of the first to respond to the crisis in both locations.

The Providence Food Pantry has received a grant for use in 2011 to purchase food appropriate for diabetics and limited perishables.

Providence will be receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering on Palm Sunday and Easter. Watch the Sunday bulletins for more information.

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**REBUILDING TOGETHER...**

*formerly known as Christmas in April*

**Save the Date: Saturday, April 30**  Be part of a team helping to rehab a property of a 72-year-old widow living in Annandale. There will be many opportunities for youth to help also. All are welcome, both skilled and those willing to learn. Please contact Mary Lee Di Spirito.
Worship on Sundays
Traditional, 9:00 am
Sunday School for All Ages, 10:10
Contemporary, 11:15 am

April 3
Communion

Beginning Palm Sunday
Traditional, 9:00 AND 11:00 am
Sunday School for All Ages, 10:00
Contemporary, 11:15 am

Holy Week
Easter Eggstravaganza, April 16,
10 am—12 noon
Children’s Palms Processional, Palm
Sunday, all services
Maundy Thursday, April 21, 7:30 pm
at Providence
Good Friday, April 22, 7:30 pm
at Fairfax Presbyterian

Easter Sunday.
Traditional, Special Music, 9:00 & 11:00
Church Brunch, 10:00 am
Contemporary, 11:15 am