

COMMUNIQUE

April 2011



*The Newsletter of
Westminster Presbyterian Church,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania*

CRAFTSMAN

**Carpenter's son, carpenter's son,
is the wood fine
and smoothly sanded,
or rough-grained,
lying along your back?
Was it well planed?
Did they use a plumbline
when they set you up?
Is the angle true?
Why did they choose
that dark expensive stain
to gloss the timbers
next to your feet and fingers?
You should know – who,
Joseph-trained, judged all trees
for special service.
Carpenter's son, carpenter's son,
Were the nails new and cleanly driven
when the dark hammers sang?
Is the earth warped from where you hang
high enough for a world view?
Carpenter's son, carpenter's son,
was it a job well done?**



“Τηατ’σ γρεεκ το με!”

It’s an expression we all used at one time or another to indicate our complete lack of understanding of a subject at hand: “That’s Greek to me!” But what if we placed a new twist on the old phrase? What if the expression indicated comprehension instead of ignorance?

Westminster is considering offering an introductory New Testament Greek course to those interested and connected to our church. Sounds like a daunting task—and so it is. Why should one undertake a subject requiring serious study and effort? Do we not have reliable English translations? We agree—but there are nuances, shades of meaning, and insights which are only available to those who read the original language. God chose to convey his truth in a language far more specific and accurate than our mother tongue.

Have you ever used a commentary that made reference to the original text? Or have you ever heard a preacher refer to the special meaning of a word in the original? A fundamental understanding of Greek will open the door to study aids utilizing the original text. You can conduct your own word studies to further appreciate the uniqueness of terms in the New Testament.

Have you ever become confused comparing translations? Why not go back to the document from which the translations come? We hold up the Bereans as models of the proper approach to verifying truth. Without an understanding of Greek, your verification must end with an English translation, a commentary, or the assertions of a preacher or a Bible teacher.

In view of these considerations, does the study of New Testament Greek suddenly sound worthwhile? But before you jump on board, you need to consider that the voyage will involve lots of hard rowing. Passage on this ship is not to be undertaken lightly. Both the young (junior & senior high) and the mature (no age limit) are invited, but this course will require persistence and discipline.



An exploratory meeting to further discuss the possibility of offering this class is being planned. Watch for the announcement of date, time and place in the Sunday bulletin.

We conclude with a word from Martin Luther: “The languages are the sheath in which the sword of the Spirit is contained.” Are you ready to strap on that sheath?



Adam LaRose Celebrates His 100th!

By Angie Stikeleather

Adam's journey of faith began as a young man when he followed his beloved wife, Mildred, down the aisle at a revival meeting. That's when he started reading the Bible, he says. He still enjoys reading and recently finished *The Robe*, despite it being almost 800 pages in length. Though he just celebrated his 100th birthday, he keeps young by playing Wii golf, baseball, and bowling. Several nights a week he plays dominoes and cards with his friends at Calvary Homes. When asked what innovation stands out the most over his lifetime, he replied, “The cell phone!” Adam is quick to share how grateful he is for God's goodness and faithfulness to him all of his days. We in Adam's home fellowship give God the glory for the privilege of knowing and loving this humble and godly man.

Pioneer Boys Shine at Shape & Race

By Kathleen Walter

Looking to our Master, the Pioneer Boys are learning to make something beautiful and useful from that which seems worthless. They take a plain block of wood, choose a design, cut the wood, sand and paint it, give it an individual number, add some lead weight, and then send it racing down a track to watch the success of their creation. It takes time, patience, attention to detail, and a true focus on the end result.

Two groups of Pioneer Boys participate in the annual Shape & Race: Pathfinders (grades 3 & 4) and Trailblazers (grades 5 & 6). At this year's race, Zac Robinson, a Pathfinder, admitted he was a little bit nervous. "I didn't know which design to do," he said. So how did he finally decide? "My dad helped me," he confessed. Actually, the father/son relationship is a huge part of Pioneer Boys. The dads run the entire club and it is obvious the boys thoroughly enjoy that extra time with their fathers and male mentors.

Aaron Hungerford, a veteran Trailblazer at age 11, said his car was really unlucky and he thought this year was harder than last year. He did not like sanding. "Sanding is really boring," he sighed. "We had to do it for weeks!" Well, the hard work paid off for Aaron as he brought home a first place award for the Sharpest Looking car.

Trailblazers raced their cars first, with tension and excitement mounting. There were many close races but last year's Grand Champion Zack Walter, age 11, pulled off his second win in a row. When asked what his secret is to make his car go faster he slyly smiled and quipped, "I can't share my secrets. I'm saving them for my brother." Zack's car was fast, but the car of the winner of the Pathfinder's race, Brendan Armstrong, was even faster! All eyes watched as Brendan's car edged out Zack's in the finals to give him the 2011 Shape & Race Grand Champion title. Congratulations to all the boys who persevered to turn hunks of wood into sleek-looking, speedy derby cars.



All eyes are on the track as the race begins. Shape & Race draws quite a crowd of lively spectators!



Front Row Pathfinder winners (l to r): Brendan Armstrong, Zac Robinson, Nate Castellitto, Aden Hunt, James Eaton. Back Row Trailblazer winners (l to r): Connor Hunt, Eli Eaton, Adam Hungerford, Aaron Hungerford, Zack Walter.



Above: All cars weigh the exact same but the designs are widely varied.

Right: Zack Walter, Trailblazers Winner, and Brendan Armstrong, Pathfinders Winner and Grand Champion of Shape & Race, hold their prizes and certificates.



WINNERS

Most Creative:

James Eaton; Eli Eaton

Most Unusual Design:

Aden Hunt; Adam Hungerford

Best Workmanship:

Nate Castellitto; Connor Hunt

Sharpest Looking:

Zac Robinson; Aaron Hungerford

Pathfinders Winner:

Brendan Armstrong

Trailblazers Winner:

Zack Walter

Grand Champion:

Brendan Armstrong

What's with All that Construction?

Some people have wondered about all that construction "stuff" going on. Asked about the nature of the work being performed, church administrator Michael Ploutz reported: "The original (1970 era) drain was undersized and we had a continual problem of the courtyard flooding during heavy rainfall. When we would get very heavy downpours, we actually had to rent sump pumps, otherwise the water could rise high enough to enter the classroom doors! Brubacher Excavating has a machine that could bore underground and pull a new pipe in without trenching the whole area for a new pipe. As the original pipe goes under the hallway, sidewalk, and driveway, we did not want to go with a repair that involved removing concrete and trenching and opted for a company that could provide a pipe replacement project without trenching." So now you know!



“Fifties” Class Is Now “Pilgrims in Progress”



The class, formed about four years ago, was originally called “Fifties Plus & Minus” (which quickly evolved to just “The Fifties Class”). “The impetus for the class was to provide an ongoing Sunday School class for the age group between homebuilders and seniors, a class with emphasis on fellowship and teaching,” says Bill Piepgrass who, along with his wife, Marcia, coordinates the class. “Originally, we defined this age group as those who have raised their family but are not yet retired. The class would hopefully give these folks an opportunity to share common interests, to build a community of fellowship and service, to pray together, and to study the Word together.”

Fellowship is an important focus of the class. “From time to time, we have had class events outside the classroom, including meals for six and meeting for brunch after church,” Bill says. The class has also been involved in service, participating in TLC renovations and currently taking an active role in coordinating the resettlement of a refugee family from Burma.

Class topics have varied. “In the early days, suggestions for topics and teachers were welcomed from the class and approved by the Christian Ed Committee,” Bill explains. “In more recent time, elders involved in overseeing adult education have contributed potential teachers and topics.”

So why the name change? “Fifties Plus & Minus did convey the age group intended for the class, but has been seen as perhaps too narrow,” Bill says. Presented with some options, the class voted on *Pilgrims in Progress* as its new name, with the byline, “for those beyond homebuilders but not yet seniors.” “But we want all who would like such a class to feel welcomed for one Sunday School quarter or more.” So, should a topic attract the attention of someone who doesn’t exactly fit that demographic, they’re welcome to attend.

Westminster's Youth Group Once Again Enjoys Great Breakaway Retreat

By Joel Espenshade



For the youth group of Westminster, the Breakaway Winter Retreat proved yet again to be a huge success. Westminster's seventh-through-twelfth graders participated in the three-day stay at Refreshing Mountain Camp from February 11 to 13, along with several other youth groups from Presbyterian churches in our area. The teens and their leaders enjoyed lots of games, great food, and spiritual teaching and enrichment from main speakers Derek Melleby and Adam Sheaffer, with worship led by Westminster's own Dead Made Alive, as well as breakout sessions led by Steve Nichols, Ned Bustard, and Dale Buettner.



Derek Melleby, the Sr. High's main speaker, spoke on identity, warning the teens of the common misconceptions people are prone to making about themselves and each other, and giving a biblical perspective on one's self-opinion and worldview. Melleby also led a breakout session entitled "Your Learning Matters to God," a topic in which he is exceedingly proficient, as author of *Make College Count: A Faithful Guide to Life and Learning* and co-author of *The Outrageous Idea of Academic Faithfulness*.



Steve Nichols' breakout session, aptly named "Adventures in Not Missing the Point: Worldview for Life," centered on constructing a worldview that is in line with the Bible and that doesn't "miss the point." The breakout seminar led by Ned Bustard, "Creativity and Art for the Glory of God," keyed on using your talents and abilities to glorify God, as well as how God reveals himself in not only his Word but also in his beautiful creation.

Dale Buettner's seminar, "Coffee and Candid Conversations: The Beauty of Informal Ministry," explored the idea of a church being built on "the basis of informal relationships and casual conversations about Jesus," as well as unpacking Colossians 4:6.



But as much as there was to be learned at Breakaway, fun and recreation was not overlooked. Ask just about anyone who went on the trip, and you will be told that Breakaway 2011 was a *lot* of fun. The students and leaders enjoyed friendly competition in various forms, such as basketball, volleyball, dodge ball, board games and card games, snowball fights, and even ice hockey.

It truly is wonderful to see God work in the lives of his people through an event such as Breakaway, as well as experiencing that yourself. You go expecting to have fun, spend a lot of time with your friends, and maybe learn something, too. But coming back, it isn't always the basketball game you remember, or the Uno tournament, or the conversations in the cabin long after your leaders have told you to be quiet, but what God has taught you about himself that will impact your life for eternity.

The Shepherd's Staff

Every Church Needs Prayer!

Pastor Bear has emerged from winter sabbatical hibernation. I was forced out of my reverie of study and writing by hearing that a certain young boy had asked his mom: "When *IS* Pastor Rogers coming back?" Pointing to the robing room door beside the pulpit stairs, he inquired, "Is he *still in that room* all this time?"

I wish to comment on a recent sad event: the closing of Living Hope PCA congregation of Lititz. What can be said about the end of a local church? After hard work and prayer over a number of years, everyone asks, "What went wrong?" Some may feel they have specific answers. There are certainly tangled emotions for those closest to the situation, and real explanations are never simple.

We must salute Rev. Scott and Sandy Johnston for seven years of totally dedicated ministry at Living Hope. Also, all the members who remained committed to this church plant to the end deserve honor. Those who originally went out from Westminster and stayed the whole course at Living Hope include the Steve Gentinos, the Gerry Styers, the Andy Brackbills, the David Nonnenmochers, the Steve Lazuns, and Sally Ringer.

Our Susquehanna Valley Presbytery takes new church planting seriously, launching new works regionally as God opens strategic doors. The presbytery recently hired the Rev. Chris Labs part-time to be our new church planting coordinator. Despite this positive environment for new congregations, we have seen a handful of ministries closed alongside new ones opened. In the early 1990s the Landisville Covenant Church, a former Westminster plant, ceased its existence. Since then, PCA congregations in Kirkwood, Williamsport, Shrewsbury, and now Lititz have been closed.

New church development is inherently a high-risk endeavor. The need for finances is relentless. Other crucial requirements are a clear sense of vision, a skilled pastor and ruling elders, volunteers, sound biblical preaching, vital worship, musicians, the right facilities, and effective outreach ministries. You can have many of these elements in place and still not succeed due to factors beyond your control.

In 1980, Carol and I founded a new congregation called Church of the Savior, PCA. It began with ten adults in a living room in Amherst, a suburb of Buffalo, NY. An economic recession was underway. It was hard, scary work—I always say I learned how to *pray* there! Yet God smiled

on that ministry. We were fully organized, with several elders, in less than two years, and became self-supporting in three. We bought an existing building, remodeled it, and twice enlarged it, doing much of the work ourselves. Attendance grew to about 120. After I was called to Maryland in 1988, that congregation still thrived. Then outsiders brought in a new, negative doctrinal spirit. Four years later, a badly fragmented congregation (incredibly, with almost no one we even knew attending) voted to leave the PCA. Watching from a distance, we were crushed. For a time, it felt as if eight years of our lives were for naught. But we soon realized how many individual lives God had impacted for Christ, and we became content to let an eternal accounting rest with Him.

The Christian Church universal is absolutely durable. Jesus said the very powers of hell cannot prevail against it. But local congregations as sub-divisions of the larger church tend to be more fragile than some people ever imagine. Even a large, robust congregation like Westminster is never more than five to ten years away from total disruption if its key leadership, ministry focus, finances, or various other factors should encounter a breakdown. You must believe this is true. Tragic experience says it is!

He has sealed spiritual benefits into many lives in Lititz. Now please pray for Scott Johnston to find a new pastoral calling. Westminster's Easter Offering is committed to enhancing the severance package for Scott and Sandy Johnston, helping to support them while he seeks a new call, which can take many months in our denomination.

Another of our daughter congregations, Harvest PCA, in mid-March saw a steeple set upon its new building under construction near Lampeter. They hope to see this building complete by late summer. We ought to be reminded that *ALL* local churches need fervent, continual prayer to endure and thrive as lighthouses for Christ. This includes Westminster and younger congregations still under development, such as New City Fellowship of Lancaster.

—Dr. Michael A. Rogers, Senior Pastor

P.S. Special thanks to my brother pastors, our elders, and so many of you for holding the fort together in my recent absence. The sabbatical time was beneficial and much appreciated.

— 2011 Missions Conference Report — “10/40 Window” No Longer a Mystery!



Home Fellowships hosted missionaries throughout the week.

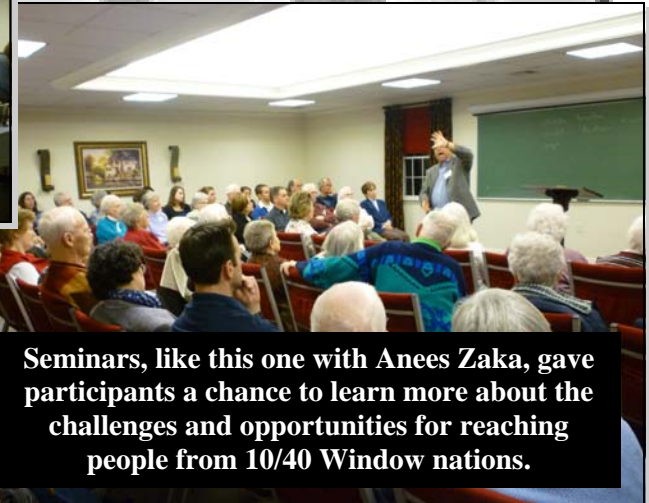


A luncheon on Friday offered missionaries a chance to interact with members of the Great Commission Committee and church staff.

While no exact numbers are available, MissionFare on Saturday drew what's probably a record crowd.



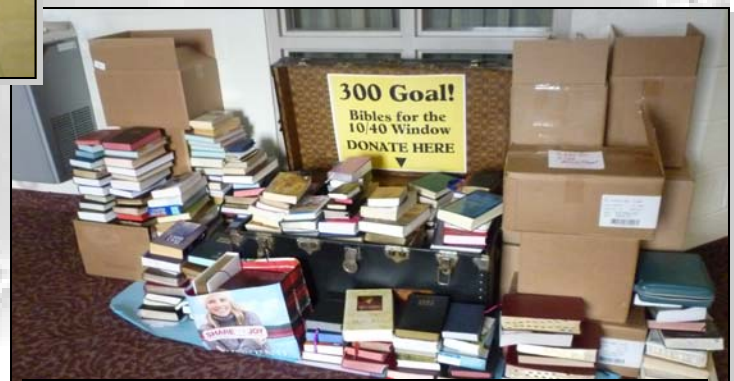
“I wonder what *this* is?”



Seminars, like this one with Anees Zaka, gave participants a chance to learn more about the challenges and opportunities for reaching people from 10/40 Window nations.



Each Sunday School class heard reports from two missionaries.



The M&M Project had a goal of collecting 300 Bibles; their final count was 714!

Westminster Presbyterian Church
2151 Oregon Pike
Lancaster, PA 17601

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Check us on the Web:
www.westpca.com

"Why do you
seek the living
among the dead?
He is not here,
but has risen."

(Luke 24:5-6)



Photo by Tracy Dager

**Join us on April 24 for Easter Sunday Services:
6:30 AM (Sunrise Service), 8:10 AM & 11:00 AM**