

**December 2008 &
January 2009 Newsletter**

Fellowship Presbyterian Church

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“Share, Pray & Rejoice”

by Martin H. Martin



So are you in the mood for the holidays yet? As I walked out the door to the car this morning and was greeted by a wind chill in the twenties, I confess that it helped get me in the spirit. I even found some Christmas music on the radio! At the same time, many experts are saying that this will be one of the worst shopping seasons for retailers in decades. The economic indicators are that we may be in a global recession. Some of us have felt the effects already and many of us are planning to celebrate the season more frugally than we often do. So what does all that say for the way we celebrate?

First, we may see a rare opportunity this season to share with those in need a portion of what has been entrusted to us. In other words, this can be an occasion to mirror the character of God by giving, recognizing what He has given to us. And just as much as the shepherds rejoiced and celebrated in the humble surroundings of a field and a stable, we can rejoice and celebrate even as we do with less than we ordinarily have.

Second, as we consider the opportunity that we have to give and provide as Christians, let me encourage you to be in prayer for those who serve in the office of mercy and provision in the Church, the Deacons, in the body of Christ. In fact, let me urge you to pray for our upcoming nominations, which will begin in January, for the office of Deacon. If you read through the New Testament, especially the book of Acts through the Epistles, you will notice that the two primary ministries of the Church are the ministry of the Word and provision for the needs of the saints. Whatever needs we might encounter in the coming months, they will be an opportunity to serve in the ministry of mercy; and as we pray that God would enable us to do *more*, pray that He would raise up more men to serve Him in the office of Deacon.

Finally, whether you celebrate the season in relative abundance or in a humble way, rejoice that God already has blessed us richly with all that we need in His Son. Christian, you celebrate this season as a prince or princess; one who sojourns for the moment humbly in a foreign land, and yet one who possesses infinite riches in your heavenly Father in Christ!

~Pastor Marty

CHANGES IN MISSIONARY SUPPORT:

In the last year the IPB (Presbyterian Church of Brazil) and the PCA have established a corresponding relationship. In light of this, Fellowship Church will discontinue support for the work of Franciscio Cardoso in Recife Brazil effective January 1.

The Session has taken this action because we now, as a denomination, have relations with a sister denomination in that country; and we even have a former Associate Member (Claudio Albuquerque) serving as a Pastor in that same city!

Our total missions giving has actually increased as we have recently picked up another work. Continue to pray for the Cardosas and for the advance of the gospel through the ministry of the IPB.

Lessons & Carols:

Sunday, December 14th, 6:00 PM:

*Our traditional service of **Lessons & Carols** (Scripture readings, choir anthems and congregational carols) will be held Sunday, December 14th, at 6:00 PM, followed by a **Christmas Reception** (heavy hors d'oeuvres & Christmas cookies/ desserts).*

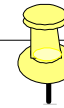


Invite your friends and neighbors!!



DEACON NOMINATIONS:

The Session will receive nominations for the office of Deacon beginning mid January 2009; please prayerfully consider who the Lord would have serve in this office.



Church Notes:

*The sacrament of the **Lord's Supper** will be celebrated during morning worship on Sunday, December 7th; and in the evening on Sunday, January 11th (a special **Mercy Offering** will be received during this service as well).*

WEDNESDAY SUPPER & ACTIVITIES RESUME JANUARY 14th!

5:30 PM: Supper (catered meal cost: \$3.50/adult, \$2.50/child, \$10 max/family)
6:30 PM: Devotional & Prayer Time (adults); Catechism (children grades k-4 thru 6th)



Operation Christmas Child Update: *We received 26 gift-filled shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child this year. Pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be shared with each child and family and that they would look to Christ as their Lord and Savior. ~Thank you, Gwen Hughey*

Bible Reading Calendars (available in the narthex):

“Daily Bible Reading Calendar”

(read through the Bible in one year)

“Calendar of Advent Reading for December”

Take extra copies to share with your friends and neighbors!

Ladies' Bible Studies:

The Ladies' Tuesday Morning Precepts Bible Study (an inductive study of the gospel of John) will begin Tuesday, January 27, from 9:30-11:30 A.M at the church; nursery is available. Please contact, Wendy Richards (877-3267 or 399-9276) for more information.

The Ladies' Thursday Evening Bible Study, “I Will Be Your God”, will begin January 8 at 7:00 P.M at the home of Barbara Wilder. The study will focus on how God's covenant enriches our lives (Ezekiel 36:26-28). Please contact Barbara Wilder (848-6434 or bwilder220bellsouth.net) for additional information.

ATTENTION CHOIR MEMBERS—REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:

Sundays (4:45 PM): 12/7; Wednesdays (6:00 PM): 12/3 & 12/10

New Nursery Coordinator:

Melissa DeJong is currently serving as Nursery Coordinator; please contact Melissa (630-772-9713 or jmdejong@live.com) for nursery related information/ questions.

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2009.

The office will be closed December 22-26; December 31-January 2 for Christmas & New Years holidays.

SERVING IN DECEMBER:

*Elder of the Month: Larry Pool (268-3314); Deacon of the Month: Sam Stubbs (968-9555)
Greeters of the Month: Tabitha, Suzannah & Alan Way; Ushers: Troy High & Bill Wilder.*

Family and Youth Corner:

by Breno Macedo

Last Tuesday a tree that is in front of my house broke in half. It was big surprise for me because it always seemed very healthy. And even with all the wind that is blowing during this fall, I never suspected that it would not resist to it. But when I looked closely it became clear why the accident happened: there was a rotten spot in a small part of the tree's trunk. No one could have noticed it and it was a really small part of the trunk, but it was there and made it succumb.

Thinking about it later, it astonished me how similar what happened with this tree is with what happens with us when we are tolerant of sin. We are sometimes so satisfied with our general spiritual performance that we tend to ignore (or to take for granted) that little spot that still keeps our heart dirty, forgetting the main commandment of our Lord: "You shall be holy for I am holy." (1Pet 1:16) And even if we look spiritually healthy, soon our public fall will come. Scripture is full of such examples (Achan, the rich young ruler, Simon the magician).

Now, more important than our similarities with this tree are our differences. Trees do not have feelings. They do not love. We do! How delightful it is to love Him who loved us first. Is not love revealed in obedience? Yes, it is. That is what teaches us our Savior Jesus Christ. "If you love me, you will keep my Commandments." (John 14:15)

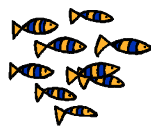
Trees do not grow in grace. We do! This marvelous God, who loves us, promised us that He would sanctify us and that with faith in Him and trusting in His power we would overcome the enemy of our souls and his temptations. "I have written to you, young man, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one." (1John 2:14)

Trees do not repent. We do. In fact, that is the very nature of a true Christian. He is able to recognize what he really is. When examining his heart, he is confronted with those things his Savior hates, his conscience bothers him and until he bows down on his knees and begs for forgiveness he finds no peace. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." (Psalm 51:2)

I suggested to my landlord that the remaining part of the tree should also be cut down. There is a great chance that it is also compromised; further and even greater damage could be caused. But as trees of the Lord, He is always ready to deal with us, to treat our sin, to bring us closer to Him. "His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations."

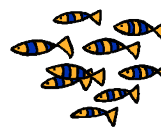
~Breno

 **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & PRAYER BREAKFAST:**
Saturday, January 31st; 7:00—9:00 AM



MISSIONARY MISSIVE Roger & Dianne Smalling

by Carolyn Root



For 35 years the Smallings have been missionaries in Europe and Latin America. They met in Europe in 1971, when Roger was a missionary in France and Dianne was a Bible courier behind the Iron Curtain. The Smallings have been involved with church-planting ministries in Guatemala, Mexico, and Ecuador. They currently work throughout Latin America to prepare nationals for Christian leadership and a 21st Century Reformation.

Roger and Dianne have a vision to bring the Reformation to Latin America through the Gospel of sovereign grace by helping Hispanics become reformers in their own culture. They do this in two ways: helping them establish their own training centers and creating dynamic reformed courses and literature.

Roger is director of *Visión R.E.A.L.*, the Hispanic branch of *Ministries In Action*. *Visión R.E.A.L.* is dedicated to bringing the Reformation to Latin America by establishing leadership training centers throughout the region. Roger is a former lecturer with Miami International Seminary (MINTS), which shares this vision. MINTS still uses several courses written by him.

Dianne ministers to the wives of leaders to encourage their unique gifts in light of their husband's call. Her focus is to encourage and challenge these women in their incredible opportunities for ministry and personal growth.

Roger has written a Spanish book on the five points of Calvinism and the doctrines of grace for Spanish readers. *¡SÍ JESÚS! Una Introducción A Las Doctrinas De La Gracia* can be used as a textbook for Spanish Bible study groups, Sunday School classes, or for personal study on the doctrine of salvation. It is being used by Spanish-speaking students in Bible colleges and seminaries in Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, and Miami. Roger also published *Unlocking Grace* in March 2002. If you would like to participate in their ministry, here is their contact information:



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