



Alex Evans, Pastor

From Alex's Study

Dear Church Family,

WAITING . . . Who likes waiting?

When I drive downtown to church every day, or many times a day, I have become more aware of the timers at the stoplights. In increasing

numbers, we have timers on the crosswalks throughout the city. These timers indicate how many seconds those in the crosswalks have to get across the street before the light changes. Sometimes when I am driving in traffic through intersections, I glance at the timers to know whether I may make it through the intersection in my car. Sometimes when I am sitting at the stoplights, I look over at the crosswalk timers to know how long it might be before the light changes. Watching the timers and waiting with the timers can make the waiting a bit easier.

These timers are not only on crosswalks. Seconds, and their countdown, becomes increasingly important in other places: as we wait for an internet connection, as we anticipate a video loading on our computer, as we watch an item heat up in the microwave, as time runs down in athletic contests. In my recent travels, it seems that timers are emerging everywhere: counting down the minutes and seconds before the next train arrives, announcing the next bus, even showing the minutes and seconds before landing on airplanes. Watching the timers and waiting with the seconds ticking down seem to make the waiting easier.

The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas – known as ADVENT – has been established as a time of WAITING.

But Advent is not about seconds ticking down. Advent is about anticipation of Christ's coming among us. As we wait and prepare for Christ, our hearts are encouraged in a discipline that might make Christ's coming that much more significant in our lives.

Advent is not about seconds passing away, but about a season of watching, opening, looking forward to the changes God can bring to us and to the world.

Advent is not even something we want to rush through – and we often remain inclined toward rushing and racing. Advent invites us to decrease our pace, and increase

our longing, our looking, our loving of God and God's ways.

How will this ADVENT be for you?

Could this season include more lighting of candles, more reading of Scripture, more prayers and faith conversations with your family and church family?

Could this season include more looking to God – God's light, God's promises, God's coming among us in Jesus Christ?

Could this season include more worship – in our sanctuary and in our homes?

Could it include more purposeful waiting – not the seconds ticking down – but more trust in God's presence, more nurture of God's love, more acts in God's service in the city and world?

May we move through these days not with the fixation on ticking of seconds but on the hope and presence, the promises and peace of God who comes to us in Jesus Christ. I look forward to seeing you often in these Advent days.

In love and faith,

Alex



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SESSION MEETING

At its November meeting the session:

- ♣ Voted to renew the appointment of the Reverend Dr. Doug Hicks as our parish associate.
- ♣ Approved several procedural policies to comply with the new Book of Order.
- ♣ Endorsed proposals regarding congregational meetings and the election of officers to be voted on by the congregation at its meeting scheduled for December 4th.
- ♣ Heard an encouraging report from Jeff Gallagher on behalf of the stewardship committee, who reported that 150 pledges for 2012 had been received on stewardship Sunday.
- ♣ Received the moderator's report of progress on several congregational ministries including RISC, VCU campus ministry, Downtown Community Ministry, and our atrium renovation project.



STEWARDSHIP MATTERS



Did you know that the ministries and missions of Second Presbyterian Church cost approximately \$2500/day? Has the church received your pledge for 2012? Thanks for your generous devotion to God's work through the church both as we finish this calendar year and make plans for God's significant work for next year. The contributions and commitments from each of us remain most important.

Pledges: To receive credit in the current year, pledge payments for 2011 must be postmarked by December 31, or delivered to the church office **by noon on Friday, December 30**. Please note that the church office closes at noon that day.

Making a Gift of Stock to the Church?

Please call the church office (649-9148) for the procedure to help you complete your transaction.



WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY CORNER

Begin the festive holiday season with Westminster Canterbury's annual Star Lighting Celebration and Vespers service featuring the Greater Richmond Children's Choir. It will be held Sunday, December 4, 7 p.m. at the Sara Belle November Theater. A reception filled with caroling, Christmas cookies, and hot cider will follow the service.

The Pastoral Care Series of Lectures presents the Rev. Nelson Taylor to speak on *The Antiphons of Advent: Israel's Cry for Immanuel* on Mondays, December 5, 12, and 19, at 10:30 a.m. in the Montague Chapel. Throughout Israel's time in the wilderness, the call was lifted, "O come, O come, Emmanuel! O come Root of Jesse! O come Desire of Nations!" These statements and others were used in the early church to reflect upon the time of waiting for the Savior's coming. Come learn more about them and how they have helped shape the Advent we celebrate today. Mr. Taylor serves as Associate Pastor of Music & Mission at Central Baptist Church. He received his Master of Divinity in Church Music from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Your Advocate,

Sue Clewell, 330-7828

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES—December



In December as we enter Advent, there are several opportunities for your involvement in the work of seeking justice for the poor and vulnerable in our community.

RISC (Richmonders Involved in Strengthening our Community) will have two events that need our attention and support. Please consider whether God might be calling you to be involved in either or both of these events.

RISC Research Kickoff - Monday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 pm - Second Presbyterian Church. This is a meeting for people who are interested in the process of research and/or in being part of one of RISC's 2012 Research/Action Committees (The Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee and the Jobs & Poverty Committee). We will spend about 45 minutes in training about how to approach the research process and about 45 minutes splitting into committees for our first meeting of this cycle.

RISC at the Richmond City Council - Monday, December 12, at 5:30 pm or as soon as you can arrive - **City Hall (900 E. Main St.)** - Each member congregation is being asked to turn out at least 10 people so that we can show the City Council the urgency of setting up and funding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. More than 38,000 Richmonders cannot find decent, affordable housing, including more than 1,100 who are homeless. It's vital that we pack the room and show them that this can't wait!

In addition, you can demonstrate your concern about the State budget by attending a **Better Choices for Virginia Event--"Calling on Governor McDonnell to make Better Choices"--December 15th at 10:00 a.m. at the State Capitol Building.** Members, supporters, and allies of Better Choices for Virginia will gather inside the capitol building to hear speakers, call on Governor McDonnell to adopt a balanced approach to his coming budget, and to sign and deliver petitions to the governor. The event will include dynamic speakers from a variety of different backgrounds and is a fantastic opportunity for Virginians to show the governor that they support schools, health care, roads, first responders, and the environment. All are encouraged to attend.



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

In October the Session approved a new Child Protection Policy for our church. This policy, developed by a subcommittee of the Christian Education Council, provides clear guidelines for selecting and supervising all employees and volunteers working with children and youth, in an effort to keep our programs safe from any kind of child abuse.

While this policy is not a response to any existing concern, it is intended to provide assurance to families of safe, secure and wholesome experiences for their children and youth in our programs. It also intends to protect the Church from unwarranted allegations of child abuse, and from situations that would allow predatory behavior. We join with many other churches in taking a proactive stance toward the existing risk of child abuse in our society.

The Committee was composed of Dr. Helen Adams, member of the Session and local physician, Dr. Catherine Bagwell, child psychologist and professor at University of Richmond, Julia Allred, Chair of Christian Education Council, Ginger Evans, Director of Christian Education, and Gail Monsma, Associate Pastor.



In the coming months we will be implementing the policy by training all volunteers and employees and securing background checks. The policy will be made available on the church website or you may request a copy from Ginger Evans, DCE.



Church School for Children

December 4 - Winter Term of Church School begins!
 PreSchool Class - Katie and Elisabeth King
 1st & 2nd Grade - Chris Madigan and Treva Thomas
 3rd - 5th Grade - Helen Adams and Nancy Foltz
December 25 & January 1 - No Church School



YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Sunday, December 4th 5:00 – 8:00 pm (note time)</p> <p>Mays' Address: 1900 Westover Hills Blvd, 23225.</p> | <p>Christmas Party at Allison Mays' House</p> <p>Come out for our annual Christmas Party for a time of fun and fellowship as we sing carols, exchange "white elephant" gifts, and study Scripture together. <i>Go directly to Allison's house and be picked up there too.</i></p> |
| <p>Sunday, December 11th 12:15-3:00 pm</p> | <p>Service and Christmas Caroling</p> <p>Join us for Second Sunday Lunch and for Christmas Caroling at various Senior Living Facilities in Richmond where we will share holiday cheer with the residents through carols and fellowship.</p> |

We'll resume in mid-January. May the peace of Christ fill you and your loved ones during this holiday season.

SUMMER TRIP DATES--MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference: Tuesday-Friday, June 26-29, 2012
High School Montreat Youth Conference & Mission Project: Saturday-Saturday, July 7-14, 2012.



Special Thanks from the Childcare Center

Exciting things are happening at 2PCCC. Whether doing our daily activities, or engaging in special events and celebrations, we share the love of Christ with the little boys and girls of 2PCCC in every detail.

From our hearts to yours, we would like to say thank you for your ongoing kindness, contributions and generosity that make this ministry a reality.

We are always happy to have new friends join us, so if you know of anyone looking for care for children ages 16 months to 6 years, please feel free to recommend 2PCCC.



Christmas Music

On **Sunday December 18**, the Adult Choir, accompanied by a group of wind musicians from the Richmond Symphony, will present **Ottorino Respighi's** beautiful and pastoral cantata ***Laud to the Nativity*** during the morning worship service. Respighi's colorful work depicts the nativity of Jesus as the shepherds might have seen it. Respighi draws upon archaic musical forms and devices like the 16th-century Italian madrigal, Monteverdi-like arioso, plainchant, and even a bit of the fugue, in setting the text by Jacopone da Todi, a 13th-century Franciscan poet who was originally a successful lawyer. Respighi, who is best known to American audiences through his symphonic works like the

Roman trilogy (*Fountains of Rome*, *Pines of Rome*, and *Roman Festivals*) and his *Ancient Airs and Dances*, also produced a significant and compelling body of vocal/choral works like *Christus*, *Nebbie*, *Aretusa*, and *Laud to the Nativity*. A twenty-minute work in one movement, *Laud to the Nativity* will fill your soul with the joy of Christmas. The musicians for this presentation are made possible through a generous gift from Bill and Susan Flowers in Memory of Mary Frances Flowers.



Longest Night Service

Sunday, December 18th 5 p.m.— Chapel

Christmas and the Holiday season can be a challenging time. It may be the first Christmas spent without a loved one; it may fall during some personally challenging times; it may be a time that has always been difficult.

The constant refrain in the air about the happiness of the season and spending time with family and friends reminds many people of what they have lost or have never had. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, and various life challenges can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebration. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know that we are not alone.

As the days grow shorter, the increasing darkness can remind us of our need for encouragement as we move forward.

Come join with us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God's presence is for those who mourn and for those who struggle and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness. Everyone is welcome.

The service will be followed by a brief time for light refreshments and fellowship..

Christmas Open House

for you and yours

Wednesday, December 21

at the Evans' Home

3109 West Franklin Street

Drop-in anytime from 4 - 8 pm



Last Friday Film of the Year!

Bid farewell to the old year and ring in the new by watching a good movie with friends from SPC on **Friday evening, December 30**. That's the last Friday of the year, and the date of the December gathering of the movie group. If you like movies, and enjoy talking about them with friends, this is an event you won't want to miss.

Plan on a couple hours for the film and about a half hour for discussion. The parking deck will be closed, but there is plenty of on-street parking after 6 p.m. *Doors are open from 6:45 - 7:00 p.m. We'll be at the door to let you in, but at 7, the door will be unattended because all will be upstairs in the second floor theater to view the film.*

Invite a friend, and come join us!"



HAPPENINGS...

LITERARY CIRCLE

Tuesday, December 13th, 7:00 p.m.

Book: Selections from *The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain*

Hostess: Sheri Highfill, 5914 Morningside Drive, 23226

If you have any questions, contact Melissa Schutt: mcschutt@gmail.com, tel.: 929-3231.



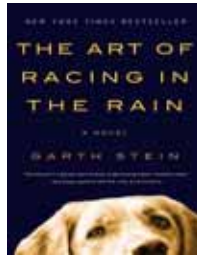
DAY BOOK GROUP

Tuesday, December 20th at 10:00 am

Home of Milt Bigger

Book: *The Art of Racing in the Rain*

by Garth Stein.



SECOND SUNDAY AT SECOND

Join your church family for good food and fellowship on **Sunday, December 11th** immediately following worship.

Menu

- Madrigal Pork Loin
- Roasted Potatoes
- Green Beans
- Chocolate Pie



Tickets may be purchased at the Deacons' Desk – \$7 adults, \$5 youth, \$4 kids 10 & under.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR THOSE IN NEED

This November and December we want to collect items to be given to those in need.

As you shop for your family and friends, remember to purchase these items and bring them to church.

What a great way to celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ to the world!

For Children at Chimborazo

- ♣ socks and underwear - sizes 5-12
- ♣ winter jackets and coats - new or gently used & clean

For Our Walk-In Neighbors

- ♣ warm hats and gloves - men's and women's



Our Bible Study for the year on "The Beatitudes" will continue the first Tuesday of each month through May.

Circle One - will meet in the Tower 6th floor lounge at Westminster Canterbury at 11:00a.m. Please bring your Bible and a sandwich to share.

Circle Two - will meet at Elaine Nagy's, 4103 Dover Road, 23221, on December 6, 11:00 a.m. Please bring your Bible.

We hope you will each find your home in one of these circles as we study and grow together in our faith and discipleship.



MICAH NEWS

Welcome back to Vernon Mays, who has re-joined the ranks of Math Buddies at Chimborazo this year. If you would like to invest one hour per week at the school and join our team of Math Buddies and Book Pals after the holidays, please contact Ele Bigger (embigger@verizon.net or 323-5803).



STAMPS FOR MISSION

Don't forget to drop off "pretty" stamps in the basket on the credenza. The "Forever" stamps and stamps with flags are not usable. Over \$85,000 was raised for mission projects from selling these stamps. With the holidays fast approaching, take a few moments and cut off the canceled stamp from the envelope.

FLOWERS IN 2012

There are several Sundays available next year for remembering loved ones. If you are interested in providing the flowers on a particular Sunday, please call the church office.

- January 8
- March 25
- July 1
- September 23
- October 7
- December 16



The third Sunday of December date will only be available when there are five Sundays in December.

Second Press Deadline for January! Please submit all items for the January issue of *Second Press* by **December 19, 2011**.

Please send email submissions to newsletter@2presrichmond.org or you may leave a printed copy at the desk.

Please make sure print copy submissions are a readable format, please print if possible.

DECEMBER CALENDAR

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|---|--|---|--------------------------|--|
| 27 SERRV Shop 9:30am - ADVENT 10am - Choir 11am - WORSHIP 12:15pm - Coffee 5pm - Youth | 28 10:30am - Walk-in 12pm - AA | 29 7:30pm - VCU | 30 6:15pm - Handbell 7:30pm - Choir | 1 12pm - Yoga | 2 | 3 Assisting Families |
| 4 SERRV Shop 9:30am - Church 10am - Choir 11am - WORSHIP 12:15pm - Coffee 5pm - Youth | 5 10:30am - Walk-in 12pm - AA 6:30pm - RISC | 6 9:30am - Staff 7:30pm - VCU | 7 5pm - CE Council 6pm - Mission 6:15pm - Handbell 7:30pm - Choir | 8 12pm - Yoga 6pm - Deacons | 9 | 10 Assisting Families |
| 11 9:30am - Church 10am - Choir 11am - WORSHIP 12:15pm - Second 1pm - Choir 1pm - Youth | 12 10:30am - Walk-in 12pm - AA | 13 4:30pm - Property 5pm - Worship 7:30pm - Literary 7:30pm - VCU | 14 11:45am - 2PCCC 12:30pm - Kerygma 4:30pm - Budget 6:15pm - Handbell 7:30pm - Choir | 15 9am - Third 12pm - Yoga 6pm - Young | 16 | 17 Assisting Families |
| 18 9:30am - Church 10am - Choir 11am - WORSHIP 12:15pm - Coffee 5pm - Longest Night | 19 Newsletter 10:30am - Walk-in 12pm - AA | 20 10am - Day Book | 21 4pm - Evans' Open 7:30pm - Choir | 22 12pm - WC Bible | 23 Office closed | 24 5pm - Family 8:30pm - Choir 10pm - Candlelight |
| 25 10am - Choir 11am - WORSHIP 12:15pm - Coffee | 26 Office closed 10:30am - Walk-in | 27 | 28 11:45am - 2PCCC | 29 | 30 7pm - Friday Films | 31 |



Stay current, check out the Second Church Event Calendar on our website

www.2presrichmond.org





Second Presbyterian Church
OF RICHMOND VIRGINIA

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Dated Material

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No Church School!
Sundays, December 25th and January 1st

SERRV Shop
Sunday, Dec. 4th

Christmas Joy Offering
Sunday, December 18th