

(Excerpt from sermon **NEW VISION** April 25. Complete sermon at [www.spcworks.org](http://www.spcworks.org))

*The Judeans gathered Jesus and asked: If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.*

Like many of you, I was raised on the teaching that Jesus Christ is the *Sun* of God. As a child, I received this image as delightful and cosmic; because, until I was a young adolescent, I always heard the word as s-U-n, Sun of God. Jesus is the light of the world, right? Eventually corrected, with a heavy dose of humiliation, what I remember most is a sense of loss—loss of that delight, of wonder and mystery. What I received in its place was an intellectual puzzle; son (s-O-n) came into full consciousness at around the same time I was also coming to understand biological processes...so now along with Jesus I had to deal with Mary, the Holy Spirit and that whole pregnancy thing...endless questions, beginning with: who is this Jesus guy anyway?

In our gospel story today, Jesus is surrounded by people asking the same thing—who are you? Are you the Messiah or not? Messiah—the great political and military savior who will free the people and nation of Israel. There's a potent mix of deep human longing, religious and national fervor, and a long history of expectation, all summed up in one little word; there is a whole lot of baggage attached to that title Messiah.

How much more baggage has piled up around Christ, the Greek translation of Messiah, over the last 2000 years as it moved out of its Jewish context, was filtered through Greek philosophy and solidified in medieval European scholasticism. So now, in addition to Son of God and Messiah, we inherit, among many other things: Trinity—Jesus is now one of three, Father, Son and Spirit; as well as the kingly, remote, and eventually

violent Christ of imperial Christianity. It will take centuries, and the creative spiritual genius of figures like Francis of Assisi to begin to reclaim some of the humanity and humility of Jesus, which was almost immediately eclipsed by perhaps the biggest bag of all, the peculiar medieval notion that Christ came solely as a remedy for human sin—incarnation, biblically tied to creation, now reduced and subjugated to human moral failing.

Well here's some good news: we are not ancient Hebrews, third century Greeks or 13th century Europeans (nor 16th century Genevans, I should add). While we share common DNA with all of them, we are 21st century, scientifically savvy, historically aware citizens of planet earth. We are heirs of a deep and rich tradition that we can, and indeed must, receive with both gratitude and a critical contemporary perspective. For our faith to remain alive, we must reflect anew on the mystery of Christ in our time, place, culture and experience. This is the invitation of the fabulous new book *Christ in Evolution*, written by Franciscan scientist/theologian and friend of this congregation, Ilia Delio.

The vision of this book is way too vast for me to do it justice here, but its well worth exploring—maybe together; let me know if you are interested. But if its true, as Ilia suggests, that God is working precisely through the chaos of creation and the messiness of our unfolding lives, that's pretty good news. It suggests that there is a power at work in the world, in human history, in Christian faith, in other faiths, in the evolutionary unfolding of the cosmos, and in our individual and communal lives. Something dynamic and directional, always moving toward greater goodness and love, but still open-ended, not deterministic, persistent, but never coercive. Everything, including ourselves is unfolding—whether we like it or not.

—Ethel Hornbeck  
*Director Spiritual Formation*

**SUNDAY MORNING SEMINAR: *Everyday Spirituality***

**May 2, 9, 23 and 30, 9:15 Classroom No. 1**

Ethel Hornbeck will lead us in exploring together some of the qualities of mind and heart, attitudes and practices that can help open us to the presence of Spirit in our everyday lives and experience. Part of the DVD-based "Spiritual Literacy Project," the themes in this segment are: Enthusiasm, Forgiveness, Gratitude and Hospitality. "To see a world in a grain of sand/and a heaven in a wild flower/To hold infinity in the palm of your hand/and eternity in an hour." (William Blake)

## EARTHFEST April 18

Though it wasn't a church service, it was somehow a sacred event. This year's Earthfest at SPC was almost electric! One person said to me that it was joyful, and another echoed my sentiment that it was the best Fest yet. It was hard not to have a smile on your face and a bounce in your body!

The opening original music was all thought-provoking and beautiful. There were moments throughout the evening that were filled with awe and reverence. And I'm biased about the choir because I sang in it, but I could see the rapt attention and the light in the faces of the audience. I know that "This We Know," the haunting Navajo blessing of the earth and Aaron Copland's "In the Beginning" truly moved them. Brad Toole's interpretation of James Weldon Johnson's moving "The Creation" from God's Trombones seemed just right.

The carefully chosen projections added a constant reminder of the earth that we had all come to honor. And there was plenty of laughter! Frankly, when I saw the program and all the names on it, I said to someone, "We won't be out of here before nine o'clock!" That would have been two hours later. As I write this, I have no idea how long it lasted. I was having too good a time!

—Rosemarie Coy

## Yootz Corner...

**VISIT TO A MOSQUE** On March 26, a small group of senior Yootz, led by Dave Smith and Charlotte Baker-Shenk journeyed to the Islamic Society of Western Maryland's mosque in Hagerstown. The Yootz observed the ritual prayer, had a question and answer session with the Imam, and participated in a Qur'an reading and discussion.

The worshippers at the mosque were all welcoming and open to the Yootz's presence. The Yootz found a religion in ways similar to the stereotypes of Islam, such as the strict patriarchal structure, but also a religion deeply interested in expanding one's relationship with God.

Islam is a religion based very much on communal learning and fellowship, as well as one that puts personal responsibility on each individual worshipper, not the clergy. It is this lesson that would perhaps be the most valuable to take away from Islam, that each of us is responsible for our own relationship with God, and in the end we are the ones who control our part in that relationship.

—Ethan Carter

**SAN MAR GIRLS HOME TOUR Sunday, May 16, 3:15 p.m.–7:15 p.m.** Includes dinner and games. Meet and greet the girls for whom we are raising money in the San Mar Canal Ride. For all Yootz whether you are riding or not. Bring a dessert to share. Questions? Contact Natasha Baihly [natashabaihly@yahoo.com](mailto:natashabaihly@yahoo.com).

## SPC Monthly Activities...

**EVENING PRAYER** In the way of Taizé. First Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A Service of Prayer in song, silence and candlelight. **Next: May 5.**

**WOMEN'S CIRCLE** First Thursdays, 10:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall. Bible study is titled *Joshua: A Journey of Faith*. All women of the church are welcome to join us. **Next: May 6.**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST SUNDAY** Coins for relief of hunger and non-perishables for JCCM (see list under **Mission: JCCM**). **Next: May 2.**

**ROUNDTABLE WITH ETHEL HORNBECK** Conversation and reflection with and around scripture, poetry, and other selected texts. Third Thursdays, 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. **Next: May 20.**

### SUPPER GROUPS

Moveable Feast **Saturday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.** hosted by Esther & Tim Murphy, 304-876-8133.

TGIF **Friday, May 21, 6:30 p.m.** hosted by Cathy & Don Cross, 304-876-2412.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** Third Saturdays. Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Discussion 8:00–9:00 a.m. **Next: May 15.**

**CONTEMPLATIVE AND CENTERING PRAYER** Third Sundays, 7:00 p.m. **Next: May 16.**

## Notices...

### SHENANDOAH WOMEN'S CENTER (SWC)

Have any of you been sneezing this spring thanks to all the wonderful flowers? Because of these, one of the needs of the SWC is allergy medicine.

Someone *you* know, or someone who *knows* someone you know, has been a victim of domestic violence. It crosses all economic and social classes. WV has one of the highest rates in the country and the Eastern Panhandle has one of the highest rates in WV.

In addition to providing counseling, the SWC has a safe house for women and children—who sometimes show up literally with the clothes on their backs. Their most immediate needs this season are on a list in the FH and the narthex. Please pick one up, do a little shopping, and leave the items in the Shenandoah Women's Center container on the stairs near the nursery.

So what do they need? All kinds of cleaning supplies; *NEW* summer sleepwear for infants, children and women; *NEW* bath towels and washcloths; and, of course, allergy medicines for children and adults.

## Mark Your Calendars...

**SUNDAY FORUM: Clean-Water Systems for Poor Rural Villages in Southern Honduras, May 16, 9:30** Fellowship Hall. Jorge Pineda from Choluteca, Honduras will de-

scribe his work with ASEQUAL, a non-profit that builds clean-water systems for poor rural villages in southern Honduras. John Gonano has worked with Jorge on two different occasions. Jorge will invite SPC to share in this project. Donations are welcomed. Refreshments will be served at the forum.

**COMMUNITY BIBLE SCHOOL** is scheduled for the week of **July 19–23** in Shepherdstown. While most of the classes will occur at the New Street Methodist and Trinity Episcopal Church, many of the community churches including SPC are involved. We need teachers, teenager teacher aides, storytellers and music help. Children three and up are welcome. This is a true community effort for our children. Please plan to be a part of it!! Contact Anne Barrat 304-876-6099 or barrat@live.com.

## Events Elsewhere...

**ROLLING RIDGE ANNUAL RETREAT** *Dear Children of the Earth* for children ages 6-12 and their parents, grandparents or mentors, **May 7–8**. Enjoy: campfire with stories and songs; nature arts and crafts; and discovery hikes. Leaders include SPC's own Verle and Vivian Headings. For details, go to [www.rollingridge.net](http://www.rollingridge.net). To register and for more information, contact Vivian Headings at 304-725-2312 or [vvattr@juno.com](mailto:vvattr@juno.com).

**FAMILY BIKE RIDE TO BENEFIT CASA** **Saturday, May 22**. Ten & 25 milers on towpath; *plus* 25, 50, 100 mile and metric road routes; *and* a "Tykes on Trikes" circuit ride at 1:00 p.m. All rides start from King St., Shepherdstown. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) provides trained volunteers to shepherd neglected and abused children through the court system to a safe place. Early registration discount for bike ride. Register at [www.casaride.com](http://www.casaride.com).

**PRESBYTERY INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP** Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idosa, President of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus visits Falling Waters Presbyterian Church, Spring Mills, WV on **Sunday, May 2**. Covered dish dinner at 5:30 p.m. followed by Rev. Dr. Idosa speaking at 6:30 p.m. Join us as we learn more about "The Good Fruits of an International Partnership." Questions? Call 304-754-8211.

**ANTIETAM WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE (AWE)**, directed by our own Georgiann Toole, will perform excerpts from Handel's *Foundling Hospital Anthem* composed to raise funds for "the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted children." This concert also includes contemporary choral music inspired by those who care for others. Proceeds will be donated to the South Mountain Center for Women and Children. AWE will be joined by the Boonsboro High School Women's Chorus. Concert at Boonsboro High School, Boonsboro, MD, **Wednesday, May 12**, 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$5 at the door.

**THE HOMELESS HOME MOVIE** will be shown on **Tuesday, May 16**, 6:30 at the Zion Episcopal Church, 221 East Washington Street (entrance on Mildred Street) in Charles Town. It's a thought-provoking film about the national homeless problem, produced for PBS.

**WINCHESTER MUSICA VIVA** concert by women composers, including Alice Parker, Judith Shatin, Dolly Parton, and (SPC's own) Georgiann Toole. **Saturday, May 8**, 8:00 p.m. and **Sunday, May 9**, 3:00 p.m. Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Winchester, VA. Ticket information, [www.winchestermusicaviva.org](http://www.winchestermusicaviva.org).

**MARTINSBURG UNION RESCUE MISSION** groundbreaking ceremony for a new 78-bed Mission building, **Tuesday, May 4**, 9:00 a.m., 606 W. King St. Please RSVP 304-263-6901 or Sharon Wolford <[murm@access.mountain.net](mailto:murm@access.mountain.net)>.

## Mission...

*Place items for these three missions (no used clothing) in the containers at the bottom of stairs on the way to the nursery:*

**JCCM** (Jefferson County Community Ministries) Current pantry needs: toothpaste, toothbrushes, canned meat, pancake syrup, instant oatmeal, vegetable and tomato soup, jelly, dry cereal, bar soap, crackers, peanut butter, apple sauce, shampoo, dish soap, laundry detergent, pork and beans, size 4 and 5 diapers.

**SHENANDOAH WOMEN'S CENTER** Most urgent needs include: all kinds of cleaning supplies; NEW summer sleepwear for infants, children and women; NEW bath towels and washcloths; and allergy medicines for children and adults.

**HISPANIC MISSION FOOD OUTREACH** Most requested items include: rice; dry (not canned) pinto beans, potatoes, salt, sugar, cooking oil, and coffee.

## SEVENTEEN STALWART SOULS SLOG ON SUNDAY SATURDAY

We had an extremely fun and productive work day on April 17 with Bob Proudman, Mike Williams, Quincy Williams, Dave Springer, Rob Glenn, Charlie Glenn, David Hatchett, Dave Borchard, Bill Howard, Phil Baker-Shenk, Moria Artlip, Tim Artlip, Naomi Artlip, Kay Schultz, Steve Baluch, Helen Burns, and me.

*Inside* we checked status of insulation in crawl space under kitchen; cleaned and replaced sanctuary storm windows; polished brass; cleaned steeple area (around bell); mounted cork strips in classroom #4; removed stains and wax from sanctuary carpet; and replaced coffeemaker water filter. *Outside* we cleaned parking lot and roof area drains; cleared outside stairwell; and weeded and cleaned out garden area.

Kudos to all for your enthusiasm and initiative!

—John Burns

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## Keeping up with Members...

**Sally Fitzgerald** sends greetings from Carlsbad, NM. "I've been attending the First Presby (the only Presby church in town) and I like it but it's certainly not the SPC that I know and love. We're having a sunrise service on the Pecos River that runs through town so I'm looking forward to that. I'll miss you guys at the sunrise service. I'll be there in spirit to celebrate Easter."



*Over 40 smiling faces at Sunrise in Shepherdstown Easter morning April 4*

*A goofy Easter bunny, aka, newsletter Editor*



**CHRIS KAYE** needs to borrow a treadmill, nothing fancy, to strengthen her leg to help deal with painful sciatica. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Contact Chris Kaye 304-876-1497.

**PAUL DENCHY** is retiring May 14 after 36 1/2 years with the Department of Health and Human Resources, where he held MANY different positions.

## Financial Corner...

**GENERAL FUND** through April 25, 2010. Expected to date: \$94,140. Actual giving: \$92,286. Building Fund pledged for 2010: \$44,803. Submitted to date: \$10,809.

**ONE GREAT HOUR** final tally is \$2,741.31 (including \$665.83 from the fish boxes!) this supports many and diverse humanitarian ministries of the Presbyterian Church.

**YOOTZ BRUNCH** collected \$640.60 to help with the Youth fund raiser for San Mar Children's Home.

**PRESBYTERIAN INVESTMENT & LOAN PROGRAM (PILP)** You can make a big difference in building the Presbyterian family worldwide and it makes you money. PILP currently returns 3% on 36-month investments. Your money is used to build new churches and ones that have been destroyed in storms and earthquakes. We built our addition to SPC with PILP funds.

Go to <http://www.pcusa.org/pilp> or contact me at 304-876-8448. Investments start at \$500. PILP needs to raise \$300 million over the next 20 months to help churches carry the Word into new communities. Won't you help? Thanks. —Paul Pritchard

**PAPER RECYCLING** 4-H group at Christ Reformed Church, 8–9:15 a.m. Paper, cardboard, magazines, books. Place in paper bags, boxes, or tie securely. NO PLASTIC BAGS. **Next: May 1.**

**NEXT NEWSLETTER: June 2010.** Announcements, articles, pictures or news about our members? Contact the office, 304-876-6466 or [office@spcworks.org](mailto:office@spcworks.org). Copy deadline **May 26.**

Visit [www.spcworks.org](http://www.spcworks.org) on a regular basis for all the latest news, podcasts (new), calendar events and much more.