



Conversations @ the Well

HISTORIC FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Presbyterian Church (USA)
402 West Monroe Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85003-1620

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PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO 191

3 Sunday Services

9:00 a.m. - Sanctuary

11:30 a.m. - DsTny in Norton Chapel

10:45 a.m. - El Bethel (Ethiopian) Service

Be a part of the church downtown

Please call the church office at
602-254-6356 to learn how
you can be involved.

Historic First Presbyterian Church

**“Loving and Sharing Christ
from the Heart of Phoenix.”**

Email: infohfc@historicfirst.org

Website: www.historicfirst.org

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Conversations @ the Well

A publication of the activities and ministries of Historic First Presbyterian Church · March 2009



Loving and Sharing Christ from
the Heart of Downtown Phoenix

We are Word-Centered

GOD ESTABLISHES A COVENANT FOR CREATION

By Pastor Nathan Byrd



Throughout scripture we see talk of a covenant. In different places the covenant has different nuances. In each place it is God that establishes the covenant. It is his thing. He establishes it and sets the terms for the covenant, contract, pact, or bond--whatever you want to call it. Examples are Genesis 9.8-17, Genesis 17.1-21, Jeremiah 31.31, and Hebrews 8. Talk of this covenant is rare in many Christian circles. However, for me, the idea of a covenant with God is the source of a lot of energy and comfort. Because of my share in a covenant with the living God through my faith in Jesus Christ secured by the Holy Spirit I know that I share in a pact with God that cannot be broken. So what ever I see, what ever I do, what ever the world throws at me or God's people, I can rest secure because I know what God has established in the form of a covenant.

Some ask why we don't talk about the end times. Why we don't talk about doom and gloom? Well, I

rest in this covenant. I don't need to worry about the end times, doom, or gloom.

The covenant implies that there are certain responsibilities for the people too. In response to God's love and grace. In response to the reality that God takes time for me leads me to take on many of these responsibilities with joy. In the areas without joy. I recognize that all of God's people are a work in progress.

So as we head toward Easter. As we head toward Easter's proper name, Resurrection Sunday, and do the self-reflection appropriate for this time of year, let us remember that we can be honest with God. The relationship is strong enough to handle all we discover about ourselves and bring forward. There is a guarantee to the relationship and it is found in the terms of a covenant with the living God and our place is secured in this covenant through his Son Jesus.



In Genesis 9 the rainbow was a reminder of God's established covenant. Today we receive the reminder the blessings, commands, and promises true to God's covenant at the Lord's Table.

THINKING ABOUT SIN

by Beth Beall

Lent is a season of penitence and repentance that prepares us for the Mystery of Easter. Many of my companions on the Lenten journey are children. There were several children around me in the pew at my Episcopal church when, on the first Sunday in Lent, the congregation chanted together the Great Litany: "Remember not, Lord Christ, our offenses...From sin, Good Lord, deliver us..."

I found myself thinking about what we—and more precisely, what *I*—teach children about the sin from which we ask God to deliver us. I teach children to say "I'm sorry" as the language of confession of sin. Yet I also find myself asking a child to say "I'm sorry" for accidentally bumping into another child as we run around together. Are accidents and mistakes the same as sin? In other words, what is the sin for which we want both children and ourselves to say "I am sorry" during this Lenten season of penitence and repentance?

Serendipitously, providentially, I came across an editorial by Gretchen Pritchard, who is an Episcopalian Christian Educator. Pritchard's words immediately spoke to me as I pondered what it means to speak to children about sin in this season of Lent. She has kindly granted me permission to reproduce her words here. May her words accompany all of us—children, youth, and adults; laity and clergy; lifelong disciple and hesitant seeker—to travel more faithfully the Lenten road of penitence and repentance.

"We do all make mistakes; we are finite and fallible humans. But the Baptismal Covenant's question, 'Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?' is not about 'making mistakes.' It is about sin. To sin is to know the good and refuse to do it: to choose what one knows is hurtful; to say 'I don't care; I'm going to do it anyway.' This is a distinction too infrequently made, especially in religious materials for children.

"Our language is ambiguous in its use of words like 'wrong' and 'shortcomings,' all of which can be used in a wide range of circumstances ranging from deliberate offenses to honest errors to simple incapacity. ...An easy conflation of mistakes and sins can bind heavy burdens on children's shoulders. Children are clumsy, impulsive, inexperienced, and weak. They 'get things wrong' with great regularity, and are constantly being asked by adults to apologize for things that turned out



"Join the fun of teaching children's Sunday School!"

(L-R) Rev. Cathy Witte, Amy Perez, Kathy Bauman, Joyce Vitkovich, Beth Beall & Suzanne

badly due to their lack of skill and judgment. Such apologies are perfectly appropriate in the context of courtesy and consideration for others, but they are not confessions of sin. 'Getting it wrong' and 'things going wrong' are not the same thing as doing wrong. No repentance is needed, nor should it be exacted.

Children are exhorted and admonished by adults to hurry up, keep track of things, and perform better at such tasks as putting on a coat, catching a ball, or learning to read. They often get on adults' nerves, even when they are trying not to. *We need to make very, very clear to children whom we are bringing up in the household of faith, that none of these things are what we mean by sin. Forgetting and failing are not 'falling into sin.'*

"Furthermore, conflating mistakes and sins can also lead to a trivializing of real sin. Adults often let ourselves off the hook ('Mistakes were made') when in fact, we chose to be unfair or greedy or lazy or dishonest or mean.

"We may make children feel terribly guilty for mere mistakes, immaturity, or limitations. But these are not sins. To sin is to know the good and refuse to do it. Children do plenty of that along with their mistakes, but *adults do it more*. That's why it's so important for our children to see us, in church, on our knees, repenting and begging forgiveness."

We are in love with Downtown



Kir makes pizza

Beth Beall and the Ajok family went to Downtown's newest museum, the Children's Museum on North 7th Street. Kir and Ajak had a wonderful time. They could not stop talking about their experience with the exhibits.



Susu and Ajak on scooter

This museum is just one example of all the great stuff happening Downtown. As we embrace Phoenix's Downtown, take time to see what is new.

We are in full partnership with El Bethel (Ethiopian) Congregation



Joe Witte sharing his gifts

PICNIC

HFPC Church and El Bethel (Ethiopian) congregation hosted a picnic on February 15, 2009. Around seventy-five family members and friends joined the fun. Thank you to those who attended and made this event a great success.

JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE

Saturday

March 21, 2009

6:30 PM

This is an opportunity to invite others to something new and unique. El Bethel (Ethiopian) and HFPC will together form a meaning worship experience for all to the glory of God.

Reformed Quote of the Month:

"The Soul is never satisfied till it has God for its portion, and heaven for its haven"

(Watson, Gleanings, 128).

HFPC SESSION 2009

Moderator Rev. Nathan Byrd

Bev Brewer..... Congregational Life

Dennis CherryWorship

.....Assistant Clerk

Carol Hill..... Property Management

Barbara Petersen..... Treasurer

..... Mission Outreach

.....Budget & Financial Planning

.....Caring & Healing

Rick Reed Clerk

.....Budget & Financial Planning

Phil Seese Property Management

.....Property Rental

.....Personnel

Brett WingateDiscipleship

..... Membership, Nominating

..... Youth Ministries

Joe VazquezAssistant Clerk

HFPC DEACONS 2009

Chob Ajak • Enoch Awejok

Laura Cherry • Mary Ann Crompton

Isabel McMahel • Pam McCune

Mary Lynn Reagan • Denise Reed

Phyllis Saylor • Schuyler Schuff



Palm Sunday

April 5, 2009

9:00 a.m. - Worship Service

11:30 a.m. – DsTny Service

Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2009

5:00 p.m. – Dinner

(tickets available at the door)

7:00 p.m. – Worship Service

Good Friday

April 10, 2009

12:30 p.m. - Good Friday Service

Easter Sunday

April 12, 2009

6:00 a.m. - DsTny Sunrise Service

9:00 a.m. - Joint Service HFPC &
El-Bethel Congregation

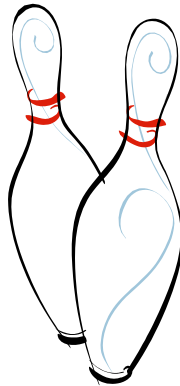
News You See

PRESBYTOMORROW

March 15, 2009

4:00 PM

PresbysTomor-
row is a group of
the young in age
and the young at
heart. If you are
interested in fun
and fellowship,
join us at AMF
Squaw Peak
Lanes, 3049 E.
Indian School. If you abso-
lutely plan to attend, please
RSVP to the church but all are
welcome even if you decide to



come at the last minute or if they just want to socialize.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 15, 2009

Pastor Nathan will lead a four week series called Words of a Prophet: Hope and Covenant Promised in Jeremiah. This educational opportunity will take place March 15 thru April 5, 2009, each Sunday after our first worship service in the HFPC Library.



Financial Information

The following pertains to the
One Month Ending January 31, 2009

	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGETED</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u> <u>FAVORABLE</u> <u>(UNFAVORABLE)</u>
Pledge & Loose			
Plate Offering	\$ 15,365	\$ 17,667	\$(2,302)
Other Income	7,776	7,332	444
Transfer from			
Foundation	<u>26,288</u>	<u>16,426</u>	<u>9,862</u>
Total Revenue	49,429	41,425	8,004
Total Expense	<u>27,048</u>	<u>41,425</u>	<u>14,377</u>
Net Expense Over			
Revenue	\$ 22,381	\$ 0	\$ 22,381

The pledge and loose plate offerings were \$2,302 less than budgeted through January 31, 2009.

Other income was \$444 more than was budgeted through January 31, 2009.

During January 2009 \$26,288 was transferred from the Foundation.

Expenses were \$14,377 less than budgeted through January 31, 2009.

At January 31, 2009, the general fund account reflected a surplus of \$22,381 due to timing differences for payroll and utilities.

At January 31, 2009, the balance in the First Presbyterian Foundation was \$670,607.

Please contact Donita Young, Financial Secretary at 602-254-6356, ext. 110 if you have any questions and/or need additional information concerning the church's finances. HFPC 2008 Annual Reports are available at the church. If you would like to receive one in the mail please call the church.