

I Will Build My Church

What is the Church? Is it a rehab facility for the needy? A soup kitchen for the hungry? A counseling center for the anguished? A think tank for brainiacs? A country club for elites? A community hub for socialites? Or something else? Over the next several months, I want to look at the Bible's answer to this important question, especially as we continue to think about who we are to be, and what we are to do, as a church in Penn Hills.

The word church comes from the Greek noun *ecclesia*, hence the rather snazzy term *ecclesiology*, which simply means "the study of the church."

As for a basic definition, *ecclesia* refers to a public gathering. It is used in a variety of ways, such as for a public assembly, the nation of Israel, a local body of Christians, a regional gathering of congregations, and the entirety of God's people (cf. Acts 7:38; 9:31; 14:23; 19:32, 39; 20:28, etc). More often than not, however, the word *ecclesia* takes on a very specific, and yes, theological, meaning.

The overwhelming use of *ecclesia* in the New Testament highlights the precious truth that the word "church" refers to a peculiar people who are called out and cared for by God. Stated differently, the church is a congregation of Christ's disciples, an assembly of blood-bought sinners, a gathering of gospel-driven saints, a fellowship of the redeemed, and a covenant community. The emphasis of *ecclesia* is primarily on *God's* people. Hence the Bible's blessed refrain: I will be your God and you will be my people. In short, *ecclesia* means, "a people loved by God."

The first utterance of *ecclesia* in the NT is from the lips of Jesus, "*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Matt. 16:18). It is hard to overestimate the importance of these words. The rest of the NT, indeed the rest of world history, is in some ways a footnote on this one verse. What then can we learn about the nature of the church from this passage?

First, we learn that the church is Christ's *possession* and that it is *programmatically* for his work in the world. The church is not owned by a college, corporation, or commune; thus it does not take its marching orders from any tribe or tradition. Jesus firmly said, "I will build *my* church." He left his Father in heaven in order to take for himself a bride here on earth. He shed his blood for his people. The church therefore is not an afterthought in the mind of God nor is it on the periphery of his plan of redemption. Make no mistake about it: Christ's work in this world centers on the church.

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COMING EVENTS



October 5 & 6
Women's Bible Study begins

OCTOBER 7 & 21
*Youth Group Corn Maze
Youth Group Hayride*

OCTOBER 18
*1:00 PM Lunch Bunch
7:00 PM Session*

OCTOBER 29-30
Saturday AM Breakfast
with Dr. Davis
Saturday PM Dinner and
Service with Dr. Davis
Sunday AM – Dr. Davis
SUNDAY EVENING
6:00 P.M.
NAPARC Joint
Reformation Service
With Dr. Ralph Davis
Reception to follow



THERE IS NOW NO
CONDEMNATION FOR
THOSE WHO ARE IN
CHRIST JESUS.

ROMANS 8:1



October



2011

Sunday

Monday




Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

	<p>Each Sunday: 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 10:45 AM Morning Worship 5:00 PM Promises Choir 6:00 PM. Evening Worship</p>					<p>1 8:30-9:30 AM Men's Prayer & Study</p>
<p>2 AM Lord's Supper Rev. John Tweeddale PM Mr. Rob Gray</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 7:00 PM WIC Council Mtg.</p>	<p>5 9:30 AM Women's Bible Study 3:45 PM Truth Troop 7:00 PM Youth Group Choir</p>	<p>6 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>7 5:30 PM Youth Group @Mallissee Farm Corn Maze </p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9 AM Rev. John Tweeddale 1:30 PM Seneca Sunday PM Rev. John Tweeddale Fellowship after service Kettle corn/cider</p>	<p>10 </p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 3:45 PM Truth Troop 7:00 PM Youth Group</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Presbytery At Murrysville</p>
<p>16 AM Rev. Jim Spitzel 1:30 PM Seneca Sunday PM Rev. Jim Spitzel</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 1:00 PM Lunch Bunch At John Anthony's 7:00 PM Session Meeting</p>	<p>19 9:30 AM Women's Bible Study 3:45 PM Truth Troop 7:00 PM Youth Group Choir</p>	<p>20 7:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7-9 PM Theology Talk</p>	<p>21 6:00 PM Youth Group Hayride at Turner Farm </p>	<p>22 8:30-9:30 AM Men's Prayer & Study</p>
<p>23 AM Rev. Jim Spitzel Installation Service PM Rev. John Tweeddale</p>	<p>24 Baby Shower For Stephenie Work</p>	<p>25 7:30 PM WIC Prayer</p>	<p>26 3:45 PM Truth Troop 7:00 PM Youth Group</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 </p>	<p>29 9-10:30 AM Men's Breakfast with Dr. Ralph Davis 5:30-7:30 PM Dinner and Service Dr. Ralph Davis</p>
<p>30 AM Dr. Ralph Davis PM NAPARC Reformation Service Dr. Ralph Davis</p>	<p>31 6-8 PM "Halloween Alternative" Party</p>	<p>Save this date Next month: Saturday November 12 Congregational Dinner-1st Annual CHILI COOK-OFF!</p>				

Taking Ownership

We had the privilege the third weekend in September of participating in a learning conference with our missionary, Lois Ooms. Our interest was heightened by our Sunday school class earlier this year using the book “When Helping Hurts” and lead by Dale McLane. The Sunday school study had brought to light concepts and approaches that we may not have considered before.

Concepts such as bringing new hope to people by having them express what vision they had for the future, what resources they had, then encouraging them into examining possible steps they might take to accomplish their vision. It is a patience trying procedure and our admiration for Lois’ capability and love in working with many people groups grew. Recently upon revisiting some of these groups she has been greeted with “Come, see what we have accomplished.”

Of course at our weekend conference we wanted Lois to give us the 1-2-3 step solution to outreach methods as well as considering how to apply those procedures within our community. I greeted Paul Sabella with the encouragement that today we would learn how to solve the world’s problems. Paul quickly replied “Will it take that long?”

Knowing Lois’ involvement in micro-economics, or home businesses, I was looking forward to something like twenty businesses that may be successful in benefitting the home and community. Also we were listening closely to see what she had in mind that our church would become involved in with respect to outreach.

Lois would not divulge what she had hoped our church would do as a result of her seminar nor would she share how her vision for us changed as she chewed on our questions. But she did give us a roadmap. A series of questions along these lines . . . Who are you? What are your hopes? What vision do you have for five years down the road? What do you see yourself doing? What steps do you think you would like to take toward your goals? What would you like me to pray for you? How much can you do yourself?

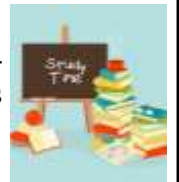
My thinking was that if Lois would provide the answers I could probably come up with some rationalization why it didn’t apply to me. But were it my vision and my steps, then I had already bought into an action plan. The ownership was mine - a valuable approach.

Then it occurred to me that my expectations were too low. Applying that thought to the overall learning process of course brought more questions. Maybe I could apply them to other occurrences where I was present in body but not fully engaged in mind. What did I expect to learn that I didn’t know before? What new areas would I expect to explore? What have I learned that I would like to learn more? How could I apply what I have learned to God’s glory?

Expectations, learning, considerations, small step action plans – got it.

Looking Forward with Salt and Light

Thank you for the support of the **Backpack project** for Light of Life Ministries. Because of your generosity 10 students received backpacks filled with school supplies. We donated extra school supplies as well.



The September WIC retreat gave us the opportunity to support the outreach program of New City Fellowship Church in Bangkok, Thailand. Women throughout the Presbytery are sporting purses and scarves from **NAPADA**, a small business of Thai women.

In November we will once again collect products for the **Penn Hills Service Association**. This is a wonderful opportunity to give from our bounty to those in need. Please be sure you check the expiration date on products you donate to this project. A list of suggested donations will be provided in the bulletin as the collection date approaches.

In December we hope to provide 2 **New Home Baskets** for graduates of the Light of Life Recovery program. These baskets will contain dishes, pots and pans, kitchen utensils and other necessary items for a new household. What a wonderful opportunity we will have to encourage someone who has worked hard to overcome obstacles in life. This collection will coincide with the WIC December gathering, but anyone can contribute. Sign up sheets will be made available as the collection draws near.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2: 8-10) What a joy it is to serve the Lord!

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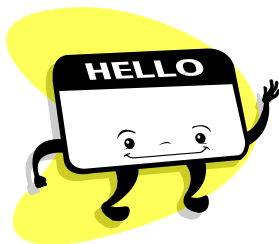
Secondly, we learn from this text that Christ *builds* and *defends* his church. The entire NT is evidence of this principle. From Pentecost onward, Christ saves and sets apart his people, equips them for ministry, sends them to the far corners of the world, and defends them from the evil one. The church is therefore not a building made with brick and mortar but a charter of salvation comprised of a people from every tongue, tribe, and nation. Furthermore, she is not promised physical peace or prosperity but can expect pain and persecution, heartaches and heresies. Nevertheless, the opposition is doomed to failure. Because Christ is, right now, on his throne. He is victorious over the powers of darkness; he has won the battle; he will defend his bride. The gates of hell will not prevail against the church.

The first lesson in our study of ecclesiology is a simple one: FRPC is not your church, my church, or the session's church. It is Christ's church.

For Christ & His Church,

Pastor John

Greeters Wanted!



As a church family, we hope to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable at FRPC. All of us can (and should!) greet one another informally, and we're blessed to have friendly folks like Karl Lawyer who faithfully welcome us as we enter the sanctuary. Unfortunately, Karl can't be everywhere at once, so we would like to begin an organized program that will place greeters, not only at the sanctuary door, but also at the entrances to the church building.

We're looking for individuals and couples who will serve once every few months. The job is simple: arrive 15 minutes before the morning worship service begins and stand at one of the building entrances to greet friends and welcome visitors. After the service, you'll return to your door to wish folks a good week, invite them to come again, and offer assistance as needed. Two greeters will serve at each entrance. You have the option of signing up with a partner or letting us pair you with someone. Children (10 and older) are welcome to serve with a parent.

If you'd like to volunteer, please contact the church office, speak with Judy Stewart, or sign up at the Welcome Center.



Fall Party – October 31

The Congregational Life Committee is hosting a Fall Party on Monday, October 31 from 6-8 p.m. as an alternative to Halloween. Join us for pizza and a movie for the kids. Bring a favorite board game to play with others and a bag of candy to share. More details are forthcoming. All ages are welcome!

See Debbi Dutton if you have questions.

WIC News

Many ladies have asked, what is this C.O.F.F.E.E. thing all about? If you attended our Fall Conference or noticed the WIC bulletin board downstairs, you might be aware that the word COFFEE represents our WIC theme for the year. The FRPC WIC Council has decided to use the acronym of COFFEE to communicate the things we are hoping to accomplish. Each letter in the word COFFEE stands for a specific focus area for our major activities throughout the year. Since the conference was our first major event, we focused on the "C" in COFFEE, which stands for "C"ommunity.



Come join us for other WIC events this year and you'll discover what the other letters in COFFEE represent!

NAPARC Reformation Service
 First Reformed Presbyterian Church
Sunday, October 30 at 6:00 PM

Dr. Dale Ralph Davis - guest preacher

Dr. Davis is the pastor of Woodland Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He has written wonderful commentaries on the Old Testament which are full of fresh exposition and thoughtful applications. Dr. Davis is a former professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi.

Schedule:

Men's Breakfast - Sat. AM, Oct 29 9-10:30 AM
 Dinner and Service - Sat. PM, Oct. 29 5:30-7:30 PM
 Sunday AM - Dr. Davis *Sunday School and Worship*
 Sunday PM - Dr. Davis NAPARC Service - Reception to follow

October Birthdays



News of our church family...

Christian sympathy is extended to Mrs. Rose Hadzima and son Dan on the passing of Mr. Steve Hadzima. Service was held Friday, Sept. 9.

Christian sympathy is extended also to the Tweeddale family following the passing of John's grandmother, Mrs. Jewel Kirksey, on Saturday Sept. 10. Services were held on Sept. 20.



1 Jill Sullivan	15 Marlene Agate
3 Terry Gardner Kay Holliday Emma Lintelman	16 Cathy Taylor 18 Janet Baker
4 Lydia Sabella	22 Dee Malone
5 Mary Schwarz	24 Jeff Clayton
7 Hannah Airgood Beth Pifer	26 Linda Lintelman Carole Olmstead
8 Samuel Dutton	
9 Rob Gray	27 Sandy Knox
9 Lindsay Sera Dick Olmstead	28 Eleanore Thompson Sophia Renda
10 Velma Patterson	31 Lori Brickner
11 Dan McClain Tyler Douglas	

Financial Summary January 1 - August 31 2011

Operating Account:	
Receipts	\$ 220,331
Disbursements	\$ 194,160
<i>Account Balances -</i>	
Operating Checking	\$ 16,253
Operating Saving	\$ 225,629
Benevolence Account:	
Income	\$ 67,150
Disbursements	\$ 73,124

*All women of
the church
are welcome*



Starts October 5th and 6th

Morning study will be

Wednesdays at 9:30 A M

1st and 3rd Weds. of the month

Evening study will be

Thursday at 7:00 PM

1st and 3rd Thurs. of the month

The book is entitled *Proverbs 31: A Woman That Feels the Lord*

by E malyn Spencer

Cost of the books \$9.00

Sign up at Welcome Center