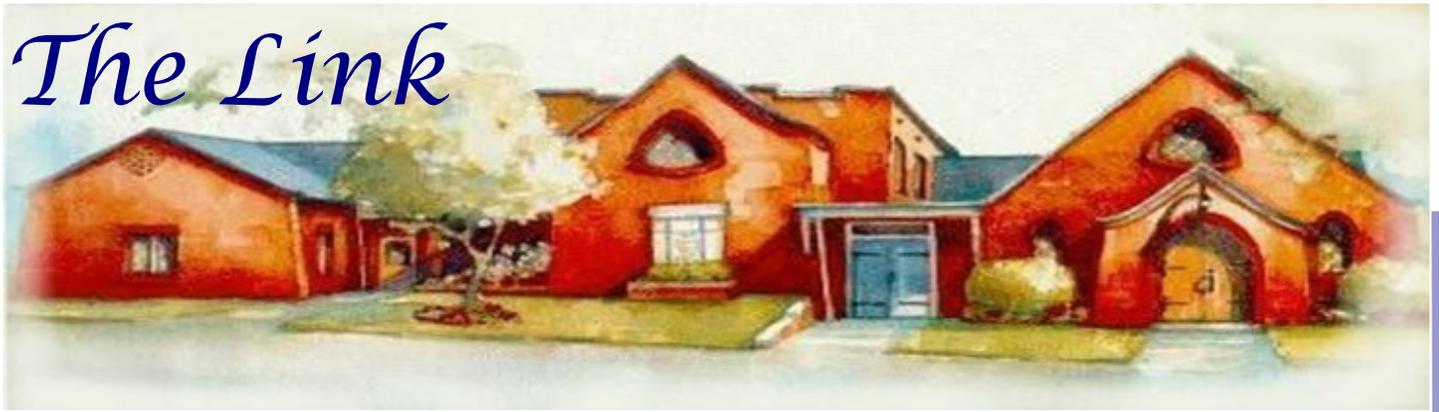


The Link



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Altavista Presbyterian Church

Our vision, our hearts, and our doors are always open

Pastor's Message.....

The First Epistle of St. Peter has always been an intriguing one. The Two Letters of Peter, the Three Letters of John, the Letter of James, and the Letter of Jude comprise what is known as the Catholic Epistles. Catholic, here, refers to “universal” and not the Roman Catholic Church. These letters are addressed generally, meaning they do not have a specific person or church in mind. As opposed to Paul’s letters, which all are addressed to a particular community or individual.

Peter’s First Letter is addressed to “the elect exiles of the Dispersion,” (1:1) and his purpose for writing is to encourage “those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (4:19). Peter challenges his readers to stand firm in the midst of persecutions. And I am sure those first century Christians needed all the encouragement and support they could get. If the author of this Letter really is Simon Peter, then he had to have written before the year AD 68, for that was when he was beheaded in Rome. Christians at that time were being falsely accused of wrongdoing and attacked by locals. In fact, starting in the year AD 64, the Roman government, under order of Emperor Nero, began state-sanctioned persecutions of Christians. Two and a half centuries later, the Roman Empire made persecution of Christians illegal in the year 313 with the Edict of Milan.

As you can see, our earliest history as a faith community was wrought with hardship. In fact, I think the Church grew out of these persecutions, and the Church is truly herself when she is in the midst of suffering. I believe this

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Kairos Prison Ministry

Many of my church family here at APC have shown a lot of interest and support for the Kairos prison ministry that I volunteer for so I thought I would give a little background on what the ministry is and what it offers the incarcerated. First I give all the honor and praise to my Lord and savior Jesus Christ for using me as a vessel to help carry out His Mission in such a dark place and many Thanks to APC for your support of this ministry.

Kairos Inside is a ministry program established in 1976 and dedicated to incarcerated men and women. The program strategy is to bring positive and negative leaders of the institution together for a 4-day weekend event after which residents establish small Prayer and Share groups within the institution and monthly reunions with the support of the chaplain. Normally a weekend would be from Thursday thru Sunday, but because at GreenRock visitation is on Saturday and the facility we use is where visitations are held our weekend program runs from Tuesday thru Friday. Kairos Inside is a lay -led Christian Interdenominational ministry that allows participants to witness Christ's love through the servitude of Christian Kairos volunteers. During this event Participants are given the opportunity to experience a religious renewal accepting God's call to a life of Christian witness and service to one another during their stay in the institution, and beyond and the reality is some of the participants will spend the rest of their life incarcerated but are seeking forgiveness and Salvation. The Kairos weekend consists of coordinated Talks, discussions, chapel meditations and music led by volunteers. This experience may create the desire to become a Christian; it may create a desire to continue his own personal spiritual growth and perhaps for others nothing at all but just the time away from their normal routine and the home-made cookies and coffee and that's alright because we are on God's time schedule as volunteers we are that to show God's Love and hopefully plant a seed that will eventually take root on God's time frame not ours.

As I said before our 4 days inside is considered a weekend, each day inside has a guiding purpose or a focus. This is a God ordained program and we have a manual that has to be used for this program to have any type of effect on the residents and no major deviation from the program is allowed. The activities of each day are designed to support that day's purpose. As the activities of each day unfold, a building process is occurring. The participants are led, step by step, through a growing understanding of the focus that day. That is why Kairos is such a structured program. The activities for each day are designed purposely to support that day's objective. As the activities of each day unfold, a continual process builds on prior activities. Everything has a place and an order.

This is how a weekend is scheduled , the first day Tuesday is only a half day/Encountering Kairos; a time to reduce anxiety and begin the comfort level includes a Host greeting each participant when they first enter our building each team member is assigned 2 residents the 1st day, we do introductions and a talk on I Chose You, spend time getting to know them share lunch and dinner receive instructions form the team leader for the week and end the night in the Chapel, Wednesday / Understand yourself and your standing with God: talks and discussion on Encounters with Christ, Choices, you are not alone, Friendship with God, Acceptance of self (Chapel), The Church, opening the door and accepting God's forgiveness (Chapel). Thursday: Meet Jesus& the body of Christ and find forgiveness: Chapel talks, Who is Jesus, Forgiveness of others, tearing down walls, Talks; Discovery, Christian action, they receive letters that the team members have written, each team member has to write 42 letters one for each resident some of these men have never received a letter and some have to have their letters read to them, this is an emotional time for some of them. Friday: Began the process of growing in Faith and community with others: Chapel activities: Healing memories, prayer circle, where we teach them how to pray for each other, private counseling with a clergy (actually we offer counseling anytime from the first day), talks, obstacles to God's Grace, Waking in God's Grace, Hang in There, then we do the presentation

May 2017 Adult Sunday School class

Our Heavenly Father so closely identifies with His children that our tears are His. Anne Graham Lotz, a daughter of Billy and Ruth Graham, explores this topic in her Bible study “Loving Him... with His tears on my face” in Decision magazine, February 2005 issue. Her first four questions are:

Read John 11:1-44, and explain why Mary wept (verse 33).

Knowing He would raise Lazarus within a few moments, why do you think Jesus wept (John 11:35)?

When was the last time you wept? Why were you weeping?

Give phrase from the following verses that show God feels our pain: Psalm 56:8; Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 4:15.

The class meets from 9 to 9:45 every Sunday morning in the adult Sunday School room. Please come and join us to enjoy fellowship and to receive God’s guidance and abundant blessings as we study His precious Word.

Date	Facilitator
May 7	Ron Coleman
May 14	Sang-il Lee
May 21	Ron Coleman
May 28	A video

Altavista Presbyterian Church

Session Highlights

April 18, 2017 meeting

- * Examined the Confirmands. Sustained the examination of Keegan deBernard, Charlotte Mabry, Jackson Moehlenkamp & John Roark & welcomed them as Active members of APC.
- * Decided to give the Ministry Beyond the Congregation Committee the authority to disperse the proceeds from the Maundy Thursday offering (\$247.62) to an entity (ies) in need.
- * Reviewed the March, 2017 Treasurer’s Report.
- * Approved minutes of the March 19, 2017 Stated meeting & the March 26, 2017 Congregational meeting as presented.
- * Elected the following officers of APC, Inc.: Mark Younkin (President), Dana Taylor (Vice President), Dennis Janiak (Treasurer), John Erb (Secretary) & Anne Mabry (Director).
- * Elected Bev Eubank as APC’s Commissioner to the May 4, 2017 Presbytery meeting to be held at Northminster PC, Roanoke & elected Gary Andrews as Alternate Commissioner.
- * Decided to hold a Session Retreat on Saturday May 20, 2017, beginning at 8:00 am.
- * Heard a report from Moderator Ed on the visits he has made since the last Session meeting.
- * Joys & concerns of the congregation were identified. Moderator Ed prayed for those listed & to close the meeting.

Congratulations to.....

Allison Mabry, who will graduate from James Madison University on May 6 with a major in Communications and minor in Human Resources.



	MARCH-2017	YTD
Pledges	9,808	29,850
Non-Pledges	1,721.25	4,543.25
Plate Offering	11	132
Total Expenses	9,742.14	20,502.86

Kairos Prison Ministry cont'd ...

of crosses that we give each graduate and then we have a closing ceremony that visitors are allowed to come in and witness.

This is a summary of what the program is about, if after reading this there is interest in reading about my personal perspective as a team member working with these men on a weekend and what it is like I would be glad to do another article next month.

God Bless
Ron

Pastor's message cont'd....

is why Christianity is so popular today in the global South. In places like the Africa and Latin America, where poverty and strife are very much the norm, Christianity has a way of flourishing. Unfortunately, persecution of Christians is still a thing, as many of us recall the recent bombing of two churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday. While churches in China and Russia are not targets of deadly attacks, they, too, are under persecutions of sorts, because their governments have restricted the voice of the Church. We Christians in the West have it easy compared to many other worshipping communities around the world.

As we explore the First Letter of St. Peter, I want you to consider the different levels of suffering the Body of Christ goes through. Think about those Christians who are actively being persecuted, and how might they hear Peter's Letter? Think about those Christians who are not threatened by death, but are threatened by poverty, disease, and politics; how might they hear Peter's Letter? And think about Christians who are living in parts of the world where they have freedom to profess and worship, but where there is an increase in secu-

larization and religious "nones." How do we, the Church in relative comfort, hear Peter's Letter? Let me know what you think by emailing me at revso-to@altapres.org or stopping by the office!

Grace and Peace,
Ed

Parents and Grandparents Mark you calendars:

Camp Peaks
July 17-21 9-3 at the Janiak's Farm

It's sure to be another great day camp experience for children ages 5-12!

SWORDS

I recently presented a program on edged weapons to a sedate group, thinking the subject would liven us up. The program was a “show and tell” presentation of authentic blade weapons. It was like giving a program about spiders or snakes, except my examples were sheathed, thus disinclined to bite. As I researched the subject, I began to wonder *why*. Why did I choose this subject, with its history of violence and death? Why not a program about puppies and cats, or Bach and Bizet, or Renaissance art?

I attribute the choice to reading a book about the British escape from the Japanese in Burma during WWII. The British were assisted in their trek through jungles and across rivers by the Gurkhas, fighters from Nepal known for their ferocity and stealth. The Gurkhas’ weapon of choice was a kukri, a curved, wicked knife.

I mentioned the book to a friend, who, to my surprise, had a collection of blade weapons that included a kukri. He showed the knife to me in all its mean beauty, and I was hooked.

So I gave a program on edged weapons, displaying examples from his collection, each carefully removed during the presentation from its protective sheath (but not by me). We had the gladius, the Roman legions’ sword, which forged a classical civilization and was used by the legions for over 250 years. We had the Viking sword, which spread the Celts throughout Europe and into Byzantium. We had the English archer’s sword, used when the longbow archer, the medieval equivalent of the machine gun, ran out of arrows. We had the Cossacks’ double-edged dagger, the kindjal, used in the Caucasus since ancient times. We had the British Dragoon saber, dramatically flourished by mounted, charging cavaliers. We had the Scottish backsword, fitted with a knuckleguard and favored by the Highland Scots. We had military bayonets and the legal version of a switchblade knife.

And, of course, we had the weapon that gave rise to my program, the Gurkhas’ kukri, which terrorized the Japanese invaders of Burma.

According to the book, “Swords and Hilt Weapons,” these swords epitomize the story of man’s inhumanity to man. On the other hand, quoting the book, they also represent: “man’s striving, through technology and just dealing, to better himself and his society, and to quell that which walks as evil in our midst.” The challenge is recognizing what is evil and attempting to quell it without creating more.

Take for example the First Crusade. Launched in 1095 by the pope to heal the break between the Byzantine Empire and the West, and to deal with the problem of knights and their mindless violence, it took on a life of its own. Not only did it spur the rise of indulgences—participation in a crusade could eliminate time spent in purgatory—it collapsed Byzantine-Western relations. In addition, in order to finance their expenses and enrich themselves on the way to the Holy Land, the crusaders massacred Jewish communities, fought among other Christian factions, and on entering Jerusalem, massacred the entire population in a violence that rivals Islamic State atrocities.

The New Testament has a number of references about the sword. In Luke, Jesus says that He’s come to bring a sword, a spiritual sword that will create division in relationships. In Luke, Jesus tells his followers to buy two swords, not for protection, but to fulfill a prophesy in Isaiah that said He would be ranked among criminals. Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians tells us to arm ourselves with a sword, but rather than a weapon of steel, a sword forged of the spirit, the word of God. God grant that we arm ourselves thusly, and in this imperfect world pick up a worldly blade only when we must.

—M. Liebchen

2017



MONTH of MAY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 12 Noon -Men's Lunch – China Wok 6 PM Ministry Beyond Mtg. @ Church	3 11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch	4	5 6 PM Church Night @ Liberty Baseball	6
7 9 AM -Adult SS 10 AM –Worship/ Communion/ Children's Church Choir Practice	8 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	9 10 AM -Women's Fellowship Mtg. in The Parlor 6:00 PM CE Mtg. @ Church 7 PM Worship Mtg. @ the Church	10 11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch 5:30 PM Property Mtg. @ Church	11	12	13
14 9 AM -Adult SS 10 AM Worship/ Children's Church/ Choir Practice	15 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	16 12 Noon – Men's Lunch –Tuscan Grill	17 11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch 9:30 AM –APC Serve at Lynchburg Daily Bread 1 PM DAWN Mtg.- Adult SS	18	19	20 8 AM Session Retreat in Fellow- ship Hall
21 9 AM -Adult SS 10 AM –Worship/ Children's Church Choir Practice 4 PM Ed's Installa- tion Service fol- lowed by dinner in the FH	22 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	23	24 11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch June Link Deadline	25	26	27
28 9 AM -Adult SS 10 AM Worship/ Children's Church/ Choir Practice	29 7 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. in FH	30	31 11-12:30 PM -Second Helping Lunch			

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Congratulations to---

Altavista
Presbyterian Church
Sunday School— 9:00 am
Worship Service
 &
Children’s Church —
10:00 am
Children’s Nursery—
10:00 am

	May Birthdays	May Anniversaries
1	Jean Murphy	
2	Kelly deBernard	
4		Preston & Ann Andrews
6	Kirsten Wooding & Jackson Moehlenkamp	
8	Mark Moehlenkamp	Rob & Susan Gilliam
9	Erin Tucker	
18	Nancy Pittard	
21	Ann Andrews, Dot Hogan, & Jeanette Walker	
25	Nicholas Shelton	
27	Jerry Moore	
29	Chip Roark	
30	June Lee	
31		Garry & Dana Taylor



Our mission as members of the Body of Christ is to be His voice and hands helping all people .

Altavista Presbyterian Church

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