

December 2011 Highlights

Sunday, December 4 8:00 AM Worship (Chapel) 9:15 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 5:00 PM 4th Worship with Communion (Chapel)	Sunday, December 11 8:00 AM Worship (Chapel) 9:15 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 5:00 PM 4th Worship with Communion (Chapel) 6:00 PM An Evening in December Music Ensemble	Sunday, December 18 8:00 AM Worship (Chapel) 9:15 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 5:00 PM 4th Worship with Communion (Chapel)	Sunday, December 25 Christmas Day 9:15 AM Worship (Sanctuary) 11:00 AM Worship (Sanctuary)
Tuesday, December 6 7:00 PM ESL, Battalion	Tuesday, December 13 7:00 PM ESL, Battalion	Tuesday, December 20 7:00 PM ESL, Battalion	Tuesday, December 27 7:00 PM ESL, Battalion
Wednesday, December 7 9:00 AM Body & Soul 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study Choir Practice, GreifShare, Couples Bible Study	Wednesday, December 14 9:00 AM Body & Soul 7:00 PM Youth Bible Study, Choir Practice, GreifShare, Couples Bible Study	Wednesday, December 21 7:00 PM GreifShare, Couples Bible Study	Wednesday, December 28 7:00 PM Single & Parenting, GreifShare, Couples Bible Study
Thursday, December 8 3:30 PM Junior Choir 3:45 PM Cherub Choir 7:30 PM Congregational Meeting	Thursday, December 15 3:30 PM Junior Choir 3:45 PM Cherub Choir	Saturday, December 24 4:30 PM Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service 11:00 PM Candlelight Service	
Friday, December 9 9:30 AM Daytime MOPS	Saturday, December 17 5:00 PM Goulden Reids Choir Concert		

For a list of weekly Small Groups, Bible Studies, and Sunday School classes, call the Church Office or check the brochure rack in the Narthex .



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EPistle

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 December 2011



Shame

by Bruce O'Neil

This week many of us have followed the horrific story swirling around Penn State University. We do not know all the facts, but what we do know shocks all sensibility. Jerry Sandusky, the former defensive coordinator at Penn State, is accused of sexual offenses, child endangerment and "corruption of a minor" involving eight boys, most or all of whom he met through the Second Mile, the charity he founded to help troubled youth, according to prosecutors. Coach Sandusky's connection to Penn State, and that many of the alleged sexual assaults happened on Penn State property, has rocked the school and its supporters.

The shame the Penn State family is now experiencing is real and painful, but it pales in comparison to the shame the victims are experiencing. The feelings of nakedness, rejection and dirtiness are often associated with this kind of abuse. Jean-Paul Sartre describes shame as "a hemorrhage of the soul." Because of the nature of the offenses, the victims remain faceless, most were 9, 10 and 11 years old when their nightmare began. And yet, it is because they are faceless we

don't often feel their pain. We need to pray for their healing and protection. It takes great courage to overcome the shame that tells them "it is your fault" and stand up to say "no, it is his fault."

If Jerry Sandusky did what these boys, now men, accuse him of doing to them, then he has much to be ashamed of himself. If he committed these crimes, he sinned against God on the day he touched his first victim with the hands God made for His service. If he sexually abused those boys who trusted him and were in his care, then what he did is despicable. Jesus once said of people who did such things: "it would be better for him if a millstone was hung around his neck and he was cast into the sea than cause one of these little ones to stumble" (Luke 17:2). In fact, if Coach Sandusky were alive during Jesus day and accused of such crimes, he would have been stoned in the streets of Jerusalem. Many will try to understand why he did this to these boys and why no one stopped him. Some will look at his upbringing. Others will

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Mission News

by Al and Sue Kairys

Chris Garriott is a campus minister for Reformed University Fellowship (RUF). For the last five years he has served at the University of Maryland, at College Park. Chris grew up in Granite, Maryland and graduated from Randallstown High School. While attending high school, he was greatly influenced by Young Life and the youth ministry at his church. After graduating from Geneva College, he worked several years for the Maryland State Highway Administration in traffic engineering. During this time, Chris felt God's call to go to seminary. This call led him to Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, where he studied the Bible and theology. After finishing his degree, he taught Bible and coached basketball at Westminster Christian Academy in St. Louis. Chris then became Youth Pastor at Heritage Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City, where he served from 1998-2006, before coming to the campus of the University of Maryland. RUF is the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America. Their mission is to present Christ to non-Christian college students and to help Christian students to grow in Christ. The heart of RUF's ministry is to present the life-

changing message of the Gospel, as it is revealed in the Bible. The hope is that as the Gospel takes root in a Christian's heart it will bear fruit in the growth of grace, evangelism and missions, fellowship and service, and Biblical world and lifeview.

Prayer Requests:

1. Strength and good health for Chris. That Chris would have the priorities that God wants him to have.
2. For God to soften the hearts of non-Christian students at the University of Maryland so they would be open to hearing God's word.
3. For Christian students at the University of Maryland to grow in their knowledge of God's word and their willingness to evangelize.



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explain his behavior on pornography or some other vice. But the reality is nothing justifies or explains this behavior. It is inexplicable.

Jerry Sandusky claims to be a Christian. One might wonder how someone who professes faith in Christ could do something like what he is being accused of doing? I can't answer that question. In fact, our sin is always contrary to what we profess to believe. We need to stop being shocked by the depth of the depravity in our hearts. We Christians are particularly susceptible to being shocked twice when we hear about a Christian's failure. We are shocked by the sin, which everyone should feel. But Christians are also susceptible to being shocked by the fact a Christian is able to do such sin. This kind of sin is incongruent with what we believe, but all sin, even the more "respectable sins" are incongruent with what we believe.

Where is the hope for the victims who now feel horrible shame for what was done to them? Jesus did not merely identify with those who were shamed as outsiders, the rejected and unclean, but he did something about their shame through the cross. Jesus endured the shame of crucifixion. He became a "man of sorrows" and "acquainted with grief." "The cross is a story of shame. He was sentenced to death in the most shameful manner possible—naked and on a cross outside the city gates. Crucifixion was for the scum of the earth, and Jesus voluntarily become a part of the dregs himself" (Justin Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace*).

Jesus did not go to the cross merely to identify with our shame as victims. He went to the cross to take away our shame. Jesus came to die for sin that is the root of our shame. I want so much for those boys to know that God was not caught off guard by what happened to them. God watched as his own son was victimized and brutalized by men in authority. God did not watch passively and helplessly while his son was shamed on the cross. God planned it. But before you think God was uncaring for his son, you missed the point of the cross. Jesus died to make a way to end our shame. Because Jesus died to pay for our sin, we are no longer defined by either the sin we have done nor the sin that has been done to us. We no longer have to feel dirty because we are not dirty anymore. Jesus took the filth and bore it. On the cross Jesus became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). I want those boys to know what happened to them was horrible, but it doesn't define them. God has already said, "I love you and you are mine."

Is there any hope for Jerry Sandusky? We are repulsed by what he has been accused of doing to children. If Coach Sandusky is guilty of what he has been charged with doing I want him to resist playing the game of denial and self-justification that will be so tempting to him. I want him to admit as fully and clearly what he has done. There will be terrible consequences for him, just as there has been for his victims. I also want him to know that on the cross Jesus died for these sins too. This need not define his life any more than his good deeds did. God did not say, "I love you and you are mine" to the victims only, but also to victimizers.

Coach, your life will never be the same here on earth and your actions horribly changed the lives of those boys. I cannot imagine the shame you must feel. On the cross, Christ despised the shame to save the sinner and make him or her family. Our tendency will be to distance ourselves emotionally from this story as it unfolds; the victims and Sandusky don't have that luxury. Jesus could have distanced himself from our shame, but he entered into it and removed our shame.

PrEParing For Marriage

by Janet Collins

According to the MVA website, the requirements for a driver's license include: 9 months on a learner's permit; 60 hours of driving practice with a licensed driver; payment of fees; and passing written and driving skills tests. Compare that with Maryland's requirements for a marriage license: a 48 hour waiting period after applying for the license, and a fee. In other words, there's a lot more required to obtaining a driver's license than there is to receiving a marriage license. If you are considering getting married and would like your marriage to last for a lifetime, please check out EP's Preparing for Marriage course. Preparing for Marriage is a premarital course designed for couples who are seriously dating or engaged, or those married less than a year. Now is the time to register for the spring semester, beginning February 5, 2012. Brochures detailing information about the class are available in the church office and in the Narthex. Of all the plans a couple makes together, planning for their life AFTER the wedding is extremely important. Please take advantage of this opportunity to grow your relationship and build a solid foundation for the future. For more information, call Al and Nancy Strong 410-643-0975 or contact the Church Office.

The Puzzle of Life

by Carolyn Woodie

Losing a loved one can make a person feel that their life has been turned inside out and blown into a million pieces. Nothing makes sense anymore. Yet, the rest of the world goes along as if nothing has happened. It is a little like having a 1000-piece puzzle dumped out in front of you and the picture on the box is nowhere to be found. How do you start? What do you do?

It probably is overwhelming to look at all those pieces of a life that has to be put back together. With a puzzle¹, we might start with the easiest pieces – the corners and the flat-sided pieces. For those grieving, that might mean just getting out of bed in the morning or returning to work. For others it may mean getting kids off to school or going to the store for groceries.

When we are grieving, our heart's desire is for the puzzle to be put back together exactly as it was before the loss. However, that is never possible. With God's help, the pieces are put back together, slowly but surely. Some of your old life will be the same as before your loved one died, but much of it will be very different. Just because your picture will be different and you don't yet know what it will look like, doesn't mean a beautiful, meaningful picture won't emerge again. God has left you here and He does have a plan – a new picture – for your life. He delights in leading you as you put the pieces back together.

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs. Zeph. 3:17 (NLB)

GriefShare, a Bible-centered grief support group, meets weekly. If you are grieving the death of a loved one, come join us or bring a grieving friend. Brochures are in the information racks and in the office. For more information, contact Paul and Carolyn Woodie 410-626-8430 - carolyn.woodie@verizon.net or Walt and Karen Asplund 410-923-3285 - asplundmd@yahoo.com.

The Thanksgiving-Christmas season is especially difficult for those grieving, even if it has been some time since the loss. Pray for them, but also take the time to call or write a note that you are thinking of them. Do it now before you forget. Also, consider including them in some of your smaller holiday gatherings.

¹Puzzle object lesson originally by Lisa Ash, GriefShare Facilitator, Heritage Community Church, Severn, Maryland.



**An advent musical celebration
"An Evening in December"**
December 11 at 6:00PM, EP Sanctuary
Come and enjoy our music ensembles and invited guests in an evening of song & joy to our Savior and King!!
Nursery for infants - 3 yrs old will be available.

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

GIVING THRU NOVEMBER 13

Operating Fund:	Year To Date
Budgeted Giving	\$ 2,152,000
Actual Giving	\$ 2,165,000
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$ 13,000

