

Calendar of Ministries

✠ Saturday, February 9

Shenahdoah Presbytery meets in Martinsburg, WV

Evening Prayers at 8

✠ Sunday, February 10

Sunday School at 9:45

Morning Worship at 11

Teen Ski Trip after worship

Community Choir at 3 p.m.

✠ Monday, February 11

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Tuesday, February 12

Morning Prayers at 8

Food Pantry, 1:30 to 4 p.m.

✠ Wednesday, February 13

Morning Prayers at 8

Bible Club at the High School, 8:08

Choir at 7 p.m.

Evening Worship at 7:30

✠ Thursday, February 14

Happy Valentine's Day!

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Friday, February 15

Morning Prayers at 8

✠ Saturday, February 16

Evening Prayers at 8

✠ Sunday, February 17

Sunday School at 9:45

Morning Worship at 11

We want to give you plenty of time to plan your schedule for our special worship on Sunday, February 24.

Elder Sonny Clark will give his testimony of faith, perseverance, and spiritual growth that day in Morning Worship at 11. We will follow worship with a Fellowship Lunch. Our lunch will feature baked potatoes with the fixings to go with them.



The Weekly Word

**Windy Cove Presbyterian Church
February 7, 2013**

The New Covenant

The center of worship at Windy Cove Church on Sunday, February 3, was the celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The celebration of the sacrament was conjoined with a consideration of Jesus' words, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood," found in Luke 22:20. Attention to the "new covenant" was a continuation of the congregation's emphasis since Christmas on the new life in Christ.

The covenantal theology of the Bible is easily misunderstood. Often people speak of the entire Old Testament as a "covenant of works" while speaking of the New Testament as the "covenant of grace." This blanket generalization is mistaken.

There is a covenant of works in the Old Testament. That covenant appears in Genesis 1-11. God made a world and a special garden where he placed human beings. He gave them only one command: "You shall not eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." Their work was to keep the garden and obey the command.

Adam and Eve rebelled against God by eating the forbidden fruit. Their disobedience started an avalanche of

sin that smothered the entire world and human race. Cain killed his brother Abel. Lamech threatened terrible revenge on his enemies. By the time of Noah and the flood, "Every imagination of their hearts was only evil continually." By Genesis 11, arrogant human beings were ready to storm the gates of heaven. The Covenant of Works was not working. God's created order and human beings made in God's image seemed inevitably destined for destruction and death. But, God had a plan.

This plan is revealed in Genesis 12 in God's covenant with Abraham. God promised to give Abraham a land and descendants. God promised to bless Abraham and through Abraham

(Continued Inside)

Take Note!

February 10: Teen Ski Trip

Food Pantry meets this month on February 12 at 1:30 p.m.

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 13, note our Evening Worship at 7:30

February 23: Faith Community Choir concert at the High School auditorium

February 24: Elder Sonny Clark's testimony during Morning Worship

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New Covenant (Cont.)

to bless all the nations on earth. This covenant with Abraham began the Covenant of Grace. God works out that covenant through the rest of the Bible and in human history.

For those familiar with the Bible, it is easy to see that people often misunderstood this covenant of grace. People spurned the covenant; they rebelled against God; they misunderstood the covenant still trying to win God's favor by their own merit. Nevertheless, God persisted in the promises given to Abraham and his descendants. Finally, when the time was right, Jesus came to complete the covenant that God had made.

When Jesus says that he represents the **new** covenant, what exactly does he mean? Jesus is talking about God's covenant of grace that began with Abraham, but there are some new elements. First, Jesus presents God's promise of grace with new clarity. As the writer of Hebrews proclaims, God had spoken in many and varied ways before, but finally God spoke with unmistakable clarity of the love that he has for people. Jesus' was the incarnation of God's love, showing God to human beings in an unequivocal way.

Secondly, Jesus' presentation of the covenant was new in that Jesus completed God's work in the covenant. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says that he came to finish the work that God had for him to do. During his awful crucifixion, Jesus cries out,

"It is finished." This saying reveals that Jesus had completed his work and that God's work in the covenant was now complete. God had accomplished his goal of loving people in such a way that they could be reconciled to him in spite of their sinful nature.

Finally, the covenant was new in the fact that through Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension God was able to make the Holy Spirit available to all who have faith in Jesus. This new understanding of the covenant was especially important. The Holy Spirit lives with covenant people daily helping them to express God's best intention for those living under the covenant of grace.

As Jeremiah had prophesied many years before, God had written his covenant upon the hearts of human beings in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Lent Comes Early

In reality Lent always comes at the same time, it's Easter that keeps changing its date on our calendar. Most will remember that our Easter celebration is set by the phase of the moon after spring arrives. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. The equinox is on March 21/22 so if the full moon and days of the week hit right, Easter could fall as early as March 23. In 2013 Easter falls on Sunday, March 31. That date does sound early since it follows a

few years in which Easter has come in mid to late April.

So, Lent begins on February 13 with Ash Wednesday. We will hold Evening Worship at 7:30 that day with a service of reflection and repentance. Prepare your hearts now.

Homecoming Reflections

One person who wrote a substantial reflection on her life at Windy Cove was elder Sharon Sherrard. She began with a Bible passage from 2 Corinthians 3:

"Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This "letter" is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts."

Sharon began with some reflections on our Youth Club program, especially a time when the kids sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Sharon continued with a rather different Youth Club experience.

The Worst Youth Club Trip ever was the one to Organ Cave in WV. Even Jay Newmarker said afterwards that he would never go on a Youth Club Trip again. I felt the same way! We would have liked to leave a number of kids in there to find their own way home! One boy did come home from that trip, though, and tell his Mom, "I'm glad I'm saved, 'cause hell is going to be really bad." He was referring, I'm sure, to the darkness of the cave, but it was the trip from, well, I won't say that.

I get teary when I think of all the kids who made commitments to Jesus as Lord at Youth Club. I always tried to give an opportunity during each semester for children to pray to put their trust in Jesus for salvation. We didn't track how many kids did that over the 28 years we did Youth Club, but there were always kids who wanted to follow Jesus in that way. It's a heartwarming thought. May all those children, who are now men and women, remember that simple choice of faith that they made as children and commit anew to following Jesus in their lives today.

I remember ski trips when it was so cold that we could hardly move our fingers when it was time to come in, and ski trips when I thought we would have to spend the night in the car because it was snowing so hard on the way home – thinking to myself, "And why, exactly, am I doing this?" I remember sledding parties behind the manse and tubing parties on the river. I remember white water rafting and people falling out of the raft and brave kids jumping off of "Jump Rock" which was, as we remember it, at least 50 feet high! And kayaking – forget paddling, we literally dragged those kayaks for what seemed like miles over the low Greenbrier River. I should have listened to the man who rented them to us when he said that the river was really probably too low!

Sharon's reflections will continue next week with more on Youth Club and Teen Ministry.