From the Senior Pastor’s Desk

By Freddy Fritz

Six Glorious Days

On the Saturday before Palm Sunday our Worship Choir presented a musical titled, “Glorious Day.” As the Worship Choir sang I thought of a number of glorious days in connection with Jesus. I would like to share with you my thoughts from my message that evening.

First, it was a glorious day when Jesus was born. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in humble circumstances to Mary and Joseph. And yet, even at his birth there was a celebration as a multitude of angels appeared to the shepherds and praised God for Jesus’ birth, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14). All history was transformed by the birth of Jesus, as evidenced by history that dates events as either BC (Before Christ) or AD (After Christ).

Second, it was a glorious day when Jesus did miracles. Throughout his life Jesus did miracles to confirm that he was the One sent by God to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). His miracles were essentially divided into four categories. Jesus demonstrated his power over nature, demons, disease, and even death. He raised three people who were dead back to life. And on a number of occasions he healed all the people who were brought to him for healing. Jesus must have healed tens of thousands of people during his three-year ministry. And it surely was a glorious day for each one who was healed by Jesus.

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church

Church Staff
Rev. Freddy Fritz, Senior Pastor
Rev. James Nichols, Assoc. Pastor
Melissa Noel, Office Administrator
Joanne Campbell, Bookkeeper
Cheryl Barber, NTCA Director
Marianne Cali, Nursery
Chris Christopher, Custodian
Eileen Fritz, Children
Garry Gawrych, Youth
Debi Hensley, Pianist, Choir

Our Mission: To bring people to Jesus Christ and membership in his church family, develop them to Christlike maturity, equip them for their ministry in the church and life mission in the world, in order to magnify God’s name.
Special Events:

- April 2-7p Maundy Thursday Communion Service
- April 3-7p Good Friday Tenebrae Service
- April 5- Easter Sunday: 8:45a Easter Breakfast Buffet; 9:45a Expansion Dedication Service
- April 10- 7-9p Christianity Explored Begins
- April 25- 11a Sister to Sister Fellowship

Third, it was a glorious day when Jesus died on the cross. The Worship Choir sang, “Living he loved me./ Dying he saved me./ Buried he carried my sins far away.” Jesus came to save sinners such as us. He did so by paying the penalty for sin on our behalf. He carried our sins far away so that God might forgive us for our sin.

Fourth, it was a glorious day when Jesus rose from the dead. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that he had accepted his sacrifice on our behalf. As the Worship Choir sang, “Rising he justified, freely forever.” That is, God pardoned all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only on the basis of Jesus’ righteousness that is credited to us, and received by faith alone. Jesus’ resurrection gives the most glorious assurance in all history that God will save sinners like us.

Fifth, it will be a glorious day when Jesus returns. Again, the Worship Choir sang, “One day he’s coming – oh, glorious day, oh, glorious day!” The Bible teaches that Jesus is coming again. Immediately following his ascension into heaven, the disciples were told that “this Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). Each passing day brings us closer to the day when Jesus returns. And when he does return, oh!, what a glorious day that will be!

And finally, it will be a glorious day when you believe in Jesus Christ. Many of you already believe in Jesus Christ. Some of you have believed in Jesus from the time you were very young children. Others of you, though, like me, came to believe in Jesus when you were older. I still vividly remember the day when I first believed in Jesus Christ. Oh, what a glorious day that was! Actually, it was Easter Sunday evening in 1976. I remember walking out of the church that night knowing that if I were to die, I would immediately go to be with Jesus! I had this incredible sense of peace and joy because of Jesus Christ.

Friend, you can also experience a glorious day when you believe in Jesus Christ. Repent of your sin. Believe that Jesus really is the Son of God and Savior of sinners. And when you do so, you too may be saved. Oh, do so today!

Thoughts from the Associate Pastor
By Rev. James Nichols

Great Problems

Many of you know that we have an overflow area for our worship services. The purpose of this area is to provide a place for our members to worship in order to free up space in the sanctuary for visitors. The title of this article is "great problems" because we have had a continuing increase in attendance during our Sunday worship services. This, combined with our expansion has created less space in the sanctuary. Because of this, we
need more members to sit in the overflow. I know that sitting back in the
overflow is not the same worship as being in the sanctuary, but thanks to
God’s grace, we are increasing in attendance. I wanted to take a few
minutes to talk about why we are doing this, how you can help, and what
we hope to do in the future.

The primary reason that we started to do the overflow was to allow
more space in the sanctuary. Studies show that growth in a church is
limited to 80% of the available seating. One of the main reasons for this is
that when a place is 80% or more full, a person walking in feels that it is
so full that there is not a place for them. To alleviate this, and to help in
general, our ushers are trained to seat people and to watch as the
sanctuary fills up so that they know where available seats are. This is also
why some of you may have been asked to move towards the middle of a
row. We try to keep seats open towards the ends of rows in case people
come in to worship late, they will not have to climb over anyone to get
into the row. With that being said, we have actually done a great job of
filling up our sanctuary to over the 80% mark. The ushers will continue to
seat people and work to allow as many people as we can to sit in the
sanctuary. However, if you are a member, we would ask that if you are
able, you take turns rotating into the overflow every few weeks or so. This
will help us to fit more visitors into the sanctuary. Another way that you
can help is to let the ushers know that you are willing to move back to the
overflow. This way, if the sanctuary does not fill up, you can remain in
the sanctuary. However, if it gets full, and you are willing to move, there
will still be space for visitors in the sanctuary. Another way that you can
help is to scoot to the middle of rows and to move towards the front. We
often have empty seats available up front. Please take advantage of these
so that the seats on the ends of rows and in the back can be used for others
as they come in.

Now I know that some of you may be saying – “I have an easy
solution, just go to two services!” We actually did try this two years ago.
The only issue is that we want to make sure that we are at a number where
this will be effective. If we go to two service and only 15 people show up
for the first service, this will not be enough to offset the increase in
attendance that we have experienced (and Praise God for that growth!).
We want to make sure that we do not go to two services before we have
enough people to have good attendance at both. After all, it is a lot of
effort and work to put on two worship services each week.

Please help us as we continue to serve our community and grow so
that we, as a community of believers, might continue to worship the true
and living Lord!
Missionaries Supported by TBPC

Mission to the World
Peter & Lauren Dishman
Essie & Natacha Etienne
Ken & Tammie Matlack
Carla Stevens
Reformed University Fellowship
Jeff & Jenny Lee
New Harvest Missions International
Nathaniel & Cherita Adawonu
Serving In Missions
Rene & Lili Palacio
Wycliffe Bible Translators
Don & Judy Vander Ploeg
Kevin & Gertrude Nicholas
Ven Con Nosotros Church
Dr. Oscar & Elizabeth Alvarez
PRCC
Chaplain Ted Hamm
Chaplain James Cochell

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

1—Mia Jeffries 26—Sage Campbell
4— Autar Kaw 27—James Nichols
6—Tim Bayley 27—Heather Tomasello
8—Fred Gordon 29—Yong Bowman
8—Shawn Nobles 30—Caleb Massie
8—Jody Todd
13—Marie Fishburn
15—John Ausmus
15—Maddison Jeffries
17—Jack McNulty
22—Bob Guest
23—Kim Brown

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

8 — Mr. & Mrs. Bob Guest
14 — Mr. & Mrs. Todd Bayley
17 — Mr. & Mrs. John Ausmus
22 — Mr. & Mrs. James Turpen
Thank you

Thank you to Debra Donaldson who coordinated the shower for first time mom, Melissa McNulty. The decorations were beautiful and room arrangement was wonderful for all to see and participate. Thank you to Debi Hensley who led the games. They were fun for all, and kept everyone focused on the wonderful assortment of gifts for baby Gabriel. Thank you also to all who attended to welcome Gabriel into our covenant family. Last, but not least, thank you to Melissa’s mom for donating the coffee and the diaper and toy centerpiece for the gift table. Remember to keep the McNulty family in prayer as they welcome Gabriel into the family.

April Event

WM will sponsor a “Ladies Spring Lunch” Sister to Sister gathering on Saturday, April 25th from 11:00-1:00. Suzanne Swenson has volunteered to open her home and be our hostess. Her address is 20117 Satin Leaf Ave., Tampa, FL. That is in the Briar Wood Village subdivision within the Live Oak Preserve community. Suzanne has requested that, as much as possible, people carpool from the church as there is limited parking. Also, if you RSVP your intent to attend she can put your name on a list at the gate so you can gain access without delay. If you decide at the last minute, you can surely attend, but will have to call her to open the gate. You can contact Suzanne by phone (703-402-3567) or email suzswenson@verizon.net. Please bring a lunch dish to add to the buffet table. Mark your calendar and plan to attend for fun, fellowship, games, and a devotional by Marianne Cali.

Looking Ahead

Women’s Ministry will have our annual collection for the 14:6 Connection (formerly the Pregnancy Care center) in the weeks surrounding Mother’s Day. This organization is founded on Christian principles, and requires the young women to attend Bible lessons and parenting classes. There will be a crib in the narthex from May 3rd through May 17th to hold donations that anyone wishes to make. Primary needs are diapers (especially sizes 3, 4, and 5), both new and used clothing in sizes from newborn to 24 months, toys, equipment, and also monetary donations. This annual collection preserves unborn life, helps moms who are struggling, and brings women to Christ. Please prayerfully consider donating to the collection.

Our next WM 15 will be immediately after worship on April 12th. Please join us to share ideas and help to plan future events.
Hello, Covenant Family,

As you read this a few things will have occurred. First, your Missions Committee has been meeting regularly, and with God’s help has been working on several tasks. We are soliciting for short term Missions Team members for the upcoming Cherokee and Mexico trips. If you are interested at all in going on either trip please see a Committee member, or write it on the Welcome Card and place it in the offering. Please do not miss this great opportunity to spread God’s Grace and be His hands and feet. Signing the welcome card is not a commitment, but will express your interest so that we can get you more information.

Second, we have been fund raising in partnership with Burger-21. They give a total of 10% of all proceeds (minus any alcohol sales) for the day to the charity that has signed up. That is all sales, not just church members. This is a great deal and can be significant in the generation of funds. We, as a Church, have a total of 5 days this year. The days will always fall on the 21st of the month. To date we have raised over five hundred dollars toward the Missions program with more to come. Praise God!!

Third, we will be having a car wash on the first Saturday of May and June. Please come out and have your car washed, with all proceeds going to the missions program.

As a past short term missions team member that went to Cherokee, I can attest to the needs of that community. Going to Cherokee has radically changed the way I think about missions in general and has given me a whole new framework to see God’s Grace at work. When you go and worship with people from all over the country that you may not know very well, as well as your own team members, eat with them, and work side by side with them, it builds bonds that last. You also see lives impacted for the Kingdom of God, from the children and teens you work with to the adults with whom you interact. Seeds are planted that we may never see come to fruition, but you can see the changed lives and that, by far, is the best reason for going.

For those of you that feel you may not have skills that are valuable or needed, I can tell you from personal experience that all you really need is a heart to serve and a willingness to love children that have not had much in their lives.

Switching gears, in closing, I am going to shamelessly ask you to fill out a welcome card with your missions pledge, if you have not already done so. If you have, thank you! These funds enable us as a church to aid our local and foreign missionaries and the missions trips and are vitally important in spreading the Gospel. If you are not able to provide funds, please fill one out stating you will be actively praying for the committee members, short term team members and trips, as well as our missionaries. Never think that your prayers are not needed or wanted. Prayer, more than anything, is what is needed in any situation.
The other day Melissa and I were at the supermarket and we bumped into the husband of a friend mine. After some brief pleasantries, I asked him how things were going between the two of them, as their marriage had never been perfect from the start. He told me that things were not going well at all and that they had actually been living apart since January and had since then filed for divorce. As tears welled up in his eyes, I asked if there was anything that we could do for them. He thanked us kindly, but stated that there was not. Before anything further could be said, he politely excused himself feeling slightly embarrassed about showing emotion, and told me to call his soon to be ex-spouse, as that person could really use a friend right now. Melissa and I looked at each other in slight shock; we knew that they were not made for each other, but neither did we ever expect them to call it quits.

What is your reaction to this situation? Is it one of compassion? Is it one of understanding? Or is it one of condemnation? Take a moment to think about it. Now that you have thought about it, does your opinion change if I tell you that the two people getting a divorce are homosexuals?

Many times, as Christians, our first inclination is to react with disgust or revulsion toward homosexuality. Let me be clear from the onset, I do not endorse, condone, or celebrate homosexuality. “The Biblical model for human sexuality has been clear from the beginning. Sex is reserved for a man and a woman who are married to each other” (Shlemon, 2013, p. 9). That being said, a practicing homosexual is no worse a sinner than two heterosexual people copulating out of wedlock. The Bible condemns all types of sexual immorality. To be sure, the sin of practicing homosexuality is especially despicable in God’s eyes; however, it is not the unforgivable sin.

Christianity is surely being attacked from all sides on this issue. “Conform or else!” is the rallying cry of the so-called tolerant crowd. If we do not agree with homosexuality, we are labeled bigots, intolerant, homophobes, or worse. Pro-gay theology has already crept into some denominations, as interpretive gymnastics have been done with the Scriptures “which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction” ( cf. 2 Pet. 3:16). The liberal media is constantly attacking anyone who opposes their agenda. Hollywood glorifies homosexuality any chance it can get. The negative health effects are rarely talked about. Is it any wonder we feel such vehemence toward homosexuality? Due to this increased pressure to conform and capitulate, some Christians believe in the wholesale writing off of anything pertaining to homosexuality. While others believe we must extend the hand of fellowship without exception. Both mentalities are neither productive nor loving—there has to be a better way.

And there is—the gospel of Jesus Christ. “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). In order to reach the lost, we must follow the way of our Lord. He was compassionate toward sinners when he needed to be (cf. 8:1-11); he was stern when the situation called for it (cf. John 3:1-15); he did not shy away from rebuking people (cf. Matt. 23:13-33). Paul followed this example by changing his evangelistic style to fit his audience as well (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22). People are different; we must adjust our styles to reach the lost. We must never compromise the
gospel, but as it depends on us, we should strive to speak the truth in love (cf. Eph. 4:15).

When it comes to homosexuality, the first thing we must do is be compassionate. We hinder our evangelism when we say things like, “God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.” We cannot treat homosexuals any different than we would other sinners. We are ALL sinners. We all deserve hell. We did nothing to earn God’s forgiveness; therefore, we should not become self-righteous Pharisees and condemn others when we have planks in our own eyes. The second thing we must do is attempt to understand homosexuality. Despite what the media would have us believe, the majority of homosexuals do not like having same-sex attractions. In addition, despite what the liberals would have us believe, there is no homosexual gene either. However, homosexuality is a developmental condition—homosexuals are made, not born “that way.” Alan Shlemon from Stand to Reason has written a short fifty-eight page guide to understanding homosexuality. I recommend it highly. Finally, the last thing we must do is never compromise the gospel! We must be loving, caring, compassionate, etc. but we must never give in to societal pressure to capitulate on gospel truths.

Homosexuality, like most sins, is about pride. It is about doing what we want to do. It is about putting ourselves on God’s throne and him on the sidelines. “The fruit of homosexuality is the ethical outworking of a heart and mind and identity that rejects the idea that God is Author and, by implication, that his Word has the right to interrogate my life, not the other way around” (Smethurst, 2015). All sinners must meet at the foot of the cross. Let us not forget that we are all sinners in need of grace. Let us show a broken world the love that Christ showed us.

References
Volunteer Sought to Compile Demographics on Potential Church Plant Sites

MNA SecondCareer Ministry has a variety of opportunities for lay people to help in ministry. For example, Alan Foster, Director of Church Planter Recruitment for the PCA is seeking volunteers to perform simple internet research and phone interviews to assemble demographics and other details for potential church planting locations. Learn more about this and other opportunities to serve, many which can be done from your own home, at www.pcamna.org/second-career or contact Gary Ogrosky at gogrosky@pcanet.org (phone 770-695-4811).
A Call for Us to Remember

Scripture Reading

“Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea” (v. 7). -Psalm 106:6-48

Devotional

Forgetting God’s great acts and blessings is such a common and grievous sin that He calls His people repeatedly not to overlook their past but to remember what He has done and how they have responded to Him. Deuteronomy 9, for example, exhorts the ancient Israelites not to forget their sin in the wilderness lest they fall into transgression again and experience the same wrath the Lord showed earlier generations. Paul calls Timothy to “remember Jesus Christ” so that he will persevere in all circumstances (2 Tim. 2:8–13).

The psalmist who wrote Psalm 106 also encourages the people of God to remember the past. He realizes that he cannot rightly ask the Lord to remember His covenant promise to bless His children (Ps. 106:4–5) if he does not recall how these same children have failed to uphold God’s law. After all, it is only in remembering our failures to keep His statutes that we can repent and enjoy all of the benefits of His covenant faithfulness. For “if a man does not repent, God will whet his sword” and execute His judgment (Ps. 7:12).

Psalm 106:6–43 rehearses the history of Israel as a means of recalling the past and implicitly calling those who pray the psalm not to repeat the nation’s history of wickedness. The “low points” that the psalmist recounts include the worship of the golden calf at Horeb, that is, the foot of Mount Sinai (vv. 19–23; see Ex. 32). That episode of idolatry was especially heinous because it occurred not far from the place where the Lord was revealing His covenant stipulations that established Israel as His holy nation. About three thousand people died as a result of God’s judgment on that sin, and many more suffered from a plague sent by the Lord (Ex. 32:25–29, 35). Note, however, that the psalmist also recalls how the entire nation was not destroyed but rather rescued through the intercession of Moses the covenant mediator (Ps. 106:23; see Ex. 32:1–14). This reminds us that even when God’s people have sinned greatly, forgiveness is available for those who repent through the work of the covenant mediator, who has now been revealed as Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

The psalmist recounts many other sins of ancient Israel, including their failure to drive out the Canaanites, the sacrifice of their children to pagan gods, and more (Ps. 106:24–43). Yet the psalm does not end on a note of doom but on a note of hope. The Lord remembered His promise to bless His covenant people when they cried out to Him for salvation (vv. 44–48). He will likewise remember this promise when we turn to Him in faith and repentance.

Coram Deo

We are a forgetful people who tend to view our record of faithfulness to the Lord as being much better than it actually is. Thus, it is helpful for us not to forget when we have transgressed His law. We do this not to plunge ourselves into despair but to remember the great mercy of God and to be encouraged to serve Him in gratitude for His amazing grace. This day, think on some of your recent sins, repent if you have not yet done so, and thank the Lord for His mercy.

From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: www.ligonier.org | Phone: 1-800-435-4343
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6:15p Dare 2 Declare; 6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
<td>2 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Maundy Thursday Communion Service</td>
<td>3 NTCA School Holiday; 7p Good Friday Tenebrae Service</td>
<td>4 7:45a Men's Bible Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8:45a Easter Breakfast Buffet; 9:45a Expansion Dedication Service; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Meeting</td>
<td>6 9a NTCA-Sanctuary</td>
<td>7 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Outreach Team Meeting, Missions Committee Meeting, ESL</td>
<td>8 9a Morning Women's Bible Study; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare; 6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
<td>9 9a NTCA-Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8:45a Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School, CE&amp;F Communicant Membership Class; 10:30a Worship Service; 12:30p Welcome Lunch; 5p PHOS Youth Meeting</td>
<td>13 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 11a Staff Meeting</td>
<td>14 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p NTCA Board Meeting, ESL</td>
<td>15 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
<td>16 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Session and Diaconate Meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>8:45a Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School, Communicant Membership Class; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Youth Meeting</td>
<td>20 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 11a Staff Meeting</td>
<td>21 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p ESL</td>
<td>22 6:15p Dare 2 Declare; 6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
<td>23 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Leadership Team Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>8:45a Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School, Communicant Membership Class; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Youth Meeting</td>
<td>27 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 11a Staff Meeting</td>
<td>28 9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p ESL</td>
<td>29 6:15p Dare 2 Declare; 6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
<td>30 9a NTCA-Sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Sunday Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45 AM</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Sunday School for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wing</td>
<td>Christian Education &amp; Fellowship for Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
<td>Worship Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inside This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Fritz</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts from the Associate Pastor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
<td>3-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship Times</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19911 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33647
Phone: (813) 973-2484
Fax: (813) 973-4673
Email: office@tampabaypresbyterian.org

www.tampabaypresbyterian.org