

# Grace Note, Feb. 2009

## Letter from the Pastor

Valentine's Day is on the way so I thought I would share with you a little love letter:

*Dearest Jimmy,*

*No words could ever express the great unhappiness I've felt since breaking our engagement. Please say you'll take me back. No one could ever take your place in my heart, so please forgive me. I love you, I love you, I love you!*

*Yours forever, Marie.*

*P.S., And congratulations on winning the state lottery.*

Now that's an example of conditional love!

Valentine's Day is the one day of the year (if you don't include "Sweetest Day") that we are supposed to offer some kind of demonstration of our love. Usually candy, flowers, or cards are the order of the day. It's supposed to be a way to show our loved ones how much they mean to us, but in truth, it sometimes becomes just another obligation. It seems to me that true love demonstrates itself everyday in the small things we do for each other, in the kindnesses offered, in the support offered, in the friendship shared. True love is not a once a year thing.

That's why the one true love that we all have is from God. Every day God offers us grace and forgiveness. Each day is a true gift. Every day is a new beginning.

When we open our hearts to the love that God has for us we are then able to share that love with others. Look at these verses from 1 John:

***7**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **8**Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9**This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son<sup>[b]</sup> into the world that we might live through him. **10**This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for<sup>[c]</sup> our sins. **11**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12**No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.*

That is the kind of love we, as Christians, strive for. That is why we are here.

This Valentine's Day give more than just candy. Recommit yourself to share the love that you have received from God with others. Make it a daily habit. And remember that God has written us a truly wonderful love letter in the gift of God's Word. Not only in the Bible, but in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

In Christ's name,

Pastor Fox

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER  
**FEBRUARY 2009**

**Secret Valentine:** We started Secret Valentines on January 25<sup>th</sup>. It will continue on February 1<sup>st</sup> and February 8<sup>th</sup>. Please do not remove your gift from the table until after Sunday School! We will be revealing our identities on February 8<sup>th</sup>. **If you know you are going to be away one or more Sundays, please notify the Sunday School office or drop off your gift in advance.**

**Lenten Pretzels:** Look for upcoming information about this favorite church activity!

**Teacher of the Month:** Check out the display cabinet outside the conference room for our "Teacher of the Month" display. Our February teachers are Jayne Imel and Diana Fox (Grades 5-7). Don't forget to say "Hello and Thanks" when you see these very special people.

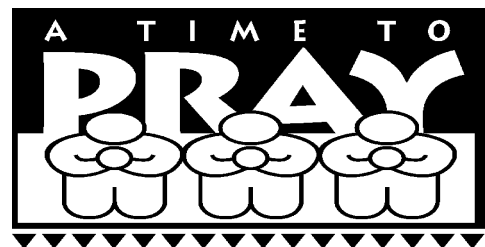
**Worship Participation:** On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Beginner Department will be serving as Greeters and Grades 2-4 will be Ushers at the 11:00 service.

Attention Parents and Family Members: Please consider serving as a volunteer for our Sunday School Department. Each classroom must have two adults each week to adhere to our church safety policy. If you would like to be part of this volunteer rotation, please use the

**THE MEN'S MONTHLY LUNCHEON** will be held on Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at Milano's Restaurant located at Cuyahoga County Airport on Richmond Road.

**FAITH CIRCLE** will meet on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon. Bring a sack lunch. Dessert will be provided by Vaughn Wingfield. Pastor Fox will continue a study of Women of the Old Testament.

**PLEASE PRAY** for Don Paul, Nils Pearson, David Phoenix and the Phoenix family, Phyllis and Lawson Anderson, Barbara Budzinski, Adam, Jack Ferree, Murawski Family, Jeremy, Margurite Gardner, Gladys Elliott, Todd Skiba, Pauline Gross, Carol Poley and Family, Ashlie Kalena, Michelle Sidaway, Bryan Newell Family, Dorothy Kramer Family, Rob Stoneberger.



Share  
the Good News



**ENQUIRERS' CLASS.....**Pastor Fox will hold classes for anyone interested in becoming a member of Messiah on Thursdays, January 29<sup>th</sup>, February 5<sup>th</sup>, and February 12<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:00 p.m. New Member Sunday will be on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you are interested please see Pastor Fox or call the office (440 442-6941).

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Michael Butler  
2 Randy Makee  
8 Michael Shepka  
  
Mary Zimmerman  
10 Gail Bradach  
William Krahl  
James Mikolich  
11 Fritz Neil  
Raymond Sabolich  
15 Kathy Lamb  
17 Marty Hassink  
Nils Pearson  
18 Renee Piper  
Laurene Pride  
19 Diana Fox  
Michael Joliat  
20 George Schneider  
22 Lynn Houlis  
25 **Christine Maharg**  
26 Jeffrey Dlugosz  
Ed McTernan  
  
27 Corey Best



**THE FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE** is hosting a **Game Night** on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Dinner and dessert provided but bring your favorite game (board game, card game, etc...) to share. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you are planning to attend so that we know how many people to expect for dinner.

**LMM MEN'S HOMELESS SHELTER.....**A reminder that warm clothing is needed. This is a good time to go through your closets and bring in those items you don't need. They also need toiletries (razors, shaving cream, lotion, etc.)

### **MUSICIANS ARE NEEDED FOR LENTEN VESPERS**

If you are willing to share your talents during our Wednesday evening services in Lent, please sign up on the bulletin board in the reception area. Call Esther Hodgkinson (440 729-9550).

### **CAN YOU HELP WITH LENTEN DINNERS?**

Ash Wednesday is February 25<sup>th</sup> and we will continue our tradition of meeting for supper in the fellowship hall at 6:00 p.m.. Our worship service will begin in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Members are asked to volunteer to bring an item and help in the kitchen for one of the weeks. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the reception area. Please indicate that you are assisting at least two weeks prior to the date. You will be contacted about what to bring. each Wednesday in Lent.



**LENT BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**

We will meet at 7:00 p.m. for worship that will include Holy Communion and the voluntary Imposition of Ashes. Remember to keep the Wednesdays in Lent open. We will begin with supper in the fellowship hall at 6:00 p.m. prior to worship in the sanctuary at 7:00.

**Easter is April 12<sup>th</sup>**



*Ash Wednesday*

**FAIR TRADE**

Orders for Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate will be taken on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> after both services.

**CAMPBELL COMPANY BAR CODES**

Faith Circle continues to collect bar codes from Campbell Company products to support the Navajo Evangelical Mission, Rock Point, AZ. The bar codes are redeemed by Campbell Company to purchase vans used to transport students to the Mission School. In the past 8 years over 6,000,000 labels/bar codes have been collected, enough to provide 2 small vans, 2 large bus vans and miscellaneous equipment and supplies for the mission. Campbell now accepts only the bar code insignia from the labels. There is a box on the table in the back hall for this collection. Thanks for your help.

**THE LITERARY LADIES OF MESSIAH**

Due to inclement weather, our January meeting was cancelled. Please watch the Sunday bulletins regarding make-up dates. Our book list for the coming year has been prepared and copies will be available in our folder on the bulletin board. We think we have a diversified program to look forward to and will post a copy in the library so that anyone who is interested may scan.

**LENTEN FOOD DRIVE**

The Social Ministry Committee is again conducting the annual Lenten Food Drive for New Covenant. It runs from February 25<sup>th</sup> through April 5<sup>th</sup>. Please bring non-perishable food. Paper products and cleaning supplies are also appreciated. No glass containers please.

***From the Library***

Janet Scott has graciously agreed to our request to write a book review on *Where God Was Born*, by Bruce Feiler. Mr. Feiler has written a series of books, some of which we are happy to note are on our shelves at Messiah. Soon, with the help of our industrious Property Committee, you will begin to notice some alterations to our library which we hope will achieve our plan to make it more user-friendly. And Janet, with her book review, is helping to bring to your attention one of the books you might enjoy reading.

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## **WHERE GOD WAS BORN by Bruce Feiler**

**Reviewer: Janet Scott**

Having read Feiler's best selling *Abraham* and *Walking the Bible*, it follows that I would read his latest biblical adventure, *Where God Was Born*.

He begins his journey in Israel, meeting there his best friend and long-time travel companion, Avner Goren, the archeologist and explorer, nearing sixty. They carry their Bibles with them always, seemingly to uncover biblical sites not seen by Westerners for decades.

Feiler immediately engages us with his first person presentation. The history and places come alive with his articulate and intimate style. You will be introduced to familiar people and places in a new and enlightening way.

Familiar people you will meet are Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the monarchs in Kings I and II. But "God chooses the prophets, who become some of the most enduring figures in the Bible." We may no longer be able to name kings, but we can name the prophets, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, and Daniel.

His search also becomes a personal one as he reaches the Wall, the remnant of the Temple envisioned by David and built by Solomon. It is at the Wall that Feiler realizes he must search farther. He must turn to exile. He must leave Avner behind. He must turn to Babylon.

For thirty-five years these sites of the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers have been closed to the West. Now, Feiler will fulfil a dream of his to travel to Iraq. At 4:15 a.m. on a cool, desert morning, he stuffed his duffel bag, threw it into the back seat of a taxi and headed toward Camp Doha, outside Kuwait City, home to the Third United States Army. Camp Doha is the forward headquarters of the U.S. Central Command.

His flight from Camp Doha to Baghdad was scheduled to last one hour and a half. His plan is to drive from there all the way south to near the border with Kuwait, then work north visiting biblical sites, return to Baghdad and exit through Turkey. He wanted to go back to the deepest roots of civilization and the earliest stories of the Bible. He has a former Iraqi Air Force for a driver. His bodyguard was a jolly university English professor. Within the parameter of his travels in the countryside, you will be learning of the battles of antiquity, while they try to escape at times the heat of the present one! You will learn of the life of the Israelites in Babylon. It was not as harsh as one might think. Jeremiah is quoted often describing life there. Feiler meets Ambassador Bremer, who tells him that he always quoted Jeremiah 29:11 in all of his speeches. Another episode of interest was Feiler's connection with a Lutheran Chaplain, Lew Messenger from the state of Pennsylvania, who organized an event between an imam, who had risked his life to come to an U.S. Military base. Their discussion was open and candid.

Throughout Feiler has help with his planned itinerary in Mesopotamia. His help is John Malcolm Russell, a fifty-year old Assyriologist from Massachusetts College of Art in Boston who had moved to Iraq after the war to serve as chief archaeologist. He is with him at the Garden of Eden, the site of Ur, the Ishtar Gate. They discuss the Bible easily between themselves.

Having followed the itinerary planned in Mesopotamia, Feiler leaves with one regret -:that he didn't get to see Uday's disco. But he did enter Saddam's plushiest lairs in the Republic Palace. He leaves Iraq feeling the mix of culture, but believing it is the most heterogeneous of countries in the Muslim world. The Bible has been close to him throughout his journey though he has been surrounded by war. Saying good-bye to Chaplain Messenger, Feiler begins to choke up as he is given a mimeographed booklet containing among other things, a list of prayers.

Book Three of *Where God Was Born* takes us to the Diaspora, to Iran, very much in the current news of year 2008. All contacts there are given incognito names now. Feiler's wife, Linda, accompanies him. Feiler presents a window into the present Republic of Iran that controls every aspect of the daily lives of 70 million people. Yet the Bible presents a vastly different picture of ancient Iran. "Persia or Trans-Euphrates as it is called in the Book of Ezra, is portrayed as a tolerant place that destroyed Babylon in 536 BC, frees the Israelites and encourage them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple."

Feiler meets someone of the Zoroastrian faith. Zoroastrianism became the prominent religion of Persia at exactly the moment that Persia became the dominant player in the ancient Near East. Its population numbered in the millions before the rise of Islam; it has dwindled to less than 100,000 today. He learns much of their beliefs and enters into some philosophic discussions.

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Feiler gives us some clarity and an introduction to the geography and ancient history of Iran. It helps to have maps located inside the covers of the book to follow his story of Persia under Cyrus, the Great, and how his victory over Babylon forever shaped the political geography of the ancient Near East.

Lastly, we meet the Book of Esther near the city of Hamaden, "one of the most beloved – and reviled – stories of the Hebrew Bible". It is celebrated each year as part of the Springtime festival of Purim. Esther tells the story of the salvation of Persia's Jewish community. There is a medieval mausoleum shrine dedicated to Esther and Mordecai, said to house their tombs.

Feiler and his wife, Linda, leave Iran and return to Jerusalem. There they witness events that shape very personal thoughts expressed in the final chapter of his book, entitled, *With Gladness and Joy*. They return to their home in New York City.

I enjoyed this book immensely and would welcome thoughts of anyone who might read *Where God Was Born*, available in our Messiah Library.

Janet Scott, Summer, 2008

## WELLNESS NOTE

### ***YOUR HEALTH = your responsibility***

Who is responsible for your health? Your doctor, your spouse, your insurance provider?

**You know the answer: It's you.** Think of it this way. On average, people see a doctor about three times a year, with 19 minutes for each appointment. That is about one hour out of the year, and it's a very important time in your health care. But there are 8,759 other hours in a year. That's where you have impact. Choices you make during those hours are vital to your health.

Take these three steps toward a healthier you in 2009.

1, **Consider your lifestyle choices.** The majority of deaths in the United States each year are due in large part to preventable problems caused by tobacco use, being overweight or not exercising regularly. Lifestyle choices are also strongly linked to risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and other illnesses.

Your role: Prioritize your health. You know the drill: Make time for exercise, get enough sleep, choose nutritious foods and manage your stress. If you use tobacco, create a plan to stop.

2. **Become an informed health care consumer.** People have more choices than ever about their health care and health insurance. To make good choices, you need to stay informed.

Your role: Study your health care plan options and choose the best plan for you. Take a critical eye toward health news and "miracle cures." Choose a health care provider that matches your needs. Create your own paper and online "health library" - places you go to get reliable information.

**Plan an active role in your health care.** Work with your doctor to achieve the best possible health.

*Your role: Get recommended physicians, immunizations and screening tests. If you have a health condition, find reliable sources of information about it. Ask questions about your medications, your treatment plan, your daily self-care. Start a medical record of your conditions, tests and treatments.*

As **Edward Creagan, M.D., Mayo Clinic**, puts it, "No one has a greater stake in your health than you do." As a savvy health care consumer, you're the one who'll benefit the most.

Source: Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth, January 2007.

Submitted by Peg Wilt and Kathy Strom, Wellness Co-chairpersons, Nancy Coleman, Secretary.

VALENTINE'S DAY BAKE SALE will be held  
on Saturday, February 14th from 11:00-1:00.  
This sale is open to the public, so pick up a  
flirt for your friends, neighbors, relatives,  
workplaces, hair dressers, etc. INTER-  
ESTED IN BAKING? Sign up on the bulletin  
board. Proceeds benefit our general operat-  
ing fund.

**Messiah Lutheran Church**

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**Dated Information**  
**Please deliver by**  
**February 1, 2009**