



"I had always felt life first as a story--and if there is a story , there is a story teller."

KC Chesterton

In *Epic: The Story God Is Telling and the Role That Is Yours* author John Eldredge claims that far too many Christians have lost their story, lost the narrative that gives meaning and significance to life. Eldredge believes that those of us who have lost the story are destined for insignificance and mediocrity.

Eldredge claims that a life of mediocrity is not why God sent His only Son to die for humanity . .

*For this is how God loved the world,
that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*
John 3:16 (English Standard Version)

Epic dives into the land of enchantment and mystery where there is a battle and each of us is a warrior. There is a great cosmic struggle in this day - a battle for our heart and our mind; Eldredge claims that too many of us who profess to be followers of Christ are relegated to sitting on the sidelines watching as others engage for the cause of Christ.

Eldredge believes that settling for the sidelines of life might as well be hell itself - clearly no place for the follower of Jesus Christ . . . full of passion, full of purpose, Jesus whose very life bubbled over with meaning and transcendence. If Jesus **is** our model, what should the life of those who claim to be His followers look like?

Come and find out as we study the unfolding story and find our place. However, be forewarned . . . this is not a study for the faint of heart nor for those who are looking for a biblical discourse on a particular doctrine - ***it is a book from the heart for the heart.***



LISA'S LAGNIAPPE

**CHURCH SCHOOL IS . .
FOR YOU!**

As disciples of Jesus Christ we should understand that the life of faith is one of cradle-to-grave . . . a journey of learning and spiritual growth. As disciples we should be actively involved in groups and classes that challenge, comfort, enlighten and deepen our faith and our faith community.

Some people are of the opinion that Church School is only for children. Nothing could be further from the truth. Church School provides an important place for many things in the lives of adult believers.

Church School is a Place of Strength

“Let us help each other to love others and to do good. 25 Let us not stay away from church meetings. Some people are doing this all the time. Comfort each other as you see the day of His return coming near.” Hebrews 10:24-25

The writer of Hebrews knew the importance of believers gathering together and staying in close touch with one another—not only for Worship, but also to encourage one another in lifestyle. The first-century Christians were persecuted by the outside world, and they needed the strength, encouragement, and sense of belonging that come from being part of the group. An uncommon bond and unusual strength can be attained by joining together as a spiritual community.

The need for the strength of fellowship is no different today. Being a member of a Bible study group can encourage believers in their relationship to Christ, but it also can increase the bond a believer has with other believers.

Church School is a Place of Knowledge

“When they were finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” Peter answered Jesus, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My lambs.” John 21:15

Jesus admonished Peter three times to feed His sheep as an act of love. How important it is for all who wear the title "Christian" to live out what they believe. If we love the Lord, then we need to obey the Lord. To obey the Lord we need to know His Word for us. Studying the Bible—God's Word—is essential to faith. The more we understand that Word for ourselves, the more confidently we can obey His commission to "feed" others.

An active and vibrant Bible study class will challenge you to become more proficient in God's Word.

Church School is Place of Belonging

“Be happy in your hope. Do not give up when trouble comes. Do not let anything stop you from praying. Share what you have with Christian brothers who are in need. Give meals and a place to stay to those who need it.” Rom. 12: 12-13

Paul reminds us that to follow Jesus is to be joyful, patient, faithful, and to practice hospitality. He knew that believers needed fellowship with one another. When believers spend time together, they begin to know one another. Knowing people's names, their family members, and occupation will lead you to be more apt to pray and care for those families and encourage them in times of need.

Church School is a Place of Prayer

“If you have sinned, you should tell each other what you have done. Then you can pray for one another and be healed. The prayer of an innocent person is powerful, and it can help a lot.”

James 5:16

Prayer is vital to a believer's life. Corporate prayer within the Bible study class is vital too. Use a large board to record prayer requests from class members. Record requests not just for those who are sick and dying, but place other expressions of concern. Believers gain great strength and comfort when they see that Christ answers prayer in such a dramatic way.

From cradle to grave, there's a place for everyone in our Church School program. As a whole congregation, let's make this a year devoted to deepening our relationships with God and with one another. See you in class!



Here is a listing of local Bible studies being offered this fall

Title: LIVING BEYOND YOURSELF - a Beth Moore study

Place: Bible Center Church

Date: Monday, August 27th to Wednesday November 14th.

You may attend Monday from 7 - 9 pm or Wednesday from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Price of book is \$16.95.

Title: ARE PROMISES MADE TO BE BROKEN?-

-a Kay Arthur study

Place: First Baptist Church of Luling

Date: Monday, September 10th to November 19th

Classes are on Monday mornings from 9:30-11:30a.m./coffee before class

Free babysitting with age appropriate activities and refreshments

Price of book is \$15.00

Title: WOMAN'S HEART

GOD'S DWELLING PLACE

- a Beth Moore study

Place: First Assembly of God Church in Des Allemands

Date: September 9 through November 25 at 6p.m.

Price of book is \$18.00



Thursday Night with Beth Moore

On September 20th at 7p.m., you can enjoy the teachings of Beth Moore. "**A Fight Worth Having**" is the title of the next DVD. If you haven't heard Beth Moore, please come and join us. Her message is Biblical. Her message is for us. This is free, give yourself one hour from the hustle and bustle of life to hear words of wisdom and encouragement. There is no workbook, no test at the end of the presentation, only refreshing thoughts and feelings.

See you on Thursday, September 20th, in the choir room.

Kay Gautheaux



Due to the Labor Day Holiday the Saturday Work Day will be the **second Saturday, September 8th**.

Last month Charles Cook, Mike Wade and I showed up to paint a second coat in the fellowship hall of the Canal Street Church. However, about 15 members of the deaf church showed up to pitch in and it was great to visit and see how excited they were to see the progress made. The members are now working two Saturday's a month in hopes of getting their church ready by October. We will again work this month at the church so be looking for emails closer to the work day.

As the work at the Canal Street Church may be coming to an end soon, the Mission Committee has come up with several ideas to continue our Mission work. Some of these being work with Presbyterian Project Homecoming to purchase appliances or landscape some yards for their families since cooler weather hopefully is around the corner.

Also, we thought adopting a Family (separate from the Presbyterian Project Homecoming Adopt a Family) could be something more members of our church could be involved with. Our Mission Work is not just for the New Orleans area, if you know if anyone in our Parish who you think we could help please let Elray Boudreaux, Charlie Andrews, Mike Wade or me know.

Elaine Stuart

Evangelism/Mission Committee



P.W. Circle will meet Thursday, September 13th at 9a.m., at the home of Fran Hickman. We will begin a study and discussion of the Seasons, Sacraments and Celebrations in the Presbyterian Church, using a book highly recommended by Lee Groff. Please join us and bring a friend.

Kathe Cedro



Those of you who are organ music aficionados are invited to John Calvin Church Sanctuary on September 10 at 7:15p.m. for some wonderful music from their magnificent pipe organ. The selections will be varied and fit most of your interests. Come be swept away.

Richard Maag
Project Homecoming Staff

It's All About Worship



Proclaiming the Word

In our journey through the understanding of the Worship Service, we have explored the meaning and purpose of Worship, reflected on ways we can prepare ourselves for the Worship service, and examined the first major action of the Worship service: Gathering Around the Word. In this article, we will consider the true meaning of the next major action of the Worship Service: Proclaiming the Word.

In the Book of Common Worship, Proclaiming the Word is summarized as the time of the Worship Service when “Scriptures are read and their message is proclaimed.” In the publication “Presbyterian beliefs” by Anne Meredith Wilson, we read the following description:

“First, the leader prays the prayer for illumination, asking that the Holy Spirit work in our hearts so that we truly hear God’s word. Then the minister, a lay reader, or the entire congregation reads the Scripture lessons. Special music may be included at this point, which should follow the theme of the Scripture lesson for the day. Following the Scripture readings, there is a proclamation, or interpretation of, the Scriptures. Usually, the minister proclaims Scripture in a sermon, but other forms of interpretation such as drama or dance may also take place.”

The Service for the Lords Day says, “Central in worship in the Reformed tradition is the proclamation of the good news of God in the midst of that community formed by the good news.” It continues, “Consequently, at this point the major focus is upon the Bible.”

The Presbyterian Book of Order tells us that Proclaiming the Word contains the following four elements:

1. In preparation for the reading, proclaiming, and hearing of God’s Word, a prayer seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit is appropriately offered.
2. Scripture lessons suitable for the day are read by a minister, by a member of the congregation, or by the people responsively, antiphonally, or in unison.

3. Psalms or anthems, and other musical forms or artistic expression which proclaim or interpret the Scripture lessons or their themes, may be included with the reading lessons.
4. The Word shall be interpreted in a sermon preached by the minister or in other forms authorized by the session and by the pastor. This proclamation concludes with a prayer, acclamation, or ascription of praise. It is appropriate also to call the people to discipleship.

Let's look more closely at each of these elements.

Prayer for Illumination



The Prayer for Illumination is our appeal to God to help us receive and understand His Word. It is an appropriate entry into the reading and hearing of God's Word. The Book of Common Worship says, "A prayer for illumination may be offered before the reading and proclaiming of the scripture. This prayer seeks the illumination of the Holy Spirit and calls upon God to make us receptive to the life-giving Word, which comes to us through the scripture." It has been suggested that, next to preaching, prayer is the most important aspect of our Worship of God. In "Reformed Worship" by Alvin L. Hoksbergen, he states his belief that the prayer for illumination is an indispensable part of a Worship service. He further suggests that "Unless God works a miracle of grace when we Worship, we will have been little more than entertained by a sermon." The prayer of illumination may seem insignificant to a casual observer, but it, and other prayers, stands at the threshold of those moments in Worship when God interacts with the believing community.

Scripture Lessons



The public reading of the scripture has always been a vital element in the public Worship of the church. The Book of Order says, "The public reading of Scripture should be clear, audible, and attentive to the meanings of the text, and should be entrusted to those prepared for such reading. Listening to the reading of Scripture requires expectation and concentration and may be aided by the availability of a printed text for the worshippers. The congregation may read Scripture responsively, antiphonally, or in unison as a part of the service." As the Book of Order points out, an important key to the reading of the scripture is listening. The congregation must be prepared to receive the Word of God. In his article "Why We Worship The Way We Do", Andrew James Webb says, "As we read the word, God speaks to us, and we worship him by hearing with reverence, diligent attention, self-application, and obedience. Our desire as we hear the Scriptures read should be that we would firmly believe them to be what both Christ and the scriptures themselves tell us they are – the infallible and inerrant word of God. As Christians we should have a passionate desire to know, believe, and obey the will of God revealed to us in His Word. As we hear the Scriptures read let us always remember that these are not merely words from a book, but God's inspired word to us, here and now. They were intended for each and every one of us just as much as they were intended for their original audience."

Psalms, Hymns and Anthems



The Book of Order says about the singing of psalms and hymns, "Praising God through the medium of music is a duty and a privilege. Therefore, the singing of

hymns and psalms and the use of musical instruments should have an important part in public worship.” It continues that the Word is “proclaimed through song in anthems and solos based on scriptural texts, in cantatas and oratorios which tell the biblical story, in psalms and canticles, and in hymns, spirituals, and spiritual songs which present the truth of the biblical faith... Those entrusted with the proclamation of the Word through art forms should exercise care that the gospel is faithfully presented in ways through which the people of God may receive and respond.”

We will explore the role of music in the Worship Service in more detail in our next article.

The Sermon



The sermon, or the preaching of God’s Word, is without a doubt the most important part of our worship. The Book of Common Worship says, “Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present in the sermon, offering grace and calling for obedience.” The Book of Order tells us, “The preached Word or sermon is to be based upon the written Word. It is a proclamation of Scripture in the conviction that through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ is present to the gathered people, offering grace and calling for obedience. Preaching requires diligence and discernment in the study of Scripture, the discipline of daily prayer, cultivated sensitivity to events and issues affecting the lives of the people, and a consistent and personal obedience to Jesus Christ. The sermon should present the gospel with simplicity and clarity, in language which can be understood by the people.” In his book *The Complete Worship Service*, Kevin J. Navarro says that the sermon is the main course of the Worship Service. “The church is famished for good Bible teaching. We need the Word of God. Furthermore, we need preaching that gives Good News and not just good advice.” Continuing from the Book of Common Worship, “Preaching should present the gospel with simplicity and clarity, and be in language the people can understand.”

According to the Faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary, excellent preaching is biblical, authentic, contextual, and life-changing. Biblical in that “Preaching is an exposition of scripture that proclaims the revelation of God and the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with fidelity to the creeds and confessions of the church.” Authentic in that “Preaching reflects the preacher’s commitment to embody the preached word.” Contextual in that “Preaching must be sensitive to the cultural and congregational context in which it takes place.” And finally, life-changing in that “Preaching proclaims the gospel of grace, calling people at once to believe it and to live a new life that fits with it.”

In Romans 10:17, Paul says that “faith comes from hearing the message.” A very essential element in this process is the work of the Holy Spirit. Neither the speaker nor the listener would be able to carry out their tasks well without the work of God’s Spirit. Just as faithful proclamation requires the guidance and filling of God’s Spirit, so discerning, listening and responding require the same Spirit. The “things of God” are only understood and discerned “by the Spirit of God.” This requires a dependence on the Spirit of God by both those who proclaim and those who listen.

The Worship Committee



Thanks to the many children and adults who faithfully continued their Christian education throughout the summer. The summer program was led by the following people: Kathe Cedro, Connie Erdely, Mike and Sharon Fortin, Kay Gauthreaux, Elaine Stuart and Brad and Linda Thompson.

Special thanks to those who were the leaders.

Christian Education Committee

Many thanks for the generous gifts given for the Project Homecoming Shower. They will help to furnish the kitchens and bathrooms of the volunteer facilities.

Also, a great big Thank You to those who faithfully provide the refreshments for the Coffee Fellowship each Sunday following the worship service. In spite of the furnace-like temperatures outside, it hasn't deterred the friendly fellowship each Sunday.

Please help us to be informed when members of the congregation and/or friends of our congregation are in need. Contact the church office at (785-8486).



Lisa will send emails and this will activate the Prayer Chain. Also, Lisa will notify the Chairperson of the Nurture and Fellowship Committee (Connie Erdely – 785-2425) in case there are needs that can be provided by the congregation.

If you have not been receiving either email or phone prayer chain messages, contact Connie at 785-2425.

Mailbag:

It meant so much to know that all of you were with Hank and I in prayer and caring during the time my beloved brother, Dr. Milton J. Miller, was in hospice and at the time of his death. Your emails, cards and calls were greatly appreciated. Though we are a distance away, we will always be close to each of you at First Union in our thoughts and heart.



Sincerely,
Charlotte and Hank Mazul

To the Congregation of the First Union Presbyterian Church

We of the Mission Trip Adults from the United Presbyterian Church of Washington want to thank you very much. We so appreciated your allowing PDA to be on your shady grounds. We also were very grateful to use a cool room for our evening devotions.

May God bless each of you and your congregation.

Thanks so much for volunteering on our home in New Orleans to gut it and clean it up so we could rebuild. Thanks

to you its all been possible. Please let your congregation know we're back and truly appreciate everything you've done, all the hard work, all your prayers and we love the new washer/dryer. We've been back since August 13th, but no electricity - just generator until end of the week so we can use the new washer/dryer set. Tell everyone hello from us and how thankful we are for all your special thoughts.

First Union - Luling
Good to be Home finally,
Malcom, Michelle, Arianna and Ashlyn