



FIRST WORD

November 2008

From the Pastor...

I just read that The Big Apple Circus is at Lincoln Center and the Cirque du Soleil is at Madison Square Garden. The circus! The very name fires up our imaginations.

I vividly remember my moments of joy and anxiety at the circus, both as child and later as an adult. Watching the lion-tamer stick his head in the mouth of the lion was exhilarating for me. After all, didn't Daniel go into the lion's den? Watching the elephant trainer as she rode the lead elephant around the ring was also exhilarating. After all, are we not all familiar with the passage in I Maccabees describing the 32 elephants in the force marshaled against the Palestinian Jews in 163 BC?

I loved every minute of all this excitement, but when the flying trapeze artists entered the center ring, held on to a rope with one hand, and were swiftly hoisted far in to the air, my anxiety level shot right through the canvas ceiling! I immediately stopped having fun. My hands would be ringing wet before the performers reached the trapeze to begin their act.

Once they began their action of flying from one trapeze bar, through

the air, to the next bar or leaping from one bar to another and grasping hold of the hands or ankles of a colleague – I was a very sober spectator.

What if they missed? What if their partner messed up the timing? What if they momentarily forgot their routine? While those around me vigorously applauded, I silently prayed. There's nothing biblical about this, I thought!

These flying trapeze artists, of course, knew exactly what they were doing. Through close teamwork they successfully achieved triple somersaults and various other gymnastics that I can't even do on solid ground! They had

complete trust in their colleagues.

They also knew that there was a net below them, a fact I never noticed until the act was concluded. They dropped onto this net, bounced once and then went gracefully swinging over its edge, lightly landing on their feet with their arms in the air to acknowledge the applause.

I have come to see the trapeze bar as life. Sometimes we fall from life because of the stress of it all; we fall from life because we fail to take leaps of faith when we should have; and sometimes we fall because a colleague is not there for us and for numerous other reasons. But we do not fall from grace – rather we fall into grace.

Annual Stewardship Campaign

This year's stewardship campaign theme is "Celebrating Life's Crossroads". We selected this year's theme to focus on all the things God shares with us and how we are each afforded opportunities throughout our lives to celebrate His words and blessings. The "Celebrating Life's Crossroads" campaign will commence in November and end in January. We hope each of you will join us in celebrating our faith, supporting our ministries and making a difference. Our first letter to you will be distributed on November 10th. The letter will share a perspective on the importance of supporting our church, celebrate all of the things our ministries have accomplished this past year, and highlight hopes and plans for this coming year.

The net of grace not only breaks our fall just before we hit the ground – it puts bounce back into our lives. It allows us to get up and go up and re-enter the act of life.

The church is “our heavenly circus” and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the safely net which catches us when we are falling from the trials and tribulations we encounter. This net is big enough and strong enough to catch all of us.

See you in church. You don't need a ticket!

-Randy

Church School News

This month the children will work on unit 3 *Trusting God's Promises* and study the life of Jacob. The stories will show the students that Jacob, in spite of his character flaws, comes out as the one through which God's promise to Abraham is lived out. God loved Jacob and worked through him to increase the family of God.

This unit will remind the students that God does indeed love each one of them

equally, with and without their faults. It helps the children understand that they should be content with what they have rather than participating in a constant cycle of wanting what someone else has. And the children are reassured that even when we mess up, God is still there for us, offering us a second chance!

You're invited!

All students, Kindergarten through 5th grade, are invited to join our combined First-Sunday-of-the-month-lesson in the Youth Room where we will watch (on comfy couches) a DVD relating to this month's unit *Trusting God's Promises*.

Thanksgiving Weekend

To give our staff time to spend the Thanksgiving weekend with their families, there will be no Sunday School, Youth Group, or Confirmation Class on **Sunday, November 30th**.

Christmas Performance

Yes, it is almost that time again. The Christmas performance is taking place on **Sunday, December 14th, 2008**. In order for us to plan accordingly and incorporate all students (K-Youth Group), please email me at sannefrank@operamail.com whether your child would like to be part of the

performance. We'd love to see as many participants as possible!

Thank you!

Thank you so much to Emily Abbott, Katy and JJ Andrews, Forest Crossman, Josie Day, Nicholas Debany, Kelly Spector, and Amanda Weinstein for preparing the meal for Pacific House on October 19th. Thank you very much also to Chase and J Whelan who joined us in Stamford to serve the meal to about 50 men.

Susanne Frank, CE Director

NOVEMBER YOUTH EVENTS

November 14th – Youth Night at FCRH. Invite a friend and come hang out in our awesome youth room!

Daisy Melo, Youth Director

Winter Coat Drive in November

During November, we will be collecting coats, jackets, sweaters and gloves to be distributed by Neighbor-to-Neighbor. Please place your donations on the coat rack in the hallway outside the parlor.

Time Change this Sunday!
Eastern standard time begins on November 2nd at 2 am.
Remember to “fall back” this Sunday and set your clocks back one hour. Otherwise, you'll be one hour early to church!

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an community, rich in heritage, open and caring,