

ONWARD

A STRONG TRADITION
A PROMISING FUTURE
FAIRMOUNT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The initial step of Onward was announced on Sunday, November 27. Bob Massey shared the exciting news that \$82,000 had been given to kick off the campaign. Our 2011 year-end \$300,000 fund raising campaign is the initial step of a 3 year \$3,000,000 campaign. This 3 year campaign begins in 2012 towards construction of a new Worship Center. Look for the new green envelopes in pew racks, chair backs, and in your mailbox.



Loving People in the Church who have Invisible Illnesses

By: Karen Smith-Will

Ever popped a bubble? You barely touched it, and then its reality shifted. Immediately. That's what it is like for those with an invisible illness. The components of that bubble still exist...but like Humpty Dumpty, all the king's horses and all the king's men are struggling to put them back together again.

Four ladies are inviting you to share their battles with invisible illnesses. Lauren Williams, a Fairmount staff member, struggles to understand what is causing mysterious pain throughout her body that often leaves her unable to stand. Shara Campbell (the wife of Youth Minister Mike Campbell) and Shari Smith (my sister, and one of the speakers at the 2010 Fairmount Women's Retreat) have spent the last couple years of their lives battling the fiery pain of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (also known as Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome). For more than a decade Tina Langley (the wife of Associate Minister Mike Langley) has experienced Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome. Incomplete lists of other invisible illnesses are available on the Internet.

The unknown can be scary, even with Christ as a constant companion. Invisible illnesses often start out as mysteries. Tina, for example, struggled to avoid fainting whenever she had to remain standing (such as in a checkout line or standing in choir). This was quite a challenge for a former physical education teacher. Doctor after doctor was mystified. Finally, after a decade, a doctor who grew up at Fairmount correctly diagnosed her syndrome. She still

battles the symptoms, but she finally understands their cause and said, "I know God brought us to Fairmount so Dr. Tucker could enter our lives and answer our prayers in His timing."

Going out in public can be a challenge for those with invisible illnesses. Singer and guitarist Lauren shared that "people with pain disorders might be afraid to go

As writers, both Shara and Shari advocate for their disease through blogs (<http://sharacampbell.wordpress.com/> and <http://rainintorainbows.com/>, respectively). Once the mystery illness has been identified, they suggest showing you care, by learning its name and symptoms using the Internet, your library or a friend in the medical field.

If you ever reach out and don't hear back, graciously let them know you remember them and are praying for them. In Shari's words, "One thing I've noticed since my injury is that there are times when I simply can't handle communication. Phone calls, emails, comments, you name it, it all goes unanswered. It's simply too much for me."

Baker-extraordinaire Shara describes having to "eat my humble pie" since she came to Fairmount earlier this year. She's used to being the one who helps *other* people. Her mother, Karen, wisely counseled her, "For your family to be successful, you're going to have to ask for help." Of the support (shopping, cleaning, etc.) she's received since coming to Fairmount, Shara noted, "Everybody's been more than wonderful." Resources like Caring-bridge.org, LotsaHelpingHands.com, and Mealtrain.com are tools that will help influence others in how to assist your struggling friend. But know that, like Shara...they'd *much* rather be doing these things themselves.

Most importantly, remember that loving others is not just about "doing unto others as *you* would have them do unto *you*." In this case, ask God's wisdom to understand **how they** "would have you do unto them." ■



Pictured:

Top: Lauren Williams & Shara Campbell

Bottom: Shari Smith & Tina Langley

out, because they don't want to be touched or bumped. Ask before you hug them. I might tell someone, 'You'll have to be really gentle with me today.' Invisible illness makes it easy to forget, "especially when I'm sitting here, I don't have a brace on, and you can't see anything wrong. But there are parts that if you touched them, I could almost scream. It's a hard concept for people to try to wrap their mind around."

Advent Conspiracy

By: Mike Campbell

I have so many fond memories of Christmas. As I look back on all the Christmas seasons one stands out above them all. My father, who was a minister in a Tulsa church, challenged our family to relate a story of where each of us had helped or encouraged someone in the last year. He laid out the idea on Christmas Eve, then we would share our story on Christmas Day. I don't remember what I even shared, but I do remember my parents sharing a story of a homeless man in our church. His name was Sam and he attended Sunday morning worship, Sunday night events, & even a Greek class my dad offered on Wednesday nights. My dad said many in the church were not accepting of Sam. This was something new to have a homeless man in a local church in the suburbs of Tulsa. My parents cried as they shared the story of the church trying to help someone whom most of the church avoided and rejected. It was such a unique Christmas. It was unique because it wasn't focused around the gifts (I don't even remember what I got that year), the Christmas Eve service, but a story of a few in my home church that set it apart. It made a lasting impact in my life because

"A Christmas Carol"

By: Rick Raines

"A Christmas Carol" is one of the greatest stories of redemption that mankind has written outside the Bible. Dickens placement of his epic tale in the midst of Christmas is not accidental. It is in Christ – His advent at Christmas – that mankind has its greatest lesson on redemption.

As Fairmount embarks on "Scrooge", a theatrical adaptation of "A Christmas Carol", we will spend Sunday mornings during the month of December drawing a parallel between the life of Ebenezer Scrooge and ourselves. As Scrooge embarks on a journey that begins with sin

my parents showed an example of loving someone who the world says not to love. It reminded me of why Christ came to earth. Christ came to share God's love to all not just a select few. I think the Apostle Paul wrote it best...*"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* Galatians 3:28. That Christmas changed my perspective for eternity. It wasn't the great presents, food, or music that changed my perspective, but a story about a few from my home church demonstrating God's love.

In December, Fairmount's teen Bible School classes will be participating in a series called Advent Conspiracy (AC). AC is about getting back to the true story of Christmas; reclaiming the story of Jesus. During the series we will hear stories of churches around the country who are reclaiming the story of Christmas. Telling the story of how Jesus came to share God's love...*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8). Sharing the story of Jesus can easily get missed in the busyness and cultural expectations of the season. Americans spend

and selfishness, he will end up in a place of repentance and redemption. Scrooge is confronted like all mankind is: with the past and the way our choices have shaped us – the present and the reality of our poor choices – and the future, which, because of our choices, will end in lonely death – without Christ.

Each of us should consider our own personal journey as we turn to Jesus, the Lord of Christmas, to find true salvation. Invite your family and friends to be here with us as we take this journey together to redemption. ■



roughly 450 billion dollars on Christmas every year. I can honestly say this isn't the story I see in scripture. AC has helped me to realize that it doesn't stop with reclaiming the story. We should do more than just tell the story of Jesus, but enter into the story. Entering into the story says that Christmas didn't just happen, but still happens today. I urge you to conspire. To conspire against the world's story and reclaim and enter into the story of Christmas where God's love was shown through Jesus' birth. ■

New Sermon Series...





NONPROFIT
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
RICHMOND, VA
PERMIT #1479

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

P.O. Box 788
MECHANICSVILLE, VA 23111
PHONE: (804) 559-8070
FAX: (804) 559-8072
EMAIL:
INFO@FAIRMOUNTCHRISTIAN.ORG

The mission of Fairmount Christian Church:

To develop followers of Jesus who:

Love God,
Love People and
Introduce the world
to Christ



The Forecaster is
best viewed online @
www.fairmountchristian.org

Our Church: November 27, 2011

Welcome to our New Members.

Welcome to **Rachel Holley**. Rachel was baptized on Nov. 27th.

Sunday is Manna Sunday: Bring your non-perishable food and toiletry donations for the Mechanicsville Food Bank and place them in the donation carts in the front foyer. Especially needed are canned meats, fruit, veggies, oatmeal, peanut butter, pastas & sauces, toilet paper, etc. Please take a black permanent marker and draw a line through the UPC codes on items that you donate - this will save the folks at the food bank a lot of time and they will greatly appreciate it! Thank you for your generosity!

Attendance & Giving.

8:15 Worship Service: 145
Children's Worship: 11

9:30 Worship Service: 524
Children's Worship: 59

11:00 Worship Service: 214
Children's Worship: 99

Total: 1052

Bible School: 625

Budget Requirements: \$36,871.00

Budget Receipts: \$25,303.76

Over \$1,300 was raised for Mechanicsville Churches Emergency Fund through the Thanksgiving offering.

Christmas Gifts for Mountain Mission School children are due by Sunday, December 4th.
Children & Teens will put their gifts under the Christmas Tree during their Bible School Class time and then have their annual class picture taken. Adults can bring their gifts to Trailer 3 B. Gifts will be packed up on Sunday evening, 12/4, and driven to Mountain Mission School.
Late gifts cannot be accepted.

Your Church Staff:

- Rick Raines - Senior Minister
- Chris Santasiere - Associate Minister
- Mike Langley - Associate Minister
- Tracy Thomas - Worship/Music Minister
- Mike Campbell - Youth Minister
- Rose Williams - Children's Ministry Director
- Bob Massey - Business Administrator
- Veronica Brewster - Office Manager
- Jef Powell - Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Barry Will - Technology Director
- Larry Haake, IV - Child Care Program Director

page four ■ Wednesday, November 30, 2011

4