

the pastor's pen

Psalm 102:12 "But You, O LORD, shall endure forever, And the remembrance of Your name to all generations."

Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church is looking forward to celebrating God's goodness to us for 175 years on August 1, 2009. If you are keeping track in terms of Latin-derived numerical names, we are celebrating our Demisemiseptcentennial. Basically, that just means that the Lord has been faithful for a long, long time. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, as the Scripture tells us. He never changes, but He changes us. He has been doing his work of redeeming people from sin and changing them over these many years.

You will read the remarkable story of God's grace in the life of Drue Porter in these pages, which is one example of how the unchanging God, in His love, works to transform real people. Demisemiseptcentennial is impressive linguistically, but we are not celebrating big words or being around for a long time. We are really gathering to celebrate a far smaller but more impressive word: love. The Lord has loved us with an everlasting love. He has forgiven our offenses against Him by sending Jesus Christ to the cross as Calvary, and He has given His Holy Spirit to



The SRPC Youth (pictured with the sign they painted) are excited to be a part of this great celebration!

live in our hearts forever. The living God has called us to be His friends, and he is transforming our lives by His love. Amazing!

We cannot help but celebrate and we hope that you can join us! You are invited to join us for a time of commemoration, testimonies, friendship, fellowship, and food with past and present members along with other friends. The event begins at 4:30 p.m. on August 1, 2009 at the church building with a time to mingle and enjoy old photos and other displays that commemorate our history. After dinner, we will gather for a service of celebration. New Song, a chorale group from Geneva College will be performing – and they never disappoint. We will hear of how the Lord has changed people's lives in the past, and we will look forward to what God has for us in the future and He leads us forward.

So, get ready to praise God for His goodness, and we hope to see you there!

pencil us in! upcoming events at SRPC

175th Anniversary Celebration

August 1-2nd @ 4 pm

Join friends and family from the past and present at this celebratory event!

Tigers Game at Comerica Park

August 7th

Come out for a ball game, plus see our name on the scoreboard during the fifth inning

Men's Softball Playoffs

August 4th

The playoff run begins on Aug 4 – and continues on Aug 6, 10, and 11, as long as the team wins.

Weekly Activities

Sunday

No Sabbath School
Sunday Worship @ 11 am and 2 pm
Lunch @ 12:45 pm

Wednesday

Prayer Meeting @ 7 pm



Where Christ is the Center of it All.



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meet the member

by Drue Porter

Have you ever caught a glimpse of yourself unexpectedly in a mirror? Is that me, you think? That's not what I look like...is it? Wow, I need to get back on those tummy crunches. What's going on with my hair? Do I really look that old? I don't feel that old. Do I always frown that way? When we encounter a candid image of ourselves it's often quite different from the one reflected when we pose in front of the bathroom mirror -- tummy tucked, hair freshly combed, winning smile in place. An unexpected but honest view may motivate us to make changes in our lives -- go on a diet, start an exercise program, dye our hair. Then again, we may resist and rationalize, choosing to believe the mirror at home and continuing in our daily delusion.

This is true for our hearts as well. We view our hearts -- our inner spirits -- in the mirrors of our minds poised as we would like to be, not as we really are. Perhaps we help the widow who lives next door carry in her groceries. I am a good person, we think. Our imaginary halos glow. On another day, we neglect to point out an error in our favor to the clerk at Kroger. The glow dims -- a bit -- but, hey, we tell ourselves, at least I'm not as bad as _____. We continue through life operating this way -- patting ourselves on the back when the opportunity arises and excusing ourselves when necessary. There comes a time, however, when we unexpectedly see our inner selves reflected honestly and we are forced to either blatantly ignore what we see and continue to live a lie -- or to change.

That's what happened to me in 1987. I saw a shocking picture of myself -- my heart-self -- that I couldn't rationalize or ignore.

In 1986, about a year before this event, I was living in Virginia Beach, Virginia, with my husband and three young children. Scott was in the Navy, and I had spent most of our six married years managing our home and raising our children alone while he was deployed. I had been prepared for this job of

Navy wife -- "the toughest job in the Navy" as the slogan declared -- by parents who raised me to be self-sufficient and independent and by the 1970's I-can-do-anything feminist culture of my teen years. My career was on hold while we were starting a family, but I had big plans for the future.

When Scott returned from deployment on the USS Whidbey Island in the summer of 1986 with orders to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California,

we sent all our possessions across the country in a moving van. Then we packed up our three children, Scotty, Maggie, and Katie, loaded our two cars, and began the long journey across the United States.

After the hectic activity of packing and preparing to move, driving hundreds of monotonous miles gave

175th Anniversary Celebration!

August 1, 2009
Picnic @ 4:30

You're invited to help us celebrate 175 years of glorifying God in Southfield. Please join us for an evening of praise and fellowship.

See back for more information!



me time to think. Even with three young children in the car and "Baby Beluga" blasting from the tape player for the thousandth time, I was able to filter the noise and escape to my thoughts. But as I stared at the back of Scott's pickup truck leading the way across Interstate 40, my thoughts were not happy. I hated the loss of my autonomous lifestyle now that Scott was home for more than a few months. I was anxious to return to work and moving to California was putting the stops on those plans. I wasn't even sure I wanted to be married to Scott. In college, our relationship had been built on the shallow "do what feels good" philosophy of the late 1970's. That flimsy foundation was beginning to feel shaky. Had our marriage been a mistake? What would happen if I turned around right now and headed east? What if I just left -- left this move, left this marriage? A quick look at three angelic faces framed in little curls kept me driving into the setting sun.



me driving into the setting sun.

Not long after we arrived at Monterey, Scott and I discovered that Capt. Richard Barcus was the senior chaplain at the Naval Postgraduate School. Great, what was he doing here, I thought. Chaplain Barcus was the man who married us on November 27, 1980, in Newport, Rhode Island, and witnessed, along with our family and friends, our vows -- promises to each other and God. It had been a long time since I thought about those vows -- the vows that I was considering breaking -- and it had been a long time since I had thought about God. Chaplain Barcus was the last person I wanted to see.

Had Scott been deployed, I would never have gone to the chapel for Sunday services, but he was not deployed, so off to the chapel we went as a family. I felt awkward and out of place -- why was I here? Chaplain Barcus welcomed us warmly; the people were friendly, but I smiled nervously and wondered if he and they could see through my deceit. One of the women I met at the chapel lived near us in the La Mesa housing area. She invited me to a Bible study. What could I say? "Thank you, I'd love to come," I lied.

This women's study wasn't my first experience with

the Bible. I had had brief encounters with this book throughout my life. When I was a young child, my family went to church every Sunday. During my early teens, my dad drove me to church and dropped me off for Sunday school, but my parents never came anymore. In high school an older woman encouraged me to read the Bible daily. I did for a while, but my parents were concerned. "You're getting a bit fanatical, aren't you," they asked. Later, in college, I realized that yes I had become too fanatical and found a safe place on the bookshelf for my Bible and looked to psychology and self-help books for direction.

Now I was in Monterey, at a Bible study, and I approached

youth report



Last month, the youth group volunteered their time at Covenant House Michigan (where Maggie Porter works). The kids went on a tour of the campus before they helped sort and organize clothes for the CHM residents (while modeling some of the more eccentric articles!) Covenant House is located in downtown Detroit, and provides shelter and services for homeless and at-risk youth, aged 13-22.



You can read about Covenant House at www.covenanthousemi.org.

Thank you for your hard work!

it as I would any self-improvement course. I looked for practical guidance -- "good" things I could accomplish and congratulate myself for. However, the more I studied, the more I began to see myself in the words of the Bible. Liar. Slanderer. Thief. Murderer. The list went on. No, that cannot be me...but it was. As I thought about those words, I could no longer rationalize the things I had done and was doing -- lying, stealing, gossiping, behaving immorally. This was me. My true reflection. Shame and guilt and fear brought many sleepless nights, many tears. Why had I never seen myself in the words of this book before? And why did I feel this way? Something was different. That something was someone -- Christ, who was speaking to me, using this perfect mirror of His word to allow me to see myself as I truly was. It was an ugly and frightening picture. I wanted to rationalize and run away, but I couldn't. I was under a spiritual death sentence -- separated from God by my lying, stealing, immorality -- sin, the Bible calls it.

The only way I could be free was to deal with my sin, but I was helpless to do anything except try to cover and hide it. I remembered a tract: a little stick figure standing on one side of a gulf and the word GOD looming in big letters on the other; a cross, representing Christ, bridging the gulf; the stick figure walking over the cross-bridge to be with God. It was so easy, so casual, so practical, but my situation was dire. There was no saunter from death to life. I was over the edge of the cliff, in the gulf, perched on the slightest of ledges, and up to this point oblivious to my predicament. I was blind, as the hymn declares, but now I could see. There was no way out. All I could do was cry for help, for mercy. Only Jesus -- perfect, sinless -- could stop the repercussion of my sin and unite me with God.

Forgive me, Lord! Change me! Take this ugliness away from my heart! Be my Lord, and let me be your servant! Rescue me, Lord!

He did. He snatched me from certain spiritual death and dragged me out of the chasm.

And then, everything changed in my life.

"I think Jesus wants me to live for him," I said to a friend a few days later.

"Of course he does," she replied and smiled reassuringly. We prayed together and talked about the changes I needed to make: more time reading

the Bible, more time with other Christians --praying, singing...

I love you Lord, and I lift my voice

To worship you, oh my soul rejoice.

Take joy, my King, in what you hear,

Let it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear.

Father I adore you...

Jesus I adore you...

Spirit I adore you,

Lay my life before you.

How I love you.

...songs of love, prayers of repentance, conversations of grace, thankfulness for the gift of life, for a husband who made me attend a chapel service, for a friend who invited me to a Bible study, for a family more important than my plans, and mostly for a Savior who gave his life for mine long ago on the cross, knowing that in Monterey, California, in 1987, I would finally see my need for Him.



Today Drue and Scott have seven children and one granddaughter, and have attended Southfield RPC for the past 10 years.

I had become the beneficiary of Christ's sacrifice, and the process of change was put in motion. It was the process of taking off the old and putting on the new. Lying had to be stripped away and replaced with truth-telling. Anger had to be resolved and kindness initiated. Honesty and generosity had to take the place of stealing. This putting off sin and putting on Christ is a long process, one that is still begin worked out in my life 22 years later. Though I love Christ and want to serve Him, there is still sin in my life. Much sin. Some days I feel far away and separated from God again, especially when I see the ugliness of my sinful heart. I want to fix it and cover it up, but I still can't. Only Jesus can. I run back to Him again and again, grateful that when I see the reflection of my sin in His Word, God sees only the beauty of Christ covering my ugliness. He is always there, loving me, keeping me -- my Savior and my Lord.