



NO OTHER SONG

TRADITION, PREFERENCE AND PRACTICE IN THE MUSIC OF THE CHURCH

The Reformers did not agree on music. Ulrich Zwingli closed up the organ in the big church in Zurich, Switzerland. He sealed it off from use with chains and padlocks, but we have no explanation as to why he did this. His reasons are lost to fog and dust of years. John Calvin in Geneva did his best to hire the most skilled musicians he could find. The city fathers didn't allow it because they were unwilling to pay the salaries of good musicians. *(Continued on next page)*

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The music Calvin wanted and the music he ended up with were two different animals. He had no choice but to make a galling compromise with the very bland musical tastes of the burghers of Geneva. Luther had no problem hiring the musicians he wanted. Germans always loved robust cultural expressions, and they expected the music of the church would be no less beautiful than what the German ear had come to love.¹ There was no single approach or style of music adopted by churches in the reformation. But the reformers themselves didn't get worried or short of breath over it. They lived very collegially within the breadth of style and practice across churches. They simply didn't need everyone in the reformed universe to look the same or sound the same - uniformity was not the goal. The goal was doctrinal practice, or 'living theology'. The only reformed requirement for worship was that it be "according to Scripture".

And the history of church music only gets more confusing, or more beautiful, depending on how you choose to look at it. Later in his pastorate at Geneva, Calvin was successful in the hiring of three church musicians. One of these was Louis Bourgeois, whose irregular meters gave his tunes a dance like quality and prompted Queen Elizabeth I of England to deride them, calling them "Genevan jigs". Apparently Calvin had no problem with these jigs, because the Genevan Psalter is full of them. Bourgeois was also known for using "pop culture" chansons as settings for gospel songs.² And then there was Georg Friedrich Handel. When Handel wrote his "Messiah" he debuted it in a theatre. Church going folks were scandalized. Holy pieces were not to be played in theaters but cathedrals. The Messiah was not well received, it was seen as too crass. Yesterday's crass is today's high culture. There was only one period in church history when the people were not fighting over music. That was in the middle ages when the monks were singing Gregorian Chant in Latin. No one fought over it, because no one understood it.

I have been asked to write this piece on music in the church because over the last two years we have introduced jazz music into our Sunday morning singing.³ As expected, some really dislike it, and some are very favorable. The occasion for defending our use of jazz music is not because some dislike it. Dislike is not a sin. The reason I have been asked to explain is because of the way the dislike has been voiced. We, the pastors, have been asked to conduct anonymous polls to determine whether the congregation approves or disapproves of our use of jazz. Well, we aren't going to do that. We aren't Baptists and we aren't a democracy. We are an elder led church, which means sometimes for our good, whether we like it or not, the shepherds push us a bit. The use of jazz music has been called "inappropriate." It may not be everyone's favorite, but to call it "inappropriate" is indefensible. We have been told that our use of jazz has disrupted the worship of some congregants. Good. Worship isn't for worshipers, it is for the Worshipped One. What I am interested in is, what does God the Father, Son and Spirit consider worshipful? We have "heard" some emotional objection, but nothing exegetical.⁴

Again, I have a lot of respect for those who are able to say, "Jazz is not my preference. I don't like it." I can resonate with those sentiments because I don't like organ music. Actually, that's too soft. I can't stand organ music. But to try to claim that organ music is not worshipful, or that I can't worship to the accompaniment of an organ, well, that's just silly. It's one thing to say that we have preferences. It's quite another to suggest or suppose that our preferences match Jesus' preferences. That's downright dangerous and borderline blasphemous. Personally, I have really enjoyed the jazz music we have done. It has been a little more than I am comfortable with, it has caused me to stretch in worship, but I am hard pressed to say that it is wrong to use jazz in worship. On our jazz Sundays I found myself having to affirm, "Hey it isn't just okay, it is right to sing 'O

tidings of comfort and joy' joyfully! It isn't more holy to sing it like we're in a Dickens novel, with ragged coats and fingerless gloves huddled around a barrel of fire." In fact, the more I have reflected on it, the more I have felt we may be wrong for not singing this way more often in light of the resurrection of Jesus and the resulting new creation of the fallen order and fallen people. Jazz seems to be a right setting for gospel songs given the finished work of Christ. But, still I understand those who don't appreciate it, and given that, we won't push to make jazz our primary musical style. But we aren't going to stop using it either. And here's why...I can't find anywhere in Scripture that lists what styles of music are allowable and what styles are banned. In fact, I find nothing in Scripture on musical style at all. Scripture does not give us musical scores for the Psalms, nor does it give inscriptions that instruct us 'play it this way only'. Their original scores are gloriously lost to time so that each generation has to struggle to find ways to sing the gospel. But somehow along the way we have convinced ourselves that chamber music is an inspired form of music. Do we really believe that chamber music, or English or German hymnody fell out of heaven as an approved way of singing, and logically then, everything else is disapproved?⁵ These aren't the styles in which Jesus sang, and so we can't be artificially confined to them either.

I also think I notice in many of us an almost desperate need to insist that beauty is objective - that there is an observable, rational, nearly scientific criteria that categorizes some things as clearly beautiful and other things as clearly not. But I haven't heard anyone who can tell me what the objective mark of beauty is. I think we believe that beautiful means "old", so old is better. Beautiful is "traditional". Beautiful is "classical". But that's not what Scripture says. Scripture says beautiful is what is "true". True trumps style.⁶

I can't say from Scripture "We shouldn't do jazz music, it is dishonoring to God."

And because I can't say it from Scripture, I can't say it to my children, and I'm not about to say it to yours. What I can say from Scripture is, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."⁷ In other words, our singing is to be filled with Jesus. That's the criteria I care about. I hope our music is good, and lively and joyful. But if there's anything to be upset over it would be that we aren't singing about Jesus; or we aren't singing truthfully about Jesus; or we aren't singing to Jesus from a need for His magnificence and beauty. Our theology of music is not based on an approved musical canon. Our theology of music is that Jesus is the source of our singing and the recipient of our singing. And our best worship is so failing that Jesus fills it up in His perfect sacrifice and praise. Jesus presents our singing to the Trinity wrapped in His own. Jesus makes our worship acceptable, we don't. So we don't need a new "worship law" to pass down, and nail up on the walls, and enforce at all cost. We need more gospel.

And for those who prefer high church music, sung in a high church setting, I would recommend Park Cities Presbyterian Church. The music leadership of Colin Howland is superb and you will enjoy singing under his direction. I simply have no interest in duplicating what Colin is doing. I am much more interested in exploring reformed worship in folk idioms, including jazz. The reformation after all, was, and still is, a theological folk movement.

Here's the other thing I can promise. We won't force feed a diet of jazz on our congregation. Currently we do jazz once or twice a year, which I fail to find as running roughshod over anyone's sensibilities. One or two Sundays out of fifty two is not too much. And we can be sensitive in other ways. In the future, we will announce with plenty of notice that we will be using jazz on



an appointed Sunday, and those who find it troublesome can make arrangements to attend elsewhere. It would be a great opportunity to visit old friends at other churches or to visit sister churches in our presbytery. But simply put, if we sing to jazz music, we are not losing the gospel. If we say we CANNOT sing to jazz music, the gospel is lost.

Whatever else we do, we know we are to do this - we are to sing from and in and toward the gospel. We have no other song.

1 *Guides to the Reformed Tradition, Worship*, by Hughes Oliphant Old, Chapter X Tradition and Practice, page 160.

2 A *chanson* was a music hall or cabaret tune, certainly nothing you would expect to hear in church.

3 Specifically, the Sundays in question are December 2, 2007 and December 21, 2008; infrequent, but notable.

4 Literally, *exegetical* means to be lead from the text.

5 Thanks to Aaron Morris for this image. Thanks also to Aaron for his beautiful and brilliant pastoral prayer in December 2008 in which he lead us with, "...and we do not worship an aesthetic, we worship a living savior."

6 See *Philippians 4:8*, and for very helpful elaborations on beauty as expressions of truth and virtue see anything written by the philosopher Alain de Botton.

7 *Colossians 3:16*.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

What Did You Expect? | BY DR. PAUL DAVID TRIPP

It's a problem as people face marriage. It's a problem as people think about the workplace. It's a problem as couples anticipate the birth of their first child. It's a problem as we think about our friendships. It's a problem as people think about their life in the church. What is the problem that I'm talking about? It's the problem of unrealistic expectations. Why do we have unrealistic expectations for all of these inescapable dimensions of human life? We have them because we don't take seriously what the Bible has to say about the condition of the world in which we live. Here it is; sin has cast this world into trouble.



Wanna Get Away?

A NSP MISSION TRIP TO ECUADOR

The ministry of Paul and Kim Barton is well underway in Shell, Ecuador. Now New St. Peter's has the opportunity to join them this summer for a week-long mission trip, and we are looking for participants! August 1st through August 8th, a group of 20 will travel to Ecuador for a week of service and fellowship. We will assist in construction projects for the Casa de Fe (House of Faith) orphanage, as well as engage the children in a VBS program.

The projected cost of the trip is \$1,500, including a \$200 deposit due by March 15. For any desiring to raise support, this may be done through group efforts and support letters sent to interested parties outside of the NSP community. Also, the NSP session has approved a significant amount of scholarship funds to alleviate the cost for any who need it. For those interested in joining the team, or looking for more information, please contact David Rice or Annie Meredith.

W

e work at Hospital Vozandes del Oriente in Shell, one of HCJB's hospitals here in Ecuador. The hospital began in the 1950's as a ministry to the great need seen by Nate Saint, a missionary pilot here. He transported many sick and injured people out of the jungle to Shell where there is an airstrip and the road begins back to civilization. He felt that if a hospital existed here, they wouldn't have to make the many hour journey to other medical facilities in Ecuador's larger cities. In 1958 Epp Memorial Hospital opened its doors and immediately began treating patients afflicted with a variety of illness including common illnesses, health maintenance, tropical diseases, and injuries in addition to obstetrics and surgery.

Over the years the hospital outgrew its walls and a new facility was built several blocks from Epp and took on its current name. Hospital Vozandes del Oriente is a 30 bed hospital which includes a three suite emergency room, ten clinic/examination room, three ICU beds, a newborn nursery, a labor and delivery suite, two operating rooms and, our newest edition, a physical therapy gym.

In 2006 the outpatient clinic saw more than 13,000 patients. There were more than 1200 hospital admissions, about 1300 ER visits, and more than 900 major surgeries were done. We are adding more and more orthopedic surgery to the mix and these patients are greatly assisted by care in our physical therapy unit after their surgery. We are also adding to the subspecialty disciplines of the hospital including a visiting ear-nose-throat specialist and an ophthalmologist, both of whom spend a week a month here. The hospital is also a medical training facility where at any given time, 3 Ecuadorian medical students and 3 Family Practice residents from Quito programs are completing a rotation. Each day, all hospital patients are discussed in teaching rounds." Formal medical training lectures are also given each week.

Most importantly, there is a vibrant full-time pastoral staff and part-time volunteer staff who visit with and share the Gospel with each patient in the hospital. In 2006 there were over 170 professions of faith. Further, as part of their weekly duties, all of the medical students and residents attend a faculty led bible study each Tuesday night.

We look forward to having you all visit us and hope that this helps New St. Peter's catch a vision for what God is doing here in Shell, Ecuador. We are open to any of you participating in our medical or spiritual ministry here as you are able. This could range from a tour of the hospital, observation of an aspect of the hospital or using a skill or training to assist us for the week or to train others. Spanish is not an absolute requirement but certainly helpful.

- Dr. Paul Barton

Casa de Fe, the orphanage in Shell, evolved as God led Patti Sue Arnold to open her home to several foster children, first in Quito and then in Shell. It soon became clear to her that God wanted her to develop a ministry for more than just a few special needs and abandoned children. As recently as 3 years ago, Casa de Fe consisted of 12 children living in a 3 bedroom house. It currently has around 50 children and has outgrown several locations. The staff of about 25 "tias" (Spanish for aunt) provide around the clock care and keep the household running. The children range in age from 1 month to 11 years. About half are age 5 and under and 1/3 have special needs, including cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, genetic syndromes, hearing and visual impairment and autism. Most of the healthy younger children have significant developmental delays, the most common being speech delay. Although the majority of the older children are physically healthy, almost all have experienced significant emotional trauma (death of a parent, physical or sexual abuse, etc).



Despite the many health and emotional needs of the children, because they are shown the love of God in a tangible way, the children are happy and are making great progress. Some of the children have been abandoned and Casa de Fe is their family now. Other children have families that visit them who are working to be in a better position to care for their child at home. Currently the older children are attending school in English at the orphanage and seem to be doing very well with this arrangement. Several of the younger children attend the missionary preschool that our Nathan attends. The children with special needs attend a special public school.

Construction is now underway on Casa de Fe's newly acquired property to build the first of many buildings that will ultimately be the orphanage's new "multi-home neighborhood" facility. This vision includes a central multi-purpose building surrounded by multiple small houses for the children to live in small family groups.

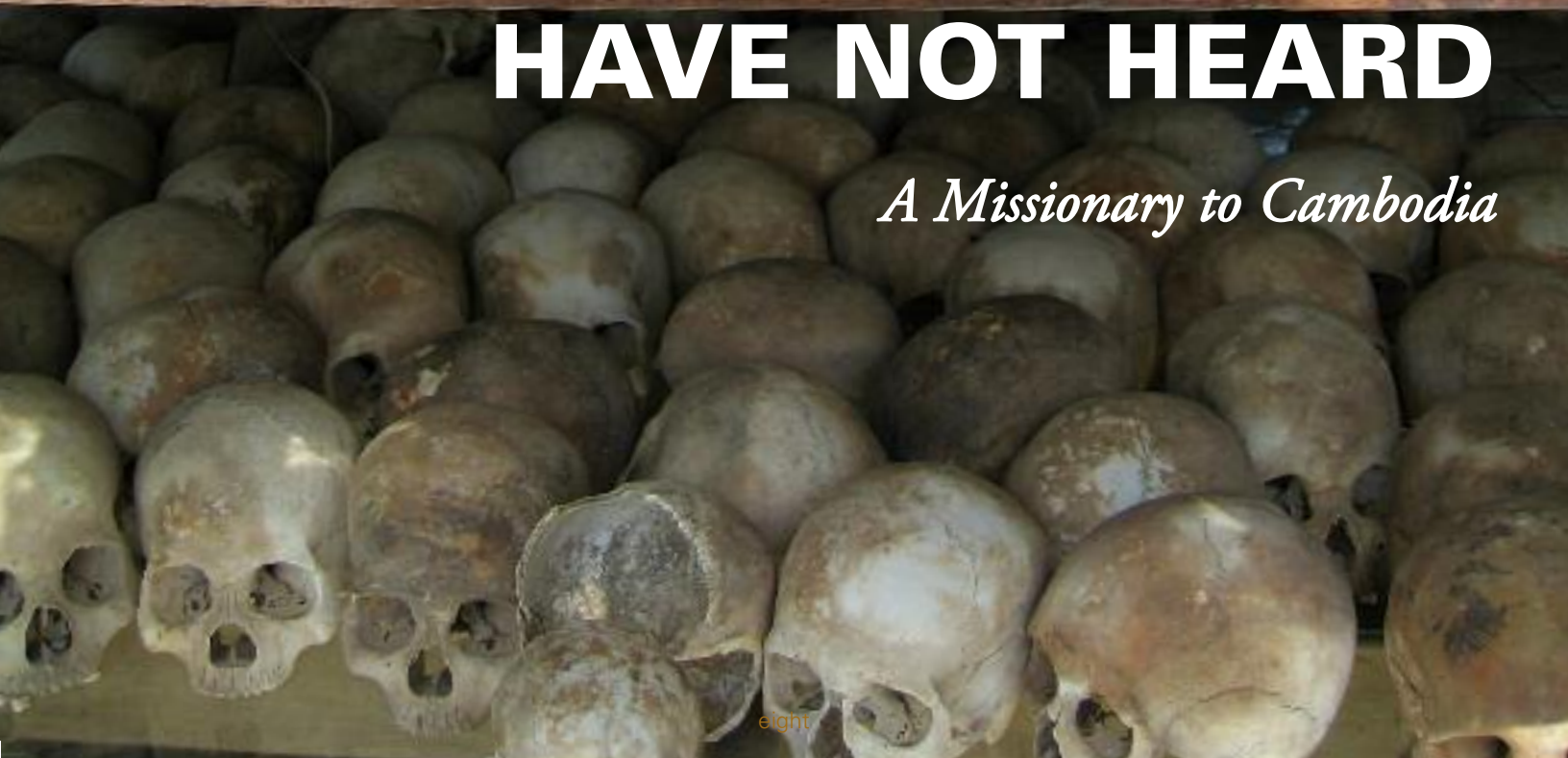
We expect many construction project opportunities this summer. Other options for team ministry to the orphanage include VBS for the children in English or Spanish, rocking children, reading to them, and otherwise interacting one-on-one. Anyone with training in ESL, child development, speech therapy or physical therapy could use those skills as well.

- Dr. Kim Barton



**TO THOSE WHO
HAVE NOT HEARD**

A Missionary to Cambodia



Luke Smith is a member of NSP and a candidate for ministry under the care of the NSP session and the North Texas Presbytery. Lord willing he will depart for Cambodia this September as a missionary from our church with Mission to the World (MTW). Our church has committed financially to support Luke in the amount of \$2,000 per month. I hope you will read his story and consider how you might individually contribute to his remaining need.

– Colin Peters

Six months ago, I finished the approval process with Mission to the World (MTW) and accepted a field invitation to join the MTW team in Cambodia. MTW is the missions sending agency of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Over the past six years my desire and calling to proclaim Christ among an unreached or least-reached people group has continued to develop. I first began thinking about missions as a student at Western Illinois University, when I went on a couple of short-term missions trips with a campus ministry. In graduate school at the University of Missouri, I was further impacted by the missionary biography *Through Gates of Splendor* by Elisabeth Elliot. For about the past 2 years in Dallas, I have lived in the Vickery Meadows area where many arriving refugees to the U.S. are placed to live. Through these experiences, my desire to go and serve continued to grow.

After graduate school at Missouri, I went to Dallas Theological Seminary to pursue a Master's degree in Theology. During my second year there, I grew in my understanding of reformed theology and started attending New St. Peter's Presbyterian Church. I will be joining the MTW team currently working in Phnom Penh, the capital city, and a few surrounding villages. The threefold scope of this ministry is church planting, theological training, and mercy ministry. Currently, the team consists of five medical professionals and one man working in theological training and church-planting.

After one year of language training, I will work in rural Cambodia training pastors.

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia, bordering the countries of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. It is a country struggling to recover from years of famine and civil war. It is estimated that 1.5 to 3 million people lost their lives during the Pol Pot regime from executions, disease, exhaustion, and starvation; these losses accounted for 20-40 % of the population at the time. During the Pol Pot regime, three million people were forced to the countryside to become slaves on government organized collectivized farms. The goal was to create a communal agrarian utopia. Education, medicine, and religion were thought to oppose the creation of such a utopia and thus were forbidden. Even after the Pol Pot regime ended, the country was still torn by war with the Vietnamese and civil wars.

Today, about 95% of the people are Buddhist with less than 1% of the population being considered evangelical Christian. A Buddhist seeks the middle path to nirvana. Their hope lies in escaping from the cycle of reincarnation and suffering. It is reported that 90% of the Christians in Cambodia were martyred or fled the country during the Pol Pot regime from 1975-1979. However, over the past few years the church has begun to grow quickly to well over 100,000 Christians. But this rapid growth has not come without problems. There is an incredible shortage of pastors to minister to the present generation of young Christians.

Approximately 85% of Cambodia's 13 million people still live in the countryside. Most of these people are subsistence rice farmers. My focus will be to provide ongoing training for rural pastors and church planters. The design to grow churches in the countryside is to start churches in a few villages and have the church in those villages go to the next village down the road and then continue to repeat this. Currently, there is a group of about 20 adults meeting in the small village of Tram Khnaa which is located southwest of Phnom Penh. A pastor named Pallah has recently been called to



SUPPORT STILL NEEDED

To go as a long-term missionary, I need to raise **\$5,664** in monthly ongoing support. At this time, **58%** of that amount has been pledged. That leaves approximately **\$2,400** still needed in monthly pledges. To leave for the field, **100%** of my monthly support has to be pledged. This need would be met if:

- 5 people give \$100/month
- 20 people give \$50/month
- 30 people give \$25/month
- 15 people give \$10/month

If you are interested in talking with me more about support needs, feel free to contact me.

Luke Smith

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“Today, about 95% of the people are Buddhist with less than 1% of the population being considered evangelical Christian.”

minister to this group. In a nearby village, Prey Lavia, pastor Pallah has started a Bible study at the request of the people there. The people in these villages are requesting help to grow and mature these works into churches.

People often ask me, *“Why Cambodia?”* Mainly, I was looking for three things to come together. First, I wanted to go somewhere that is unreached. I started to look at several different countries in the 10/40 window. The 10/40 window is a rectangular area between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude which is made up of most of Asia, northern Africa, and the Middle East. It is estimated that about 2.4 billion people living in this region of the world have little to no chance of hearing the gospel. The questions Paul poses in Romans 10:14 – *“But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”* – impressed upon me the urgency for missionaries to go to this part of the world. Second, I wanted to go somewhere that is a developing country. I thought

that a developing country may provide an opportunity to use my agricultural background. Third, I wanted to be able to work under someone with experience. I feel like I still have much to learn, and did not want to be put in a leadership position that I was not prepared for. As I looked at several options, I saw these three things coming together best with the team in Cambodia.

Presently, I am completing my last semester of seminary, raising support, fulfilling internship requirements for North Texas Presbytery, and starting to study for ordination. This summer I will take the Presbytery’s ordination exams. If all goes well with that process, I will be going as a teaching elder. Also, this summer I will be attending the final two MTW training events. In June, I will go to Living in Grace which is a grace-based discipleship course for missionaries. Then during July, I will be at Pre-Field Training in New York City. This is a month-long training program that focuses on church-planting, language acquisition skills, and cross-cultural living skills. September of this year is the target date for my departure.

I started the beginning phases of the long-term candidate track last spring. In May, I submitted my application and received the recommendation of the NSP session. In July, I went to Readiness Evaluation which is a week long assessment event. Exercises for the evaluation are oriented around church planting and cross-cultural ministry. MTW missionaries and staff serve as assessors. I received approval at the end of the week to accept a field invitation and proceed to the final step in the candidate track. In September, I went to Interview and Orientation where I was interviewed and approved by the Committee for MTW which is made up of teaching and ruling elders from the PCA. The rest of the time at Interview and Orientation was spent learning about support raising and the policies of MTW.

As a long-term missionary, I will be serving 4 years on the field and then on home missionary assignment for 1 year. This cycle is repeated every 5 years.

FC Roosters



dwell

march

Girls Night In

A casual evening of fellowship at the Peters' Home

Thursday, March 5
7 pm

Reformed Youth Fellowship

Youth activity and study of WCF

Sunday, March 8
5-7 pm

FC Roosters

Family friendly soccer and pizza at White Rock Elementary

Sunday, March 22
4 pm

Visitor's Cafe

Introduction to NsP leading into the New Members class

Sunday, March 29
4-5 pm

april

School of Life and Doctrine

Spring Session begins Wednesdays at ZLC- Lovers Lane at Skillman

April 1
5:15 - 7 pm

Marriage Conference

Dr. Paul David Tripp - Sponsored by PCPC and NSP - to be held at PCPC

Friday and Saturday,
April 3-4

Maunder Thursday Service

At the Dallas Arboretum in the Lay Ornamental Garden

Thursday, April 9
6:30 pm

Reformed Youth Fellowship

Youth activity and study of WCF

Sunday, April 19
5-7 pm

FC Roosters

Family friendly soccer and pizza at White Rock Elementary

Sunday, April 26
4 pm

may

North Texas Presbytery Friday and Saturday, May 1-2
Spring Meeting at Fifth Street PCA, Tyler

Spring Picnic

Join us at Curtis Park to celebrate God's faithfulness to New St. Peter's in the 5 years since its founding.

Sunday, May 17
5 pm

FC Roosters

Family friendly soccer and pizza at White Rock Elementary

Sunday, May 24
4 pm

New Members Joining Sunday

During the worship service; followed by New Members class lunch at Mariano's

May 31

ongoing

SOLD Spring Session

Nursery, Children's classes, Adult classes including New Members. See www.newstpeters.org for more details.

April 1 – May 27
6-7 pm

Men's Prayer

Church office

Tuesday mornings
7 am

Alms

The 4th Sunday of each month the deacons will collect alms for the sake of mercy and gospel encouragement.

Every 4th Sunday

introducing our NsP officers



Sheryl, Logan and Steve Brown

Steve Brown was ordained and installed as a Deacon at NSP in 2006. He graduated from McKinney High School in 1997, then attended Texas A&M University – WHOOP! Although he was raised in a believing church and family, he was not converted until midway through college. At that point he found Reformed University Fellowship

where he met his would-be wife, Sheryl. Steve graduated from A&M in December of 2001 with a degree in Economics. After marrying in June of 2002, Steve and Sheryl moved to San Antonio to be founding members of Redeemer Presbyterian Church. In 2004, Steve's job moved them to Dallas where they soon began attending NSP. Sheryl taught US History at Skyline High School in Dallas ISD until their first child, Logan, was born on September 25.

Steve is a software developer for a small marketing and advertising company based in Addison, but he greatly enjoys his free time. Since marrying Sheryl, who grew up traveling around the world with her Air Force family, Steve and Sheryl have vacationed on four continents

including trips to Australia, Fiji, Mexico, China and Botswana in southern Africa. Steve and Sheryl are both certified divers, and Steve firmly believes that it's not a real vacation unless your cell phone doesn't work. Steve, Sheryl and Logan now live in Lake Highlands with their two dogs, Hallie and Bandera. Since becoming a Deacon at NSP, Steve has marveled at the grace and provision of our Lord as he has watched Him reveal needs and provide the ability to meet them in miraculous ways.

cafeteria 
smorgasbord for the soul

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