

PATHWAYS FOR PASTORS

FALL 2007

Brook Lane's quarterly newsletter for pastors ■ Deryl Fleming, Editor

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Annual Seminar For Pastors

January 24-25, 2008

"Pastor, Person and Persona: Who and Whose We Are" is the theme for the 2008 edition of Brook Lane's annual seminar for pastors. As always, the purpose of the seminar is tending our souls and caring for our callings. Getting away and being with colleagues in worship, reflection and fellowship will restore your soul.

Guest preachers are Ginger Gaines Sorelli, Pastor of Capitol Hill United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, and Ron Foster, Pastor of Bethesda United Methodist Church in Bethesda, MD. No, this is not a Methodist event, though some of my best friends are Methodists. Foster will be preaching and presenting on Thursday, and Sorelli will be preaching on Friday.

The day and a half seminar is a best buy in continuing education. The \$45 fee includes a continental breakfast and a full lunch both days. We begin both days in the chapel with breakfast at 8:30 a.m. and worship at 9:00 a.m. Thursday's session will conclude at 3:30 p.m., and Friday we conclude with lunch.

One CEU credit is given to those who participate in the entire event. A registration form is found on page five.

Resource Available

Walking Together: A Training Workshop, a new manual of interactive exercises designed to develop a better understanding of mental illness and attitudes toward those who experience it is available from Pathways to Promise (www.pathways2promise.org).

Brook Lane's Fall Community Programs

Understanding Mental Health through Education

To Love and to Cherish: Tuning Up and Taking Care of Your Marriage

Dr. Deryl Fleming, Chaplain

Thursday, October 25, 2007, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Main Campus ~ Community Room

Attend this program to discover how to nourish your relationship with your spouse.

Understanding Bipolar Disease

David Gonzalez, M.D., Medical Director

Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Main Campus – Community Room

Everyone experiences highs and lows, but when moods cycle rapidly or go to extremes, there is cause for concern.

This program will explore the signs and symptoms of Bipolar Disorder, as well as current treatment options.

To make reservations or for more information,
call 301-733-0330

Our Mission Statement

As an expression of our Christian heritage, we are committed to utilizing our resources carefully and creatively to provide quality behavioral health services.

Travel Tips

“So little time, so much to do,” Winston Churchill observed. That is one of the ways I remember the fall when I was a pastor. I had a dentist who, in spring, summer, fall or winter, never failed to ask, “Is this your busy season, Reverend?” I usually said, “They’re all busy.” Yet in my experience, none more so than the fall.

That may be in part due to my not being in a liturgical tradition. For some pastors, Lent and Easter may be the most time challenging season. Another reason for the fullness of fall may have been due to my having been on vacation most of August. I suspect that the week before leaving for vacation, I transferred too many items from the “Do it before you leave” list to the “Do it as soon as you return” list.

It took me years to learn that I would never get it all done. A pastor’s work is never finished. Just ask the congregation. You disappoint someone every week because of something you did not do or did not do well enough. Thank God, you will not hear about most of those disappointments.

Juggling the pastoral tasks – pastoral care, preaching, teaching, and administration – calls for continuing reflection and revision. I learned to give more energy to ongoing pastoral care after a time of shortcutting it. For obvious reasons, I did little formal teaching in the summer.

Even a pastor’s preaching is never done. When I occasionally preach in a church that has three services, I’m still fine-tuning the sermon between the second and third services. I think I have never preached a sermon that I could not improve, given another chance. My sermons are, at best, works in progress. I pray that they are not works in regress, though some must have been, since my wife tells me not to change the sermon after the first service. Enough already.

Perhaps the single most significant discipline in managing the “never finished” dimension of the work we do is to determine priorities. No one else can do that for you. Yet we do well to get help from pastoral colleagues and from wise

congregants. Without candid feedback, it is tempting to spend an inordinate amount of time and energy on what you most enjoy doing.

Shared ministry is another issue at stake. Why should a pastor do something someone else can do well enough, as well, or even better? Because sometimes it is easier to do it than it is to recruit others and evoke their gifts. But is it better? After I resigned my last pastorate, I was told that in recent months I had become less controlling (kinder, gentler words were used). Ouch! I am afraid that I so much wanted things done the right way, i.e., my way, that sometimes I did not let the church be the church.

While on vacation last month, we spent a night in a Bed & Breakfast that was purchased by the new owners, a husband and wife, nine months ago. Their service was excellent, and we told them so. The wife was working hard from 5:30 a.m. to bedtime. She told us it was her 88th consecutive day on the job. Maybe after a successful first year, they can ease up. I hope so. Even if you get it all done, you cannot do it indefinitely. On my bulletin board I have an ad for a sweatshirt: “I am Woman. I am Invincible. I am Tired.”

So much to do with only time for some of it. Learn to live with it, and you won’t have to change careers. Meanwhile, enjoy the autumn leaves.

Brook Lane

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Lynn Rushing, *Chief Executive Officer*

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Director of Pastoral Care Services

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Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

Maps for the Journey

James A. Autry, *Looking Around for God: The Oddly Reverent Observations of an Unconventional Christian*. Smith & Helwys, 2007, \$16. 1573124843.

These brief essays by an executive, consultant and poet trace the author's journey from Fundamentalism to a "grown-up" mystical faith. His poetry, some of which is here, has been featured by Garrison Keillor and by Bill Moyers, who wrote the forward for the book. Autry writes about the pain and joy around his autistic son, taking communion to homebound congregants, good work, miracles, angels, and homosexuality and the church. His layman's perspective and his ability to see the sacred in the ordinary are gifts to any preacher. His theology is for me a mixed blessing.

Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter*. Shoemaker Hoard, 2004, \$14. 1593760361.

This novel is classic Wendell Berry, a story of family, farming, community, loss and love. In her late seventies, Hannah recalls memories of childhood, young love, raising children and twice becoming a widow. In telling the story of her life and community, Port William, Kentucky, she shows us how to grieve the loss of loved ones and of a culture. Berry's characters are living and working against the depersonalizing forces of modernity. His work as a writer of poetry, essays and novels is parallel to his 40 years of farming in Kentucky.

J. Kent Borggaard, *Experiencing the Lovers Dialog Between Church, World and God: in the pastoral prayer*. Authorhouse, 2007, \$12. 1425965464.

This collection of prayers over a career of ministry is an invitation to a conversation about leading others in public prayer. Borggaard follows each of the prayers, sometimes identified by the occasion of their offering, with his reflections and provides space for "reader reflections." In addition, he has some rich excursions along the way on ministry and prayer. The most valuable contributions of the volume are his reflections on what was happening with him or what might have been happening in the congregation during

the prayer. I hear a lot of public prayers telling God what "we know" and what God already knows, telling God what to do, listing what's happened in the news this week, making announcements, confessing other peoples' sins, etc. Borggaard lives the questions of public prayer and can help us do the same. Thanks, Kent.

Kiara Brinkman, *Up High in the Trees*. Grove, 2007, \$23. 080211847X

This stunning debut novel is narrated by an eight year old boy with autism. It is the story of a family's chaotic coping with their tragic loss. Brinkman is a gifted writer who, according to the book jacket, has worked with children all her life. It shows.

Annie Dillard, *The Maytrees*. Harper Collins, 2007, \$25. 0061239533.

Marilynne Robinson, acclaimed author of *Gilead*, says, "Annie Dillard's books are like comets, like celestial events that remind us that the reality we inhabit is itself a celestial event." Dillard's sense of wonder and knowledge of the natural world demonstrates how much we lesser mortals miss. Set on Cape Cod, her story of the Maytrees is a meditation on the nature of love and the love of nature. Always a philosopher/theologian, Dillard muses on why we are here. The answer turns out to be not far from "to love one another." Though I'm not sure why, in reading this I felt like I was on the outside looking in. However, it was well worth the look.

Brad Sachs, *When No One Understands: Letters to a Teenager on Life, Loss and the Hard Road to Adulthood*. Trumpeter, 2007, \$14. 1590304075.

This collection of wise and winsome letters from a family psychologist responds to adolescent angst questions I hear on a weekly basis. The letters are somewhat revised versions of letters Sachs wrote to a client because she refused to talk when her parents brought her against her will after a serious suicide attempt to the first therapy session. The author concludes with notes to teenagers, to parents and to professionals.

PAT'S PONDERINGS

"Grandma, I see a cucumber growing on the seedling I planted," said Gregory, with excitement in his eyes. "Have you been watering it?" I asked. "Well, no, but it is still growing." Grandma went into her lecture about plants needing to be nurtured after the initial planting. I asked Gregory, "What if Grandma didn't provide any food for you on a daily basis?" He said, "I would just go to my Mom's." I could see that my point was not getting across as I had intended it to. The cucumber did not have another location to go to for nurturing, as he did.

July and August have had some sweltering days of heat. For survival, people, birds, plants and animals all need to stay hydrated during such heat. Since I am at Brook Lane two days a week, I regularly water the plants that I have in my office, which is sufficient for their well being. In July I was out two alternating weeks, so I watered the plants well and knew I would care for them upon my return first thing.

Two of the plants were thriving but beginning to show some signs of drooping and were glad for the revival of water. However, the plant over my desk received a more direct hit from the sunlight. I could see there was no reviving it. It was a stark reminder to me of the need for ongoing and consistent nurturing, and some types of plants have very specific nurturing needs to maintain their health.

I began to question my need for nurturing. As I tend to be a nurturer by nature, I often ignore my needs until my body says STOP, as in a recent case of shingles. I am also aware that since a hip replacement, my feet and legs tire more easily when I use them standing in the kitchen too long or walking on paved surfaces. It was time for me to make time for my own nurturing. I stopped at Nails Plus and had the pedicure of my life. This included massaging my legs and feet with various ointments while sitting in a chair that massaged my back. My feet practically rejoiced at this time out for them.

I learned the hard way that my sleep requirements are a must for me. In college if I attempted to pull an "all nighter," the result

would be more devastating on the exam than if I went to bed early and had a clearer mind. As the years multiply, I still listen to my body when it says I must sleep.

Those in a "nurturing" profession must know that they cannot be all things to all people all the time. One of my college professors reminded us that there are only three emergencies in life: a heart attack, profuse bleeding and a threat of suicide. All other concerns can wait until the next day. She also reminded us that people are usually more resourceful than we think. We are not indispensable.

We are approaching the fall season when gardens, leaves and flowers are beginning to wilt and fade so they can have a season of rest. In our hi-tech culture we seem to have forgotten or ignored the reality that seasons apply to our bodies and spirits as well. Don't fill that calendar with an event every weekend. Learn to listen to what your body, mind and spirit need and do not need. This will be different for each of you. Do not compare your needs to someone else's as either being "wrong" or "right" for you. Take time to re-fuel, renew and nurture on a regular basis. You owe it to yourself.

Patricia Robinson

Pastors at Brook Lane

You are welcome here. Patients seem to enjoy saying to us, "My pastor came to visit me."

Visiting hours at the hospital are 6:30-8:30 p.m. daily. If you need to visit at another time, you may by calling the nurses' station for an appointment. Otherwise, you may have to wait for your parishioner to complete a therapy appointment.

To see a patient in the child and adolescent unit an appointment is the only way to be sure of the patient's availability. The need for confidentiality is such that we ask for a patient's ID number before we offer any information.

Permission Granted

Everything in Pathways for Pastors not otherwise credited is written by Deryl Fleming. You are welcome to use it with acknowledgement.

Brook Lane's Fall Community Programs

Understanding Mental Health through Education

The Autism Spectrum: A Four Part Series

These programs will focus on the different diagnoses associated with autism to explore the symptoms, manifestations, and treatments. Information will be shared in a relaxed atmosphere with time for participant interaction.

The presenter is Beth Chaney, LCPC, Brook Lane therapist. The location is the Community Room on our main campus, and the time for each session is 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

Children & Adolescent Asperger's Disorders

Thursday, October 11, 2007

Children & Adolescent Autism Disorder

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Autism & Asperger's Disorders in Adults

Thursday, October 18, 2007

To make reservations or for more information, call 301-733-0330

Excursions

(Ongoing offerings to you)

1. Support to pastors in crisis (on an occasional basis or as many as five sessions without charge to you).
2. Five sessions without charge to members of a pastor's family.
3. Consultation on matters of church and ministry.
4. Consultation on matters of mental illness or emotional disorders.
5. Referral information regarding Brook Lane or other services you or members of your family, staff, or congregation may need.
6. Assistance with ministering to members of your congregation who may be patients at Brook Lane.
7. Confidentiality in all of the above.

REGISTRATION FORM

YES, I WILL ATTEND THE ANNUAL SEMINAR FOR PASTORS, JANUARY 24-25, 2008.

Name _____ Church _____

Address _____

_____ Phone _____

Please return this form with a check for \$45.00, payable to Brook Lane, P.O.Box 1945, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21742-1945.

Trail Guides

Anyone who is not lost in rapturous awe at the power and glory of the mind behind the universe is as good as a burned-out candle.

Albert Einstein

Work and play are words used to describe the same thing under different conditions.

Mark Twain

There are some things so serious you can only joke about them.

Niels Bohr

What would Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech look like in Power Point?

Richard Lischer

There is no right way. The important thing is to find your own way. Tell me what it is you plan to do with your one wild and precious life.

Mary Oliver

The most wasted day is a day without laughter.

e. e. cummings

The most certain sign of wisdom is cheerfulness.

Michele I. Montaigne

I have struggled all my life with a tormented and joyless relationship with God. Faith and lack of faith, punishment, grace and rejection all were real to me, all were imperative. My prayers stank of anguish, entreaty, trust, loathing and despair. God spoke, God said nothing. Do not turn from me Thy face.

Ingmar Bergman

We can do no great things – only small things, with great love.

Mother Teresa

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

George Bernard Shaw

God does not want us to be exhausted. God wants us to be happy.

Wayne Muller

To instruct calls for energy, and to remain almost silent, but watchful and helpful, while students instruct themselves, calls for even greater energy.

Robertson Davies

E-mail us at curt.muller@brooklane.org. Thanks!
If not, please let us know so we can correct it.

Is Your Address Correct?

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