

THE CHANNEL

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MCC
SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE
METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCH

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BIBLE CHALLENGE

Answers to the Bible Challenge Questions can be found somewhere in this current issue of the Channel.

Have Fun!

All questions will follow the same format:

Question #1 will be found in the "Old Testament"

Question #2 will be found in the "New Testament"

Question #3 will be about the "Life of Christ"

Question #4 will be about "People"

Question #5 will be a "Quote"

Question #6 will be a "Place"

Question #7 will be a "General" question

#1 What was the seventh plague that God placed on Egypt?

#2 In the Christian armor, what is the shield?

#3 Where did the evil spirits go that Jesus cast out of a man?

#4 Who did God give a sign of the sun moving backwards to show him that he was healed?

#5 Who said "Lord, save me"?

#6 What city did Jesus weep over?

#7 Which book of the Bible has the most chapters?

SMALL WAYS IN SMALL PLACES

Isaiah 49:1-6 The Message (MSG)

Listen, far-flung islands,
pay attention, faraway people:
GOD put me to work from the day I was born.
The moment I entered the world God named me.
God gave me speech that would cut and penetrate.
God kept God's hand on me to protect me.
God made me God's straight arrow
and hid me in God's quiver.
God said to me, "You're my dear servant,
Israel, through whom I'll shine."
But I said, "I've worked for nothing.
I've nothing to show for a life of hard work.
Nevertheless, I'll let GOD have the last word.
I'll let God pronounce God's verdict."
"And now," GOD says,
this God who took me in hand
from the moment of birth to be God's servant,
To bring Jacob back home to God,
to set a reunion for Israel—
What an honor for me in GOD's eyes!
That God should be my strength!
God says, "But that's not a big enough job for my serv-
ant—
just to recover the tribes of Jacob,
merely to round up the strays of Israel.
I'm setting you up as a light for the *nations*
so that my salvation becomes *global!*"

Often I meet with people who serve in what they think are seemingly small ways in small places. They are frequently discouraged by loneliness, feeling that their acts of service are insignificant. When I hear them speak, I think of one of the angels in C. S. Lewis' book *Out of the Silent Planet*. He said: "My people have a law never to speak of sizes or numbers to you. . . . It makes you do reverence to nothings and pass by what is really great."

Sometimes culture says bigger is better—that size is the truest measure of success. It takes a strong person to resist that trend, especially if he or she is laboring in a small place. But we must not "pass by what is really great."

It's not that numbers aren't important (after all, the apostles counted their converts; see Acts 2:41). Num-

bers represent living people with eternal needs. We should all work and pray for large numbers of people to enter the kingdom, but numbers mustn't be the basis for self-esteem.

God doesn't call us to find fulfillment in the amount of work we do for God or the number of people who are a part of that work, but in faithfully doing our work for God's sake. Serving our great God with God's strength in a small way is not a stepping-stone to greatness—it is greatness.

Jonathan Hollander

Deacon St. John the Apostle.

¿SIN IMPORTANCIA?

Isaías 49:1-6 Nueva Biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy (NBLH)

Escúchenme, islas,
Y atiendan, pueblos lejanos.
El SEÑOR Me llamó desde el seno materno,
Desde las entrañas de Mi madre mencionó Mi nombre.
² Ha hecho Mi boca como espada afilada,
En la sombra de Su mano Me ha escondido.
Me ha hecho también como flecha escogida,
En Su aljaba Me ha escondido.
³ Y Me dijo: "Tú eres Mi siervo, Israel,
En quien Ti mostraré Mi gloria."
⁴ Y Yo dije: "En vano he trabajado,
En vanidad y en nada he gastado Mis fuerzas;
Pero Mi derecho está en el SEÑOR,
Y Mi recompensa con Mi Dios."
⁵ Y ahora dice el SEÑOR (el que Me formó desde el seno materno para *ser* Su siervo,
Para hacer que Jacob vuelva a El y que Israel se reúna con El,
Porque honrado soy a los ojos del SEÑOR
Y Mi Dios ha sido mi fortaleza),
⁶ Dice El: "Poca cosa es que Tú seas Mi siervo,
Para levantar las tribus de Jacob y para restaurar a los que quedaron de Israel.
También Te haré luz de las naciones,
Para que Mi salvación alcance¹ hasta los confines de la tierra."

(Continued Pg. 3)

¿SIN IMPORTANCIA? (Continued)

DESPARATELY NEEDED---A GOOD SNARE DRUMMER

Suelo conocer personas que sirven en lugares y de maneras que consideran insignificantes. A menudo, las desanima la soledad y sienten que lo que hacen vale muy poco. Cuando las escucho hablar, pienso en uno de los ángeles del libro de C. S Lewis Más allá del planeta silencioso, que dijo: «Mi pueblo tiene una ley sobre no hablar de tamaños ni de números [...]. Eso hace que reverencias las pequeñeces y pases por alto lo verdaderamente grande». A veces, la cultura afirma que lo grande es mejor; que el tamaño es la verdadera medida del éxito. Una persona debe ser fuerte para resistir esta tendencia; en especial, si trabaja en un lugar pequeño. Pero nosotros no debemos «[pasar] por alto lo verdaderamente grande». No es que lo números no importen (después de todo, los apóstoles contaban cuántos se habían convertido con ellos; ver Hechos 2:41). Los números representan seres vivientes con necesidades eternas. Todos debemos trabajar y orar para que una gran cantidad de personas entre en el reino, pero la autoestima no puede apoyarse en números. Dios no nos llama a encontrar satisfacción en la cantidad de trabajo que hacemos para Él ni en el número de personas que forman parte de esa obra, sino a cumplir fielmente la tarea en su nombre. Servir a nuestro gran Dios con su fortaleza y de maneras pequeñas no es un trampolín hacia la grandeza; es la grandeza en sí.

Jonathan Hollander
 Diácono San Juan el apóstol.

As a child, I went to the Congregational Church--the church of pilgrims and pioneers. We had a pipe organ, but originally, I learned, there were no organs in America. Pilgrims relied on what was available, sometimes having only a drum to keep the tempo of hymns. In remembrance, a snare drummer performed at the entrance of our church every Thanksgiving Sunday.

Long after leaving my home town, I moved to Fort Myers and found my second church home. In order to meet local people, I agreed to attend a church service when invited by a new acquaintance. But I returned because the service and the experience were so meaningful. Fifteen years later I'm not only still attending, but serving on the board of directors and helping review our music program as part of the strategic plan.

To prepare for the music program review, I asked several people for their opinions. Of course there were some complaints, with some wanting gospel music and others who hated clapping. There were complaints about the music being too slow, too loud, or ruined by the sound system. Several wanted a director hired, a large choir, and angels on high.....Personally; I think we really need a drummer in the music program.

Despite these few complaints, everyone likes parts of the music provided at Sunday Service. I was told that the music differs among MCCs, reflecting the religious background and talent of the musicians and pastor. One couple who enjoyed singing with either the piano or organ was "just glad to take what ya get." Personally, I found the pilgrim spirit still alive at SJAMCC, where people share the talent they have or appreciate what others provide.

Our volunteer pianist, Don Gouger, has provided a list on the label table and is playing hymns suggested by congregants. He would appreciate knowing if this is helpful. Pastor Steve is interested how the music enhances the spiritual meaning of other parts of the service and the extent to which congregants will be accepting of new or different music. My interest is in how to develop the music program, given current budgetary constraints. The program needs volunteers and Don, Pastor Steve and I welcome suggestions.

Julie Hover

DEANS FOOD PANTRY

Please welcome our newest volunteer to the food pantry: Carol Greschow. Ever since coming to Saint John, Carol has been active in many ways - most recently serving on the Board of Directors.

Carol was instrumental in setting up the visitor's table in the entrance hall among other endeavors.

Please continue to bring your donations. The first Sunday of each month the Pastor blesses the gift in the sanctuary.

Remember - 'Bye one - get one free' items. The pantry can use any and all donations.

Also, as a reminder; the food pantry is open on Sunday's following the morning worship services - just see Ron.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Steve Filizzi pastor@sjamcc.com

Congregational Administrator

Kurt Hood admin@sjamcc.com

CHOIR DIRECTOR / ORGANIST

Don Gouger—Organist music@sjamcc.com

Brian Dietrich—Pianist

BOARD MEMBERS board@sjamcc.com

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Nivia Torres Julie Hover

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Pastor's Pen



IT IS SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM

Sometimes or maybe most of the time situations in life seems so big or so out of our hands that we are tempted to ignore them.

What can I do about immigration or war or gun violence? Sometime people fall into the thinking "I am a white man therefore what happens for woman's right to choose or birth control is not my problem."

"I don't have kids in school. The only thing I want the school district to do is lower my taxes." "There is nothing I can do about climate change, so I won't do anything."



There is even a brand of theological thinking that says "God is in control of everything. So it is not my problem. I'm going to heaven, so I don't need to worry about anything happening on earth."

This may be why some people have difficulty with Social Justice in the church context. It can seem too much about earth and not enough about heaven.

I understand that theological thinking. I just don't agree with it. God gave the Israelites the Promised Land but they still had to fight for it. In Micah 6:8 we read "What does the Lord require of us? To do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God."

What each of us does, however, can make a difference. First, we must take personal responsibility for our own actions. Whether it's refraining from lying, caring for those in need or respecting the environment, our own actions are the ones we control. We must start by responding consistently to God's call to be faithful and to work for God's reign here and now. In addition, there is the dimension of witness. Who knows when someone might see our small efforts and decide to do something similar?

As a church we must be committed to "Transforming Ourselves as We Transform the World."

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 21, 2014

Pastor Steve Filizzi opened and closed the meeting in prayer and chaired the Board of Directors meeting.

The Strategic plan discussion was led by Maxine Johnson, monitor. The Facility, Growth, Financial, and Communication Teams all reported on progress being made.

\$\$\$\$\$ The final payment for the former copy machine was made, with nearly all this payment offset by a 2013 donation from the new copier company. Comparing the first four months of 2014 with 2013, it was shown that ordinary income (primarily general offerings) decreased by 3.7%. Ordinary expenses have increased by 7.6%, primarily due to payment of 2013 expenses billed during the first four months. The average attendance per week increased from 108 to 119, an average increase of 10% per week.

Advertising on the new Fort Myers city map was approved conditional on obtaining congregant donation to cover expenses.

A **Kaleidoscope (C.A.R.E.S.)** request to hold a fund raising pasta dinner in the social hall was approved pending proof of liability insurance and a donation to cover the room charge.

Hallway carpet repair or replacement has been recommended by congregants. Estimates will be obtained.

The Local Colors committee final report was accepted. Remaining funds will moved to the ordinary income portion of the budget.

Cleaning of the Social Hall will be added to the Clean Keepers contract contingent on donations of congregants to cover this unbudgeted expense.

JUNE 7, 2014

The board met Saturday morning for a Financial Workshop focused on the budget. Dale Gnatek, Treasurer of SJAMCC, led the meeting and answered many questions.

JUNE 18, 2014

The meeting was chaired by Pastor Steve Filizzi, who also gave the opening and closing prayers.

\$\$\$\$\$ Once again, compared with the previous month and with June of last year, the attendance was higher and the offerings were lower. To stay within this "bare bones"

budget, when unbudgeted items are needed, individual congregants are notified and, in addition to their usual offering, donate funds to cover these specific items.

FUNDS DONATED during the last month included funds to purchase the 2014 version of Quick Books software, to cover the cost of cleaning the social halls floor bi-weekly for 7 months, to complete coverage of the cost for painting the social hall, and to cover the cost for a business card add on the new City of Fort Myers map.

THE PASTOR'S REPORT provided the rationale for a plan to begin holding a potluck worship service once a month on Sunday evening. It was suggested that this would provide an opportunity to introduce friends of congregants to the church other than through inviting them to a morning service and also that it would provide a time for attendance of persons unable to attend morning service due to work or other obligations.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN discussion was led by monitor Maxine Johnson. Nivia Torres reported that the Communication Team had held the first "Love on ya" lunch, with the next one scheduled for fall. Rudy Bliss reported ideas for upcoming fund raising projects and the Finance Team also reported that based on their review, the current budget was realistic. Carol Greschow and Julie Hover reported that the Growth team had completed changes to the Visitor Information Form, had contacted Carefree about the possibility of advertising in their newsletter, had distributed copies of the Channel at the Spanish center, and had planned a meeting of the women congregants to identify ways to increase newcomers, long term congregants, and participation of women at SJAMCC. Maxine Johnson reported that the Facility Management team had obtained volunteers and held work days to weed and mulch the landscape and were currently examining the condition of the roof, for which the warranty expires in 2015.

A COMPUTER DONATION from Jason McRae and Ron Jakubisyn was accepted. This computer is for use of the Channel Team.

ADVERTISEMENT design ideas were discussed by Bob Schneider, Julie Hover, and Kurt Hood, who also suggested modification to the graphic designer's drafts until agreement was reached. The business card sized add will appear on new Fort Myers city maps, with 10,000 maps to be made available at City Buildings and many other locations over the next two years.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LOCAL COLORS FESTIVAL IDEA? AN EXPLANATION

Just over a year ago our church's concern regarding our mortgage debt (over \$4,000 a month) led us to decide upon a capital campaign to actively try to pay it off. The capital campaign provided a real lift to us financially, thanks to Wayne and his committee, but we were still left with a mortgage that kept us from doing God's work in ways we would wish to do it. The money that came from the capital campaign thus far had come from individual members from inside the church. With this in mind, church members were invited to participate in an "event exploration" meeting for ideas on how to generate outside money which could be used to pay off our mortgage. Initially we focused on a church thrift store inside our church building. As it became apparent that we could not do a thrift store, we focused on holding an event that could potentially raise \$25,000+ annually. We reviewed an environmental fair, a human slavery recognition fair, a rubber ducky race fair and finally settled on holding a fair featuring various national, ethnic, cultural, and major religious groups. The final decision made by the committee was to call it a "Local Colors Festival."

The thinking behind the choice had to do with the numbers of ethnic and/or cultural groups, who perhaps did not have enough members or money to sponsor their own festivals, yet are a part of the community we live in. Those folks could share their culture with the rest of us through dance, art, food, or whatever set them apart as a group. The mission for this event, then, became one of promoting cultural understanding of diversity including origin, race, and ethnic backgrounds. By the same token, it was we who became the recipients of that understanding of diversity that leads to loving our neighbors as ourselves. That made us the beneficiaries.

Once the decision was made, all sorts of questions arose, like where do we hold the event, when will it be held, how do we get the information out, what about marketing and advertising, how do we get sponsors, etc.. The list goes on and on. Thank God for our fearless leader, Dana, who never got flustered during this whole event planning cycle. The committee decided to hold an international dinner and auction to raise the needed capital for a direct mail campaign to all the religious institutions in Charlotte, Lee and Collier counties. This International Dinner, held on February 8, 2010 was a great success, thanks to Chuck and Jeff's wonderful menu and preparation, as was the auction that followed. Thanks also to a number of donors and Dale who assembled the baskets and acted as auctioneer. The "seed" money allowed us to do our direct mailing in which we requested names of local cultural groups. We complet

ed our direct mailing to approximately 1,100 folks by the first of April. The letter that went out included a statement of purpose for the event and asked for help in identifying any ethnic or cultural groups known by the recipient who might be interested in participating. A return card was provided with a request for a contact person's phone number on it so that we could call to provide more information about the event. Members of the committee would be those making the follow-up calls.

We predetermined a need for participation of 35 to 40 organizations in order to meet the rental and other expenses and to achieve the desired funding level for the church. By the middle of May, we had confirmed 6 organizations, including one food vendor, and had 9 additional prospects. Even if all prospects had agreed to participate, we were still far short of our goal. Therefore, after about a year of planning and effort, we sorrowfully disbanded the Event Committee on May 18, 2014.

As we end this project we have informed respondents to our letter and all group contact persons that our project will not move forward and have thanked them for their interest and desire to participate. We have asked the Board to return any funds that remain in the Local Colors account to the general fund. We also suggested to the Board as they look for additional opportunities to raise funds that they limit themselves to projects that do not require more than 10 or 12 volunteers.

Our very special group included, Angie Smith, Bev MacNeill, Maxine Johnson, Carol Greschow, Chuck Swihart, Jeffrey Paschal, DJ Driscoll, Perry Daniels, Rudy Bliss, Peter Scott, Mary Leigh, Susan Adkins, Dale Weddle, Julie Hover and Dana Drew. Throughout the year, we were assisted by Kurt Hood. Our committee was blessed to celebrate our many intermediate successes and learning experiences and the opportunity to share with our church. We wish to acknowledge the tremendous assistance we received from Nivia Torres, Chachi Yanes and Bryan Dietrich in presenting the international dinner. We are also thankful for all who helped by contributing to the auction, attending the dinner, and showing interest in our progress. As we move forward, hopefully, an event can be found that better fits the interests and desires of the congregants as well as the needs of the church.

From Mary Leigh w/final report to
Board of Directors from Dana Drew

BUILDING BLOCKS OF RELATIONSHIPS (PART I)

A major focus of the All Regions conference on March 27-29, 2014 was a seven hour, three part presentation by Reverend Elder Ken Martin, on committed human relations and human sexuality. Dr. Martin has studied human sexuality extensively and uses his expertise as part of his counseling within the GLBT community. He is also an engaging, humorous and thought provoking speaker on relationships issues.

Beginning on Friday morning and then the afternoon of March 28th and continuing into Saturday morning, Dr. Martin discussed what he views as "Ten Building Blocks of Relationships." My intent is to summarize Ken's thinking concerning each of the ten components. Comments are my attempts to paraphrase his views.

Committed relationships are by their nature long term. There must be a sense of "we are in this together." Jointly held views are to the future as much as they are to solving the problems of daily living. The sexual attraction of a couple is important, especially in the early stages of a relationship. However, eventually we begin to notice our partners have "faults." It is then couples look to the long range benefits of a committed relationship.

It may be tempting to expect our partners to be near perfect but in reality we all have our limitations. The second building block is then that **"we must develop realistic views of our partner and his/her capabilities."** It ain't necessarily always pretty.

From honesty evolves trust. As relationships mature there may be a tendency by one or by both of the partners to be less that forthright in presentation of self. For example, someone who has a great need to be in control may slant his/her comments in the hope of getting the upper hand in order to feel in control. To the extent humanely possible we must be as honest as possible with our partners. When a couple senses ongoing honesty in his/her partner, trust evolves. It is that trust that then further nourishes a long term relationship.

Fidelity. It is not uncommon to hear couples talk

about "open relationships"; relationships in which intimacy includes more than the committed couple. Open relationships bring with them a special set of problems. An open relationship

may be viewed as adultery and, for many, adultery is synonymous with the breaking of vows.

Openness to change. Change is often difficult for all of us. Allowing change in a relationship may be viewed as loss of control. Yet, change is inevitable. The task in a healthy relationship is not to avoid change but to learn how to manage it so that change contributes to the ongoing healthy development of a committed relationship.

Part II (to be continued in the next Channel) will focus on: pleasure in relationships, ritual & routine, development of spiritual values, individuation & personal freedom and attentiveness to your partner.

Bruce Mericle

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN(d) RAISERS

Its been a while since we at St John the Apostle MCC has had a Fun(d) Raising Committee. So here we go again. For starters we had our first meeting on Sunday, July 20th .

Leading up to this first meeting Julie Hover and Carol Greschow were going like gangbusters to get the ideas flowing. At this time we are working toward the third annual Wreath Auction at Tubby's with St. John the Apostle to be the benefactor. Actual date is upcoming, probably last of November or first week of December.

Carol and Julie also worked on having Bingo (for prizes, not money) on Sep. 27th. Games will be preceded by a light supper of pulled pork sandwiches with chips and cake for dessert. During games other snacks will be available for purchase, such as packages of cookies, candy, and soft drinks and water. Some of the prizes will be things like hair salon gift certificates, Merchant Gift cards, and maybe even gas cards. This is a night full of winners, all the way around.

Another exciting project, currently up in the air, is a drag show by the wonderful LipSchtick. He does all costume changes on stage and is a one person show. This may even be preceded by a dinner still in the planning stage.

And this is only the beginning. Season hasn't even started yet. The next meeting will be held following Sunday service on August 3rd. Join us to talk more about FUN(d) raising for SJAMCC. Bring your friends, your ideas, and lets get the 2014-2015 church calendar year off to a rip-roaring and fun start!

Bev MacNeill

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Answers to Bible Challenge

Answer #1 Hail (Exodus 7:12)

Answer #2 Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

Answer #3 Into a herd of swine (Luke 8:29-32)

Answer #4 Hezekiah (2Kings 20:8-11)

Answer #5 Peter (Mark 14:30)

Answer #6 Jerusalem (Luke 19:41)

Answer #7 Psalms - 150 chapters

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This year, the marketing machine does not need to try to push the consumer toward Real Estate Purchases. With 1st Quarter Listings 2014, up a solid 12% over 1st Quarter listings 2013, and the average sale price of a single family home up 11.7% this year over last year, according to FAR (Florida Association of Realtors), now is a terrific time to Access Jack, jack@accessjack.com to evaluate your property in preparation for listing and sale over the next few months. With just 58 days, as the average Days On Market, prior to receiving a contract, now is the time to make needed landscaping changes and updates; touch up paint inside and out; and finish the spring cleaning that may have gone by the wayside.

Please Access Jack Lewis today at (239) 839-5927, for your Complimentary, No Obligation, Market Analysis of your property. If it's your goal to celebrate Christmas in December, in a new home, let me partner with you to reach that goal.

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