

Words of Faith

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Edelstein-Milton nuptials draw overflow crowd on New Year's Eve

In a standing-room-only ceremony accented in green and white, Sandy Edelstein and Andrew Milton were joined in marriage at Faith Presbyterian Church on New Year's Eve 2003.

Family members, friends, and acquaintances of the couple crowded into the sanctuary for a 6:00 p.m. service that ended the calendar year with a celebratory exclamation mark, and which created a happy momentum for the year that was to follow.

Music for the occasion, performed on a harpsichord in the balcony, was chosen with the theme of "If it's baroque, it doesn't need fixing," with prelude selections from that era, and continuing through the service with numbers from J.S. Bach, Domenico Scarlotti, and G.F. Handel.

Pastor Rayburn, in his remarks to the par-

ticipants and guests, spoke of marriage as "a most private matter with the most public consequences," and went on to describe a happy marriage as a powerful evidence of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as a union that serves a purpose that goes far beyond the personal happiness of husband and wife, as great as that happiness can be.

Two expansive floral arrangements at the front of the church included white roses, white delphinium, green cedar boughs, and variegated holly. Cedar boughs also formed a green arch that framed the bride and groom as they exchanged their vows.

The sanctuary glowed with candlelight. Indeed, the candlepower was such that it could have guided an airliner down for an emergency landing, with candles lining both sides of the center aisle, three sets of ▶ 7

December programs mark Christmas season

For more than ten years, the Christmas season at Faith has been marked with not one, but two programs in December.

The Covenant High School program, straightforwardly called CHS Christmas Concert XI, took place with back-to-back performances on December 11 and 12, and featured the Concert Choir, Madrigal Choir, and Chamber Choir in an hour-and-a-half program that ranged from French and English carols to snippets of Shakespeare to excerpts from George Frideric Handel's oratio, *The Messiah*.

Following a sprinkling of prelude selections on the piano, the Concert Choir got things off to a festive start with several numbers, including "Merrily on High," the "Zither Carol" (sung to a Czech folk tune), and "Silver Bells." After a musical interlude (*Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*) the Madrigal Choir, dressed to the hilt in the latest in Renaissance wear, sang several more pieces, including

"Good King Wenceslaus" and "Deck the Nutcracker Hall," which featured the music of Peter Tchaikovsky, the voices of the choir, and the footwork of Brittany Bond and Whitney Cook. The Chamber Choir then had a chance to practice its French (the chanson *Allon Gay Bergeres*) and Latin (*O Magnum Mysterium*), after which the Madrigal choir returned in full voice for selections from Handel's 1741 masterpiece.

The several choirs were conducted by Mrs. Florence Rayburn. After the program refreshments were served, and student artwork was on display in the school's classrooms and hallways.

On December 21 the Sunday school students told the story of the birth of Christ with a succession of Prophets, shepherds, angels, and kings, with a re-enactment of the nativity as well.

The hour-long program featured well-rehearsed performances from all ▶ 7

Biblical Worship: A Continuing Series

Baptism in Worship

By the Rev. Rob Rayburn

A regular feature of our worship services at Faith Presbyterian Church is the sacrament of baptism. In the more than twenty-five years of my pastorate we have witnessed some 377 baptisms (as of the end of January 2004) which means that on nearly 30% of the Lord's Days over those years we have had a baptism. In the first month of 2004 we had a baptism every Sunday. Understandably the largest number of these baptisms were infant baptisms, but through the years people of all ages have received baptism in our services.

Given our practice and that of the vast majority of Christian churches, it is an interesting fact that there is no precedent in the Bible for performing the ritual of baptism in a Sabbath worship service. The baptisms recorded for us in the New Testament were performed in large gatherings out-of-doors immediately after evangelistic preaching (Acts 2:41), in private homes or desert wastes after Christian witness had led to conversion (8:38; 9:19; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33), or immediately upon believers receiving instruction in the sacrament (19:5). Circumcision, baptism's predecessor, was likewise a ritual practiced generally in a home setting and never, so far as we know, in a church setting. In the same way that we have taken weddings out of the home—where they were conducted in the ancient Near East—into the church, we have taken the ritual of baptism out of the home, the city square, and the byway and brought it into church.

It was not difficult to do this and certainly not improper, for the ritual is itself the sign and seal, the embodiment of everything that Christian hearts confess in a service of worship on the Lord's Day. As baptism is initiation *into* the church there is certainly nothing improper in its being celebrated *in* the church. The other Christian sacrament, the Lord's Supper, is naturally a part of Christian worship and has been from apostolic times. Christopher Wren, the great English church architect, proposed that the narthex of the church should be large enough to accom-

modate the congregation standing and that the baptismal font should be located there. Baptisms then would take place, as in the New Testament, outside the church service, and only after the baptism would the congregation, enlarged by the one or several just baptized, enter the church service together. That, alas, is not possible in our case and we continue, happily enough, the tradition—for that is what it is—of placing baptisms in our Sunday worship.

Several things are important for a congregation to remember when baptisms occur in a worship service. *First*, the congregation's role in baptism is primarily that of witness. In our tradition—a very worthy tradition—we have the congregation take a vow at most baptisms. But that is a small and secondary part of the ritual of baptism. It would be no less a baptism were that vow to be omitted or, for that matter, were the vows of the parents to be omitted when their infant children are baptized. Such vows are not required in Holy Scripture and the Bible finds the nature and meaning of baptism in the ritual itself: the application of water by a Christian minister in the name of the Triune God. *Second*, as with so much else in Christian worship, the congregation must witness the baptism *by faith* as well as by sight. The great actors in the drama of a baptism are God and the individual being baptized. We are tempted to think, for example, that in an infant baptism the really important thing is the exhortation of the minister or the vows taken by the parents. That is natural enough. We can hear the minister and see the parents. But the minister is there because he is appointed to act on Christ's behalf and it is the Lord's doing it that makes baptism so important. Could we see the Lord Jesus sprinkling water on a person's head, could we hear him utter the divine name over that life, we would know that a very great thing had just happened, something that would, that must change a person's life, place it on a different foundation, and hold promise of the greatest

“What makes the difference between heaven and hell for any and every sinner is what God does and what God alone can do.”

conceivable blessing in time and eternity even as it lays a person under the greatest conceivable accountability. As with everything else in the Christian life, we need to come to a baptism with our faith awake and working, “seeing him who is unseen.”

American evangelical Christians, including those of the Reformed type, have a greater difficulty with ritual than other Christians have and do. We have been taught a highly intellectualized view of faith and a profoundly voluntarist view of the Christian life (*voluntas* is the Latin word for the human will and so “voluntarist” refers to views that emphasize the exercise of the human will). Because in the baptism of infants the person being baptized is not *thinking* anything, *doing* anything, or *willing* anything, we find it hard to see how it can be of any great importance. In the case of adult baptism, on the other hand, in order to make it more significant evangelicals have subtly transformed baptism into less what God does to and for someone and more what the person does for God. If baptism is a public confession of the person’s faith and demonstration of his loyalty to Christ then it seems more important. Not so! What makes the difference between heaven and hell for any and every sinner is what God does and what God alone can do. This is profoundly demonstrated in Christian baptism, a ritual in which the person is passive, in which something is done to him and for him, not by him. The very nature of baptism is in this way a picture of salvation by grace alone.

There is, to be sure, *some* doing on our part in baptism – the parents take vows, the adult convert takes vows – but our doing is an aftereffect of the rite, not the meaning of the rite itself. It is God’s doing, Christ’s doing that makes baptism so significant, so solemn, so life-changing. *That* doing, however, can be seen only by faith. The danger of Christian ritual, even those appointed for us in Holy Scripture, is the possibility of it being considered and practiced apart from living faith. Just as parents must bring their children in faith, give answer to their children’s baptism by raising them in faith; just as the children must in due time “improve” their baptism by the practice of their own faith; just as the adult convert must follow his baptism with a life of faith, so a Christian congregation must exercise her faith as she witnesses baptisms Lord’s Day by Lord’s Day. We do this not only by seeing the Lord by faith as he acts in baptism, but by taking that great

moment to heart for ourselves: giving thanks for the promise of salvation so wonderfully and solemnly given, joining our hearts in love to that newest member of the church, remembering our own baptism and that of others, and consecrating ourselves once again to that salvation signified and sealed to us when we were baptized.

At a Christian wedding we witness two people becoming a family, surely a most important moment. In Christian baptism, we witness by faith something still more wonderful and more important: the Lord Christ adding another human being to his church. No rite, no ritual in the world compares to this! ♦

DeSoto Scholarship Fund goal announced

Some 15 years ago, Eunice DeSoto, who along with her husband Harry has been a member at Faith for more than 50 years, had an idea: to establish an endowment fund that could be used for tuition at Covenant High School for families with special needs.

At the time she had been retired from a school-teaching career for several years, but still had plenty of energy, 28 years of experience, and opportunities to substitute teach regularly came her way. So, with the full support of Harry, she started substitute teaching on a regular basis.

Her initial goal was \$10,000, but after reaching it she thought it would be good to add to it somewhat, so another \$10,000 was added, then another \$10,000, and then even more after that.

Five years ago she turned 75, still felt pretty good, and kept adding dollars to the fund.

In January 2004 Covenant High School announced that the fund had reached \$100,000.

“I’ve had a very fruitful teaching life,” she says, “and God has blessed me in every way. I want this fund to be used to His glory.” It is also meant to pay tribute to her parents, Sy and Mae Robyns, who many years ago stretched themselves thin to pay for Eunice’s teacher-training course at a normal school in Mora, Minnesota. ♦

The Long Run: An Interview with Dallas Holm

Dallas Holm started his musical career in 1965, at the age of 16. That same year he became a Christian. He formed a band in 1976 and they played together until 1987, when he returned to solo performing. He continues to sing in churches and auditoriums across the country. He was interviewed by Phil Callaway, editor of Servant magazine, a publication of Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada. A version of this interview also appeared in the spring 2003 issue of Servant. Used by permission.

PC: You've been singing your songs for how many years?

DH: Well, full-time traveling for thirty-three years and thirty-four albums.

PC: Was this the first gold album by a contemporary artist?

DH: The album that we did in 1976 was called "Dallas Holm & Praise Live." We'd only been together as a group for six weeks; we didn't know anything. I wrote some songs and we got together in the Lindell (TX) high school auditorium; it's a town of 1200 people and the auditorium seats about 300. We decided to do a live album and we recorded it with gear out of a travel trailer. The first gold record ever in Christian music was Bill Gaither's, "Praise Gathering for Believers." But yes, the first gold album by a contemporary band or group was that album "Dallas Holm & Praise Live" which contained "Rise Again."

PC: What has helped you be faithful for thirty-three years of musical ministry?

DH: I think it's a combination of spiritual and practical. Some of it goes back to parenting. I had two wonderful parents who, from the time I was very young, told me that "You're no better and no worse than anyone else." I also had a wonderful pastor who gave me some of the best advice I ever got when I was a brand new Christian. I was playing in a band and when I got saved a lot of people in my area knew about that and I would get calls from churches asking me to come speak to their kids. Well, with every good intention I started going to all these places because I wanted to minister. But my pastor took me aside and said, "Dallas, you'll have all your life to minister; but you'll have only one chance to prepare. Stay

home, let me disciple you, and let's build up a foundation of the Word of God, and you'll have something to say all your life." Many young musicians today have an experience and they go with good intentions, but they have no knowledge of the Word, and no maturity, and in many cases no accountability to a local church; they're flying by the seat of their pants. There is the absolute necessity to spend time with God every day and I've always put it this way: we talk to God through prayer, He talks to us through His Word. You've got to have that daily walk with the Lord.

PC: A lot of artists might look at this and say, "Well, there's no way I can take a year off. I'm going to be passed over."

DH: Contemporary Christian music wasn't even a term when I started. Christian radio didn't exist. The Christian record industry as we know it now simply did not exist. The potential to be financially successful or to have any degree of notoriety in the realm of some new form of Christian music wasn't even a concept. I spent the first five years of my Christian life singing in jails and rest homes and on street corners. And I loved it! I thought, I've fallen in love with the King of the Universe. I'll sing any place that will have me. So I'm so thankful for that. It was a slow process, it took a long time. In 77 or 78, into the 80s with gold records and Dove awards and Grammy nominations, the perception was that Dallas Holm and Praise had just burst on the scene. But I'd already been out there probably 12 years just grinding away, plugging away, writing songs in every kind of situation you can imagine. But a young person today, strictly on the basis of their talent, can overnight have extreme success and consequently some of them get ruined in the

"I spent the first five years of my Christian life singing in jails and rest homes and on street corners."

process. Many others who deserve to have a ministry, who deserve to be heard, get discouraged because the big ticket didn't work out for them and the perception is so much that the big time is when you have the record deal and you do the big arenas and you get the Dove Awards.

I was there for a season, but the last couple of records I've done, I've just done myself. I don't contract any more. The record industry is just totally disinterested in the ministry of Dallas Holm or Randy Stonehill or Chuck Girard and other pioneers of contemporary Christian music. We're all back out there just selling records out of the trunk of our car and doing our own thing. We have to look at success from God's eyes. What is a successful season? All the numbers? No, but boy, we sure like it. It's real easy to say it doesn't mean much when it's happening. When it's not, you realize how much it does mean.

PC: Your wife Linda has had health troubles. How is she doing?

DH: She's doing really well. Sixteen years ago we found out she had cancer and from that time until now she has gone through surgeries and chemotherapy and radiation. She still continues to take monthly treatments, a shot and some oral medication. I know some people would say you're just rationalizing your way around it, but I believe that the greater miracle is when you can have joy and peace and confidence while He's taking you through something. When you've been healed, it's easy to feel good and be happy. But when you're still going through a struggle and a valley, to maintain that same degree of confidence is a greater miracle because it goes against everything in regards to human nature. We keep praying for that day when the doctor will say there's nothing there. We've prayed that and we believe God is more than able to do it. But we keep on our journey and find that God is incredibly faithful and His grace is more than sufficient for every moment.

PC: How has going through these deep waters impacted your ministry?

DH: When I stand before a crowd I need to see people as individuals, some of whom are going through the most difficult moments of their lives. They can be sitting there smiling, and seemingly everything's fine. But I know that there are people dying out there—physically, relationally, marriages, financially, you can just make a list of all the things that assault people. I end my concerts

with a song called "I Have Hope"—I have joy in the time of storm, I have faith, I have hope resting in His arms. I don't know what His time schedule is. God is up to things we don't know anything about. Oswald Chambers says "Sometimes it looks like God is missing the mark. It's just that we're too short-sighted to see what it is He's aiming at." When you get the perspective that God's up to so much bigger things, preparing us for eternity—these are just little blips on the radar screen, just little moments in this little package we call life and God's up to huge, eternal things. It's always been that way. They say you shouldn't just base what you think on experience, but we do have the experience of God's people in scripture. The year before last I read a devotional that was the writing of men and women from hundreds of years ago, the earliest was from 70 AD, and these are saints of God, some of whom were martyred for the cause of Christ. You listen to people like that. And there was never, ever a single hint of 10 Easy Ways to Avoid Suffering or God's Personal Plan for Your Prosperity. In fact the blatant theme throughout was Lord, if through loss, if through pain, if through sickness, if through death, if Thy name might be glorified, then so be it. That's a far cry from what I see today for the most part.

PC: What would you like to be remembered for?

DH: My parents raised me to value integrity, consistency, and honesty. Obviously people are going to remember the music, but I hope I'll be remembered as a good husband, a good father. But the character qualities that define Christ, the fruits of the Spirit, those are the kinds of things I want people to remember. Not what I did, but who I was and that hopefully I was a man of character. ♦

"We keep on our journey and find that God is incredibly faithful and His grace is more than sufficient for every moment."

New Members

By Ron Boydston

ANDREW MILTON was brought up in a Presbyterian church, raised with a knowledge of the Christian religion but no living faith. He studied at the University of California – Davis, and earned a doctorate in political science from the University of Oregon. A personal crisis brought him to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, and at the suggestion of FPC member and academic colleague Karen Travis he started attending Faith in the fall of 2002. There he became acquainted with Sandy Edelstein, one thing led to another, and they were married at Faith on New Year’s eve 2003. He has two children – Jackson (8), and Miranda (4), and teaches politics and government at the University of Puget Sound.

JIM and PAIGE PRICE have been married for 26 years, and have lived in Tacoma for six years, but have been Christians for less than a year. They met and were married while on a Scientology mission, but gave little thought to spiritual things until last year, when, with no particular purpose, Jim started reading the Bible. “After a while it occurred to me that it was just what it claimed to be,” he recalls, and subsequently accepted Christ. Some time later Paige followed him into the faith, also as a result of doing some independent reading. They live in the north end of Tacoma, where Jim is part owner of a small software company, where Paige also works. She also gardens, and is learning to play the piano.

DEREK WHALEY is a junior at Seattle Pacific University, majoring in sociology and business, and a 2001 graduate of Covenant High School. His church background is non-denominational, but his time at CHS produced some good friendships and impressed him with the way that church members practiced their faith.

Baptisms

WILLIAM FARELLY, infant son of Nicolas & Alison Farelly (PMI missionaries to France) ♦
JOY CASSIS, infant daughter of Bob & Ruth Ann Cassis ♦
NATHANAEL KAMKE, infant son of Jonathan & Brooke Kamke

Child Professions

HANNAH LAWTY, daughter of Doug & Amy Lawty ♦



Andrew Milton



Derek Whaley

Christmas Programs

1 ◀ grades, plus selections by the Junior Choir and a bevy of piano tunes during the prelude, along with Scripture readings and the lighting of a series of candles to introduce each segment of the program.

Highlights of the evening included:

- A tender rendition of “While Jesus Sleeps” by the first and second-grade girls.

- The portrayal of shepherds by a number of wiggling, exuberant first, second, and third grade boys, who watched their flocks—and the audience, the floor, the ceiling, and each other—by night.

- A narration of Luke 2:15-20 by Karl Kvale, who exited the stage while still reciting his lines, with the last of the words trying to make their way back to the microphone even as their speaker was heading away from it.

- A mellifluous presentation of “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” by the high school girls.

- A robust “March of the Kings” by the 4th through 8th grade boys, who marched up the aisle, bearded, robed, and headdressed, did their kingly duties, then marched back out again, in record time.

- Some two dozen angel-shaped distractions, ages two through five, fitted out with silver, red, and gold halos, who gave disarming, if somewhat unfocused, presentations of “That Boy Child of Mary” and “Away in a Manger.”

The program was the distillation of many hours of practice by both students and teachers, and resulted in a focused re-telling of the most significant event in human history. This dramatic narrative has been told and retold for the better part of the last 2,000 years, was foretold long before that, and has the power to change lives to this very day. ♦

Legacy of Faith update

Clerk of session Steve Jack announced in January that some \$1.2 million had been pledged towards the planned new addition to the church building. A June 2004 start of construction may be possible depending on the construction bid, lending package and additional donations. Some 100 of the 190 members or adherent families have attended informational meetings on the proposed new wing, which is anticipated to cost \$4.3 million. ♦

Edelstein-Milton nuptials

1 ◀ seven candles on either side of the front of the sanctuary, and another seven candles at the very front of the church.

The bride wore a white fitted drop-waist beaded bodice with a medium train and satin skirt, with an accompaniment of stephanotis blossoms in her hair.

Ever the thorough planner, she had also arranged for three inches of snow to fall the day before the ceremony, extending the green and white motif outside to the south Puget Sound area.

Afterwards, the celebration moved to downtown Tacoma, with a reception held at The Vault, where the wedding party and guests dined on prime rib, salmon, chicken, and a marzipan wedding cake.

The couple honeymooned in Greece and France, and then returned to Tacoma, where the bride maintains a private counselling practice and the groom teaches at the University of Puget Sound. ♦

All that is under this vault of heaven, and betwixt us and death, and on this side of the sun and moon, is but toys, night-visions, head-fancies, poor shadows, watery froth, godless vanities at their best, and black hearts, and salt and sour miseries, sugared over and confected with an hour's laughter or two, and the conceit of riches, honour, vain, vain court, and lawless pleasures... Turn, turn your heart to the other side of things, and get it once free of these entanglements, to consider eternity, death, the clay bed, the grave, awesome judgment, everlasting burning quick in hell... Consider heaven and glory... Look into those depths (without a bottom) of loveliness, sweetness, beauty, excellency, glory, goodness, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ; and ye shall then cry down the whole world, and all the glory of it, even when it is come to the summer-bloom; and ye shall cry, “Up with Christ, up with Christ's Father, up with eternity of glory!”

—from The Letters of Samuel Rutherford, first published in 1664

What does a missionary do?

What do you do on the mission field? We have asked that question, and been asked that question.

Here are some answers I know you have heard, some of which we have often given ourselves: You are fulfilling the Great Commission, taking the Good News of the Gospel to people who have not heard. You are on the cutting edge of what God is doing in the world. You are participating in the work of Jesus to bring the world to Him.

All of that it is true our hearts respond with a loud "Amen! Here am I, Lord, Send me!"

But what if the answer went more like this? The work of missions is hassling over church buildings, and having long meetings to deal with interpersonal and money problems. It is filling out reports about attendance left undone for a year, counting conversions, and raising support. It is having to stand by and see people suffer from diseases that you have

no skill to do anything about and not enough resources to make a difference. It is having friends die of malaria and others with AIDS.

To that description our hearts tend to whimper, "Here I am, Lord, could you please send someone else?"

And yet it is in that second list God has blessed us in Abidjan the last month. David is still going through the attendance for the last year and recording who has come, how often, and who is from a Muslim background. As he goes through the lists, we are impressed by how much God has done in so many lives. One lady that became a Christian a few years ago has led her mother, grandmother, brother, sister-in-law and a friend to the Lord – all from a Muslim background. It is a privilege to be part of her life, and see God transform her and her surroundings.

Many in our churches are without jobs. Many are very sick. Please pray

that the jobless would look for and find jobs. Pray too that God would heal the sick, and comfort and sustain them. How has that been an encouragement to us? Well, in one way it hasn't. We don't see any good coming from poverty and sickness at the moment. I wish we had the resources to "fix" the problems we encounter daily. But there is a joy in being part of their lives, and loving them, and directing our eyes together towards the One who has all the resources needed. We look in hope together toward the Great Physician and that does encourage us. ♦

—Excerpted from the October 2003 prayer letter of David and Marcia Jones, PCA missionaries working in Cote d'Ivoire

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Church Calendar

February 25: Ash Wednesday,
Lent begins ♦ **March 4-6:** Couples'
Retreat, Lake Quinault Lodge
♦ **March 18-19:** Covenant High
School drama production, "An
Ideal Husband" ♦ **April 9:** Good
Friday ♦ **April 11:** Easter Sunday ♦
April 23: Pacific NW Presbytery
meets at Liberty Bay Presbyterian
Church, Poulsbo, WA