

EchoEs from the Valley

March 15, 2009

Volume 36, No. 3

Our Church Staff

Pastor

Rev. Michael D. Roper

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Ms. Marcia McBride

Pianist

Mr. Thom Martin

Organist

Ms. Sandy Mize

Ministry Assistant

Ms. Louise LePortier

Nursery Assistant

Mrs. Shelia Harkleroad

Housekeeper

Mrs. Brenda Waters



*Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.*



A Loving, Accepting, Affirming Baptist Church

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The Hearts Of The People And The Doors Of This Church Are Open To Everyone



BIKES & BIBLES A Way to God

An Interview with Pastor Mike
by Shelia Harkleroad

Pastor Mike joined Valley Brook Baptist Church as its pastor and with his bike rides, he tries to involve folks in a healthy habit just as he tries to bring those around him closer to God.

I sat across the desk from him and wondered about the many things I did not know about him. I knew that he was a captain of industry who came to the ministry later than most, leaving behind big business for the most important business of all. I knew that he had baptized me and helped knit together the pieces to a long and perplexing spiritual journey. He had spoken at the memorial service of many of his new church, helping to assuage the hardest pain of some of his new flock; and been at the hospital before some of his sick congregation members even arrived there, beating the EMS team. He was a no-nonsense, brass tacks kind of guy--even the blind man in the parable could see that.

I remembered when he was selected as our new pastor, and most of us only had a name, with the selection committee having all the details. We had to meet and greet this man of God and form our impressions. It didn't take long for me--it happened at the first family supper after he was pastor. I am a people watcher and there is much to be gleaned from actions and reactions, body language and gestures. He milled quietly around, talking to all while we formed our two lines and served ourselves. Then, and only then, did he start to fill a plate. Yes, there it was, clear as day. His flock would come first, and we knew that without a word or another sermon or a meeting. He road-tested well, this new man of the cloth.

But, it was time to find out the other things that would help us to know Pastor Mike Roper. And as we did that, we thought we would share these things with you, should you like to come and visit us at Valley Brook Baptist Church.

So, to the questions:

Q.: Pastor Mike, shortly after you came to Valley Brook we saw a profusion of bicycles on Saturday mornings as you organized our first bike rides. What led you to this activity, and how does it serve our church?

A.: **Having been a cyclist enthusiast since 1976 leading a ride from the church was a natural progression. This kind of visible activity shows us to be alive in the community and demonstrates an emphasis on physical health as well as spiritual health. Each compliments the other.**

Q.: Could you briefly tell our readers how you came to the ministry?

A.: **During the decade of the 1990's several influences came together that caused me to slow down the pace of living and begin to appreciate the truly important aspects of life. One such influence was caring for aging parents. That not only caused me to slow down a bit; it also brought about a realization of the significance and value of human life and relationships. People are so important.**

Then, in 1998 I was asked to substitute for a Sunday morning Bible Study teacher just "one time." That one time became a permanent pleasure and I've been teaching the Bible practically every Sunday since. In 2000 I enrolled in Luther Rice Seminary to take "one" theology class just to be a better equipped teacher. Next semester there were two classes along with a growing realization of God's call to ministry. As we often hear: "The rest is history."

Q.: What do you see as the biggest challenge for Christianity in today's chaotic world with its daily financial and ethical woes?

A: **Financial uncertainty is a significant concern. Whenever people are frightened or unsure there is a generally greater appreciation for spiritual matters. People turn to God for comfort and direction. We are familiar with the old cliché "There are no**

atheists in foxholes.” The church offers stability and perspective that can encourage and offer hope in any time.

The ethical deterioration of our society is a major problem for the church and for society as a whole. The prevailing humanist ideology with its emphasis on self fulfillment and lack of restraint is taking its toll all across America; the false attraction of such philosophy is bringing about rapid and devastating results. Morality, self respect and respect for others has brought about increasing crime rates, major behavioral problems in schools and a deterioration of the American work ethic. It is difficult for Christianity, which calls for self-sacrifice, surrender and discipline, to counter a system that appeals to what is *promoted* to be a life of self-fulfillment, freedom, personal choice, liberty and pleasure. This presents a great challenge for the church today. Missionary, Jim Taylor, addressed the challenge of Christian surrender when he said, “He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.”

(To be continued in the April Echoes)



A TEA PARTY IS A SPA FOR THE SOUL

Date: April 25, 2009
 Time: 3:00—5:00 p.m.
 Guest Speaker: Sherri Dodd
 Cost: \$10.00
 (Early bird special, Buy two tickets, Get the third ticket for \$5.00).

The Tea Party is for Ages 14 and above.

Doors open at 2:30 p.m. for China Exhibit and to choose your place at a table.



In the Spirit of “Black Beauty”

Second Chances

Based on a true story, *Second Chances* is the uplifting tale of a little girl’s physical and emotional reawakening after a car crash claims her father—and her spirit. The accident leaves 10-year-old Kelsey Mulrooney unable to walk without crutches. However, the damage to Sunny’s leg pales in comparison to her emotional wounds, which cause her to withdraw from life and everyone around her. Miraculously, things begin to change when Sunny and her Mother move next door to a horse ranch run by one-time rodeo star, Ben Taylor.

Come join us for this story of Understanding, Giving, and Love...Everyone Needs a Second Chance.

MISSION MARCH/March 29, 2009



Annie Armstrong/Global Missions



April 5	<i>Easter Cantata</i>	11:00 a.m.
April 9	<i>Maundy Thursday</i>	7:00 p.m.
April 12	<i>Easter Sunday</i>	
	<i>Sunrise Service</i>	7:00 a.m.
	<i>Morning Worship</i>	11:00 a.m.

The Road
to Golgotha



**GAME DAY
MARCH 14**
4 - 7 p.m.

Chess, Checkers, Board Games and
other Fun Stuff. Free Entertainment!

From the Editor:

The **Echoes'** staff invites your input. Let us know of your committee work, group activities that are underway and of interest. If you are able to help with an article, please provide the church office with that information in written form or via e-mail at echoes@vbbchurch.com

Remember, the **Echoes**, is your newsletter.

VALLEY BROOK

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