

The Carpenter's Tool Box

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 6

JUNE, 2008

“The Prodigals Predicament” by Rev. Duane L. Sich

“At last he came to his senses and said, ‘All my Father’s hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve!’ I will get up and go to my Father and say, ‘Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer worth to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.’ So he got up and started back to his Father.”
Luke 15: 17-20

The prodigal has painted himself into a precarious corner. Actually, the problem was the broken relationships within the family; the situation was that the brothers didn’t love or trust each other, nor did they have much respect for their father. For example: When the prodigal asked his father for his share of the inheritance ... early; well, that attitude was just as if the son had said, “Dad, I wish you

were dead, but since you’re not, can I have mine now?” Mine??? It wasn’t his; it was his Father’s to do with however He pleased. For this son to assume that it was his (or even that one day it would be) was selfish and sad. All he saw in his father was a “ticket to ride” – and when he got it, he rode right out of there. Both the selfish request and the shameful run-away must have broken his Father’s heart. However, he probably asked this sorry favor of his father because his relationship with his brother wasn’t that good either. In that culture, the tradition would have been that when the father passed away, all the inheritance would go to the elder brother to divide among the family. Knowing how the elder brother felt about his younger sibling, (as revealed later in the

story when he slandered him saying he squandered the money and slept with harlots) the prodigal probably knew that if the inheritance was totally given to his elder brother, he’d be lucky to get a trifle. So he figured if he was going to get anything, he’d have a better chance “sweet-talking” his Dad rather than trusting his brother.

But then, cut off from family, adrift in a foreign land and “easy-money” in his pocket, it was predictable that his demise would develop. Slowing sinking, his instability and short-time/self-serving friends left him standing in the sorriest situation he could have ever imagined himself being in. He slid to rock bottom with no “hand-grips” or help to get back up.

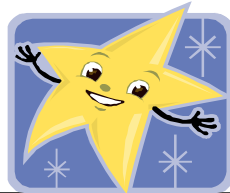
He must have thought - What

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THIS MONTH’S STARS! THANK YOU’S TO...

- ★ John McDonagh, who led the Friends of the Carpenter Board of Directors through a Board Development workshop on May 20th.
- ★ All our many volunteers who attended the Volunteer Appreciation on May 15th. Our òVolunteers Light the Wayö!

- ★ Our Auction Planning Committee, led by Chair, Lee Nickels.
- ★ Our Rummage Sale Cleaners & Sorters, led by Clarice Garrison!



- ★ Dan Nicholas, Brent Stahl, and Rodger Stevens who are working on a Sanctuary Cross for the new East Woods Presbyterian Church.
- ★ Hockinson H.S. Student Colin Sherer, who, along with 11 other students, helped with the Share House Brunch and Event on May 17th.



Inviting the Homeless to

- C -ommunity
- H -ope
- R -enewal
- I -nspiration
- S -elf Esteem
- T -ruth
- Through Friendship

The Carpenter's Tool Box is a monthly publication of FRIENDS of the CARPENTER
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When he came up with this chance idea – “My Father (Dear old Dad) ... he’s always loved me even when I didn’t deserve it.” Maybe if I just go back with “my tail between my legs,” he’ll give me another chance. I’ll tell him “I blew it, I goofed, I’ve made a major mistake, but please, just give me a job.” He would continue, “Oh Dad, I understand how you must feel, so don’t treat me like a son – I don’t deserve it; just pay me what you pay your other servants.” The Prodigal probably figured, day by day and dollar by dollar, he would work his way back to walking tall. The Bible says, “He came to his senses,” but it may have more likely been a scheme that he thought made sense than any sense of remorse.

What he never thought of or even remembered from before was his Father’s gifts of grace. Whatever he imagined his Father’s response might be, he could have never imagined the unconditional love his Father still had for him. As he came home, he was just hoping for a lucky break, but seeing and sensing his Father’s lavish love, it broke his heart. Humbled to his knees, ironically his pre-planned speech now took on new meaning. “FATHER, I AM NOT WORTHY TO BE CALLED YOUR SON.” All he wanted and hoped for was a job, but what his Father wanted and hoped for was His Son ... to welcome him back into the family!

turned into a party. Oh, not so much because of anything he did, but rather because of the power and potential of grace ... in this case, the Father’s grace. Truthfully, the cost was enormous; not just the property and money, but the heartache and undoubted headaches the Father endured. There must have been excruciating frustration ... wondering why, wondering what else could he have done, why didn’t his kids get alone, why didn’t they love Him, what went wrong, what else? Any parent (or for that matter, any person) suffers and sacrifices the grief of loss when relationships fail and fall apart. Such must have been (an still is) our heavenly Father’s feelings at the fall of His family ... the first time and every other time we disrespect His love. Like in the story of the Prodigal, and yes also the story of Christ’s passion on the cross, the only fix for failed relationships is forgiveness; it is grace given and grace received, humility heartfelt and real, and reconciliation realized and repaired.

At Friends of the Carpenter, our mission is to create an atmosphere and experience of welcome and grace. Many of our homeless friends come to the ministry just wanting help, even if only in the form of a “hand out.” They come as if frustrated in “a far country,” sometimes shamed for feeding upon the leftovers and scraps of social systems

and charities. Their reasons and stories sometimes seem like schemes and scams, trying to defend their dilemma or divert consequences to some other source. So often the truth is ... it’s just a mess, mistakes were made, resources were wasted and relationships ruined – disconnected and damaged family ties, un- or under-employment, poor peer associations and no path in sight for reconciliation or renewal.

The mission statement of Friends of the Carpenter is “Inviting the homeless to CHRIST through friendships.” And though the Christ we invite folks to meet is the Son of God, we use the word as an acronym: **C** – community, **H** – hope; **R** – renewal; **I** – inspiration; **S** – self-esteem; **T** – truth. As persons experience these aspects of God’s grace, love and hospitality – they meet the risen Christ; and yes, the celebration and way back home begins.




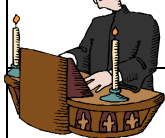



In the scriptural story of the Prodigal Son, we don’t really know how the story ends. We don’t know if the elder brother ever “got it” when His Father asked him to come in. Maybe he did, maybe he just continued his self-righteous condemnation of his brothers mistakes. And actually, we might wonder how long the prodigal kept his priorities in place. Hopefully forever! However the point of the story is, “What are we going to do?” Who of us has perfect relationships with our

family, with our friends or even with our Lord? Will those of us, who though we may not be physically homeless, find our true home with God? Will we be humbled, not so much by our embarrassing mistakes in life, but rather by receiving God’s grace ... expensive grace paid on the cross ... for our reconciliation and relationship with God? And what about our lost brothers and sisters ... those who made mistakes, lost their way, and left for the far country? Will we do whatever we can to pray, proclaim and promote God’s grace to have its full potential and power? Have no doubt ... it will probably be frustrating, expensive and exhausting; Christ didn’t give up on us ... and He’s counting on His disciples to keep the doors open.

In order for the Friends of the Carpenter mission to be realized, we constantly need (and invite) volunteers to help make the hospitality happen. For those who are able, we urge you to take a turn at the Friendship Center. We have many varied and fun and supervised activities which create the atmosphere of hospitality and friendship. Best of all, the “party is for everyone!” Regardless how the Bible story ended, let’s make sure “we get it” and keep giving God’s grace away!

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JUNE & JULY 2008

| | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Father's Day 15  | 16 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 1—3:30 pm Rummage Meeting | 17 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am Auction Meeting | 18 Serve SHARE Breakfast No Open Shop Noon Worship No Event | 19 Serve SHARE Breakfast No Open Shop → Set-up for Rummage Sale → | 20 Serve SHARE Breakfast Share Outreach No Open Shop | 21 Cook SHARE Brunch NO EVENT  |
| 22 | 23 Serve SHARE Breakfast Cook SHARE dinner & Worship → Set-up for Rummage Sale → | 24 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am | 25 Serve SHARE Breakfast 9:30—11:30 am Noon Worship No Event | 26 Serve SHARE Breakfast → 9TH ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE → 9 am-6 pm | 27 Serve SHARE Breakfast → 9 am-6 pm → | 28  |
| 29 Rev. Sich preaches at Mill Plain Methodist  | 30 Serve SHARE Breakfast No Open Shop → Rummage Sale Clean-Up → | July 1 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am | 2 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Noon Worship & EVENT | 3 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Friendship Center closes at Noon | 4 Independence Day Holiday Friendship Center Closed | 5  |
| 6 Rev. Sich preaches at Calvary Presbyterian, Portland  | 7 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 1—3:30 pm | 8 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am | 9 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Noon Worship & NEWSLETTER | 10 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Board of Directors Meeting | 11 Serve SHARE Breakfast Share Outreach Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am | 12 |
| 13 | 14 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 1—3:30 pm | 15 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am | 16 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Noon Worship & Multnomah Falls | 17 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am | 18 Serve SHARE Breakfast Share Outreach Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am | 19 Cook SHARE Brunch & EVENT  |
| 20 Rev. Sich preaches at Beautiful Savior Lutheran | 21 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 1—3:30 pm | 22 Serve SHARE Breakfast Center Devotion & Activity 9:30—11:30 am | 23 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am Noon Worship | 24 Serve SHARE Breakfast Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am | 25 Serve SHARE Breakfast Share Outreach Open Shop 9:30—11:30 am | 26 |

9th Annual Rummage Sale

June 26, 27, 28
Thurs. & Fri. Hours: 9am—6pm
Sat. "Bag Sale": 9am—12noon
@ The Friendship Center
1600 W.20thSt.


Additional volunteers are needed for sorting, pricing AND SET-UP! Days are flexible, and training is available. Please call the office at 750-4752 to join in! If you've had previous experience at other sales... we'd love your help!
NEXT MEETING FOR SALE VOLUNTEERS:
Monday, June 16th - 1:00 pm at the Friendship Center

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Judy Enders, Financial Secretary

*Dear Friends, Let us love one another because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God
1 John 4:7*

Back by Popular Demand!....
A FRIENDS of the CARPENTER
WAREHOUSE
DANCE and BBQ

Saturday, August 2, 2008 5 - 8 pm

Admission: \$3 at the door or \$5 per couple
Dinner Available! Raffle Prizes Too!

Featuring the tunes of Beacock's
New Horizons Dance Band,
held at the Friendship Center

1600 W. 20th St.,
Vancouver, WA
98660

COME AND
MEET NEW AND
OLD FRIENDS!



The Annual Friends of
the Carpenter Auction
"In Celebration of the
10th Anniversary of the Ministry!"
Sat. Sept. 27, 2008
at the Red Lion Inn at the Quay

- RESERVE YOUR DINNER TICKET FOR \$50 !
- SPONSOR A TABLE !
- DONATE AN ITEM FOR THE AUCTION !
- VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH PLANNING !

Help is Needed in Seeking Donations
for the Live and Silent Auctions;
Baskets; Decorations; Data Entry, Hospitality;
Registration, Cashiering, Check-out;
Set-Up & Clean-Up!

Come to the next meeting at the Red Lion Inn at the
Quay, Tuesday, June 17th, at 7 pm.
Give us a call to add your name to a committee!