

The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church
Cookeville, TN 38501
www.firstprescookeville.org

August 2011

The Impossible Dream

It was great fun for Debbie and me to attend *The Man of La Mancha* and listen to the great songs of that powerful story. Rick Woods helped bring it to life with his magnificent performance and the high point of the story is often the singing of *The Impossible Dream*: "To dream the impossible dream, to beat the unbeatable foe, to bear with unbearable sorrow, to run where the brave dare not go. To right the unrightable wrong, to love, pure and chaste from afar, to try when your arms are too weary, to reach the unreachable star." It is a continuous string of seemingly impossible tasks. And yet, by the end of the story a transformation has definitely taken place and love has triumphed over hate.

I recognize that this is only a beautiful story and that the real world has many examples of love being destroyed by hatred and anger. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that God's plan is for love to triumph over evil and I have seen that transformative power of God enough times to know that impossible dreams can become reality. I am convinced that a big part of our problem is that we don't have strong enough faith to let love take its course. We become impatient and want things to happen sooner. We get angry when things don't go our way and we want to strike back and get even. We are often afraid that if we don't act quickly enough, we will miss some special opportunity. Then, what we really miss is the chance for love to work. Paul wrote that we must not try to overcome evil with evil but we must overcome evil with good.

When there is so much evil in the world, it can be difficult to maintain faith, hope and love. I thought about that while watching the horrifying story out of Norway. It was quite easy for me to dismiss as completely wrong, the idea that God wants Christians to kill people as a way of fighting immigration, Islam and multiculturalism. I am confident that the God of love does not command Christians to commit murder. I am also convinced that God does not want Christians to take the law into their own hands and act on the legitimate anger that is caused by such outrageous acts. To answer hatred and violence with more hatred and violence is not what Jesus would do.

What I have a terrible time dealing with is the knowledge that God still loves the shooter and calls me to love him as well. That's a tough one for me. I have a difficult time separating my sense of justice from my desire for revenge. I want him to be punished and to suffer for what he has done. I want him to feel even a fraction of the pain that he has caused so many innocent people to feel, even though I realize that nothing that happens to him can bring back any of those who have been lost in this tragedy. I also have a hard time seeing where any good comes from this. Where is the silver lining? In all things, God works for good but where does that happen here?

Asking that question puts me in the same boat with Job and so many others throughout history and it is then that I must put my ultimate trust in God, who is in charge and has already won the victory through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Then I can also start to heal and be inspired by the gracious and bold response of some of the survivors of this and every tragedy; people who are willing to forgive and move forward; people who are not willing to sacrifice their principles for a quick response to hatred. I appreciated the words of Norway's Prime Minister when he said that Norway would not change their democracy or restrict their freedoms or their openness but would recommit themselves to them and show the world that evil cannot overcome good. My personal prayers of peace to all victims of hatred and violence.

Peace,
Pat H.

100th Anniversary Finale

We will conclude the celebration of the congregation's 100th anniversary on Sunday, August 14. Several former pastors and family members have been invited to attend that day and say a few words during the worship service. We will also rededicate the sanctuary, which was originally dedicated on August 11, 1910. We will also dedicate the new organ that day and hear the music that was commissioned for our celebration. Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for an extended potluck luncheon and send us into our next century of service.

And After the Festivities at the Church



Helping Hands *of Putnam County*

Benefit Concert

Wei Tsun and Seanad Chang and Friends

Sunday, August 14,

3:00 p.m.

Wattenbarger Hall, TTU Campus

Tickets \$25.00 available at the door

(Check or cash only, please)

Sunday School Teachers

We are in need of folks to help teach our Sunday School classes. Several new families have started attending the church recently and we need some committed people to teach, especially the younger ages. Our church has a great reputation for high quality adult education classes and we want to make sure that our children's and youth classes are at the same level. Currently, our classes are small and it is very important that we be prepared to meet the needs of those who want meaningful education for their children and grandchildren. Please give prayerful consideration to the possibility that you are being called to provide this necessary service. Contact Pat Handlson if you have questions or want more information.

Financial Update

At the end of June, the church's overall financial status is good. Giving for the first half of the year was just under \$121,000. Expenses for the year so far have been just over \$131,000, including about \$29,000 for the new virtual organ components.

For the past several years, the church has started out the year with a strong core of regular giving. This year has not been as strong as the previous several years. Now as we move into the summer months, it will be important to remain committed to our support of the church's ministry and mission. This will be especially important in the area of local mission, such as support of Helping Hands and the Samaritan Fund. Thanks to all for your generous support of the church.

Tom Aitken has shared with the session that after four years as church treasurer, he is ready to turn the job over to someone else. Tom would like to take the last months of 2011 to train his replacement and will remain available for advice and help in the future. It is always good to have more than one person who knows the system and this rotation model works very well to insure that church finances remain in good order. Anyone who may be interested or wants more information is invited to speak directly to Tom or to David Johnson

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Wednesday night Bible study lessons are being led by Virginia Lovellette during the month of August. Lessons are based on a video series by Ray Vander Laan. Beginning on September 14, Wednesday night study will examine spiritual gifts and offer everyone an opportunity to understand spiritual gifts and explore their own.

Dinner Out

In October the Dinner Out Group will change to the fourth Saturday to attend Fiddler on the Roof at 2:30 pm at the Cumberland County Playhouse in Crossville. Tickets are \$23 or \$12 for children/students. Dinner afterwards will be at Forte's on the Square. It is a steak and seafood house with an Italian flair in a historic building! Questions? Diane Glasgow 260-9350

C2G Returns in the Fall

The Come 2 Gather group will return to Fellowship Hall when the fall semester begins at TTU. On Sunday, August 28, there will be a salad and sandwich supper for returning members of the group and interested newcomers. The meal will begin at 5pm, with a time of discussion and prayer to follow. After the initial meeting, C2G will return to its usual format of worship at 5pm, followed by a potluck meal, generally wrapping up by 7pm.

For those who need a refresher on what Come 2 Gather is; it is a Christ centered experimental casual service of worship where everyone is invited to participate. There is a brief message, based on Scripture, followed by an open ended discussion and opportunities to share prayer concerns. Music is provided by participants. It is an alternative to the traditional worship style of Sunday morning, and, it is also different from many of the college ministry worship services that are available on the TTU campus. The leadership of C2G comes predominantly from First Presbyterian Church but other Christian traditions are also represented. All ages are welcome and all stages of faith development are invited to participate and share in the journey.

On several Thursdays in August, C2G will meet at Sweet Sallie's from 3:00-4:30pm for book discussions. The next books being discussed include "What Jesus Meant," by Garry Wills; and, "The Naked Now," by Richard Rohr. For more information, talk to Andy Smith or Pat Handlson. Everyone is welcome to have a cupcake and share their thoughts.

More Montreat

By Dori Bullard

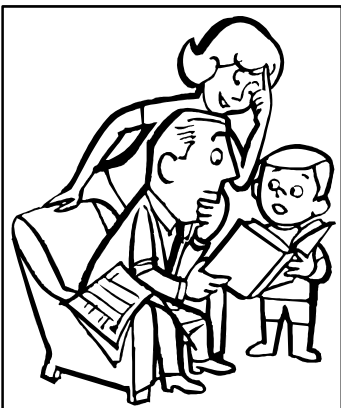
Montreat was really fun. We played games, learned about God, met new friends, and just had a blast. I met many different people who had many different ideas about God. I got to express my own feelings about God.

The only thing I didn't like was we lived in a cabin that was far from Montreat. We had to walk there and back. But overall, it was a very inspirational experience. I would love to go back next year

Halloween Block Party

Halloween falls on a Monday this year and several local organizations are working to provide a community party for families and children. Broad Street will be closed between Dixie and Fleming Streets for several hours that evening and cars filled with candy and goodies will offer families a safe and exciting experience that evening. There will also be activities in the newly expanded Dogwood Park. Our church is invited to participate by providing people, cars and candy during that time period. We can also collect Halloween costumes for families that might not otherwise be able to afford them. If there is interest, we could also provide some kind of activity in the parking lot during the event. This may become an annual event along Broad Street and ideas are welcome during this formative stage. Contact Pat Handlson for more information.

Read Anything Good Lately?



WHEN MEN WIN GLORY, by Jon Krakauer

By Thelma Johnson

Krakauer, a superb journalist, has taken on the story of Pat Tillman, who was killed in Afghanistan by friendly fire. The book deals with his childhood and his passion for football, with emphasis on his desire and ability to go beyond what was possible. Whatever he did, he did with determination and sheer will power. He was considered too small for football, but he became a valued member of the Arizona Cardinals, only to walk away from a three million dollar contract to join the service after 9/11. His goal was to be a Ranger, and he was sent to Iraq and later to Afghanistan on the Pakistan border to hunt for insurgents where he was killed by our own troops in a night firefight. The incident was covered up by the government and he was acclaimed a hero. It was a time when the country was hungry for good news. The truth of the coverup became known a few weeks later. The book emphasizes his determination and desire to do the right thing, although it cost him his life

SARAH'S KEY by Tatiana De Rosney

By Linda Wilson

The Velodrome d'Hiver (Vel' d'Hiv') roundup took place in the heart of Paris on July 16, 1942. The story tells of the historical events although the characters are fictional. Sarah is a ten year old girl who is taken with her Jewish parents by the French police in the middle of the night. Julia Jarmond is an American journalist writing an article commemorating the sixtieth anniversary. As Julia begins her research, she stumbles upon secrets that link her to Sarah. It will make you cry and tug at your heart as you relive this horrific tragedy.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 01—Ted Heselton
- 03—Lucille Robertson
- 05—Kay Powell
- 06—Chynna Crawford
- 06—Bill Dyer
- 11—Albert Wilhelm
- 12—Linda Hurt
- 12—John McGee
- 12—Malcolm Williams
- 14—Carolyn Medley
- 18—Brenda Lundholm
- 20—Helen Copeland
- 26—Virginia Morton
- 26—Kat Bullard
- 31—Patsy Williams

ANNIVERSARIES

- 01—Katie & Krishna Kumar
- 03—Linda & Tom Hurt
- 12—Virginia & Gary Lovellette
- 14—Sam and Diane Glasgow
- 16—Mike & Carolyn Medley
- 17—Ann and Kenneth Turner
- 17—Wil and Charley Wilson
- 26—Dave and Donna Johnson
- 29—Dave & Barbara Riddell
- 31—Tom & Marilyn Aitken

In Our Prayers

In Nursing Homes or Assisted Living Facilities. Helen Copeland; Edith Jared, Joanne Miller, Frances Snyder.

Keep in prayer also: Mary Armstrong; Mike Birdwell; Cleao & Joyce DuBey; Sam Glasgow; Don Medley; Hugh Piercey; Gloria Thomas; Martha Jane & Whit Whitaker; Mary Smith; Grace Anna Sine's brother, Don Green; Linda Wilson's sister, Diane Roby; Barbara Riddell's brother, Jim Gerchow; Peggy Rittenberry's sister, Linda West; Jean Metz; Linda Furtsch; Cindy Dyer; Susan Dowland; Deryl Martin's nephew, Kyle Martin; and the people in the armed services, especially Giles Evans.

Church Office:

Mon.-Fri. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
 (931) 526-4424
 (firstprescooke@frontiernet.net)
 Pastor: The Rev. Pat Handlson
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 (phandlson@frontiernet.net)
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Next newsletter deadline is

August 23

Phone Debbie Handlson at 536-5486
 or e-mail (phandlson@aol.com) or
 Katie Kumar at 528-7968 or
 e-mail (KJKumar@ntech.edu)
 with any information
 you would like to have included.

Save the date

September 24, 2011

Handlsons' Annual Hot Dog Day

First Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
 20 N. Dixie Ave.
 Cookeville, TN 38501

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