

The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church
Cookeville, TN 38501
www.firstprescookeville.org
June, 2011

TRENDS OF THE CHURCH

For the first five years of my time in Cookeville, the church experienced slow but steady growth in nearly all aspects of the life of the church, from worship and education attendance to financial support and mission projects. Over the past several months we have seen a change in that pattern. The change is small but noticeable. We have seen a decline in attendance at worship and Sunday school, as well as Wednesday night dinner and Bible study. Our regular giving has leveled off and only our mission projects currently remain in the growth column.

There are a number of reasons for this pattern of decline but the larger question is; how will we respond? Every church goes through periods of strength and growth, as well as times of turmoil or a need for renewal. As the congregation ages, we have more people who used to do much of the work of the church now home bound and in need of visitation. We owe it to them to make sure they don't feel forgotten. At the same time, we have newcomers and visitors that have come to church to see what we are about. If we don't make them feel welcome and include them in the life of the church, they will attend somewhere else. We also have folks, who for various reasons, have chosen to attend less regularly.

I challenge all of us to make sure that we are reaching out as much as possible. If you have some free time, why not spend some if it visiting one of our elderly or shut in members. If you notice that someone has become less regular, how about giving them a call or sending them a note to catch up and let them know they are missed. When it comes to newcomers, try to learn their names and find out a bit about their everyday lives and families. Our world is so busy. The church can be a place where people take time to know one another.

I believe that this is a good time for our congregation to ask itself questions about who we are and where we want to go. The session will be evaluating some surveys to try and help the congregation assess its strengths and prioritize its ministry and mission programs. During the coming weeks and months, we will be asking a few questions about our direction. Anyone who has ideas or questions about this process is encouraged to contact me or any of our elders.

Continuing on the topic of direction and progress, I have watched as components of the new digital organ have been coming into the church. Within the next couple of months our organ will be updated and have additional capabilities, as well as maintaining the fine traditional aspects of our music program. I look forward to hearing what Paul will do with our new expanded organ. We also hope to add a video component in the future, which will allow us to record our worship and special services visually as well as in audio form.

I have been reading lately about how to further engage our church lives to the surrounding community. I think many of us would be amazed at how much change has taken place around us while the church has changed very little. I wonder what might happen if we went out and searched for people who aren't like us but, in fact, are very different from us. Then, what if we invited them to come to church and spent time learning more about them and their particular cultures. The University gives us a flavor of the wider world but we can also find bits of that wider world in the whole Cookeville area. When the church was young, it grew because it invited and included people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. Maybe it's time to get back to those roots.

I look forward to what God has in store for us. Peace, Pat H

NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED

Dale Work and his wife of 41 years, Debbie, retired to Cookeville at the beginning of 2010. They have two grown children, a son in Nashville and a daughter in San Francisco. Most of Dale's career was spent as an engineering manager in the field of lighting with Philips, and this career included assignments in Europe and Asia as well as the northeastern U.S. From 2002-2007 he was a technical lobbyist for Philips in Washington. Before moving to product development work, he taught chemistry and natural science for one year at Pepperdine University.

Since moving to Cookeville, Dale has returned to college as a student (history and biology), has worked as a math tutor, and volunteers at Helping Hands one morning a week. He reads a lot and runs to keep fit.

This is Dale's first experience with the Presbyterian church, though he has been active in other church groups for many years

Sylvia and Ed Milner were married 35 years ago when Ed was in flight training and Sylvia was teaching school. While Ed was in the Navy they spent 5 years in northern Japan where Sylvia found a job teaching school on the base. When Ed left the Navy they went to Germany by way of Wisconsin to teach on a military base there.

After several years in Germany, Ed began to teach soldiers how to use computers in Hungary and Bosnia and Sylvia began to administer Special Education programs. Sylvia's job transferred them to Okinawa where she eventually became responsible for Special Education programs throughout the Pacific, traveling frequently throughout Japan and to Korea, Guam, and other locations.

Sylvia retired in 2009, and Ed in January of this year. They live on 12 acres near the Cumberland River. Ed is trying his hand at gardening and teaching a free computer class; and wants to go fishing. Sylvia is planting flowers, trying to organize their furniture, cleaning up after Ed and prioritizing his to-do list.

The adult choir appreciates Ed's bass, and two Sunday School classes profit from the Milner's attendance.

IF YOU SHOP AT KROGER...

Think not only provisions for your picnic, gas for your summer trip, and medications for the mosquito bites, but use your gift card purchased at the church and think "Missions." Every purchase made with a church card will help support the work of the local housing ministry, Creative Compassion.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

At the end of April, the church's overall financial status is good. Giving for the first four months of 2011 was just under \$85,000. Expenses for the year so far have been just over \$78,000, including about \$14,000 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. 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.

C2G DISCUSSION GROUP

The leaders of Come 2 Gather held afternoon discussions on Rob Bell's latest book, "Love Wins." The discussions were quite lively and the group has decided to continue the discussions on Thursday afternoons in July from 3:00-4:30pm at Sweet Sallie's on the West Side. The next books to be 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.

THE FELLOWSHIP CLASS

This summer we return to the Uniform Series of Lessons for a study titled "God Instructs the People of God," using selected verses from Joshua, Judges and Ruth. Meeting in the library, this class is led by the insightful teaching of Virginia Lovellette.



READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

by Thelma Johnson

IN THE GARDEN OF BEASTS, by Erik Larsen

What was Germany like between 1933 and 1937? Did anyone pay attention? Larsen has based his book on letters and memoirs of Americans who lived in Berlin during the rise of the Nazi party, with concentration on the family of Ambassador Dodd. Dodd was a retired history professor, and by no means first choice for the job. He believed in living modestly, wanted only to finish his book on Southern history, and had a tendency to think the best of everyone. He was charged with urging Germany to repay loans to American corporations. His family accompanied him and all would have been well except that his daughter, a new divorcee and lover of a good time, became part of the social life of the Nazi leaders. Larsen has painted a vivid picture of how a nation and world can be lulled into apathy and ignorance of the oncoming storm. His previous books are Isaac's Storm, Devil in the White City, and Thunderstruck.

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.

Peggy Rittenberry and the Christian Education Committee seek assistance from the congregation for teachers in several classes, ages K-8. Currently, Rev. Handlson is teaching a combined class with children in those age groups, but there will be three Sundays this summer when he will be absent (June 12 and 26 and July 3). In addition, there is a need for teachers when the new Sunday School year begins this fall. If you can provide any assistance for either the summer dates or the fall, please contact Rev. Handlson, Peggy Rittenberry or Amy Woods. These children are depending on our church to help them take their first steps in Christian faith.

SUNDAY SCHOOL DISCUSSION CLASS

During the month of June we can look forward to a series of four lessons on Earth Stewardship led by Gordon Hunter. Gordon's lessons will be based on extensive study of this subject. He says he will not really use "Field Notes to a Catastrophe" by Elizabeth Kolbert as his only source, but recommends it as a short, non-technical book which deals clearly with the subject of threats to our earth.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND INSPIRATION CLASS

This class will not meet in the summer, but will resume at the end of August.

.PLEASE NOTE THESE NEW ADDRESSES:

Mary Armstrong
% Kathy Tinker
12412 Chelwood Trail NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Lenora Hester
3204 Stokes Lane
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Anne Rose
38 West 6th Street
Cookeville, TN 38501

YOUTH TO MONTREAT

A number of our young people, along with a few adult leaders, will be headed to the Montreat Conference Center near Black Mountain, NC. This year's conference is called, "Searching for the Signal." As many as a thousand young Presbyterians from around the country will gather for worship, study, recreation and small group discussions about their faith and their place in the church. Our group will be in attendance at Montreat from June 12-18. Please keep them all in your prayers.

OUR WONDERFUL WEB SITE

Many thanks to Raj Kumar, who volunteers his time to manage our church web site. Many newcomers have found our church through the web site and long time friends as well as visitors have been impressed with its completeness and ease of use. If you haven't taken a look at it in a while, it will be well worth your time. The web site is www.firstprescookeville.org and you can still listen to Sunday services as well as learning much more about the church. We are even trying to keep updated photos of newcomers and mission projects. Once you've seen the site, encourage others to take a look. You can also become a friend of the church on Facebook and have access to the web site in that way.

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.

DINNER OUT GROUP

by Annette Flanders

Come join us on Saturday, June 18th at 5:00 p.m. at Nick's Restaurant, 895 South Jefferson. Nick's is an old Cookeville favorite. Please call Annette Flanders at 526-3301 with any questions or if you have signed up and are unable to attend

BIRTHDAYS

- 01—Raj Kumar
- 02—Diana Dugle
- 02—Stephanie Synnestuedt
- 03—Frank Lundholm
- 10—Christine Hegenderfer
- 10—Gary Lovellette
- 11—Joyce DuBey
- 12—Kaye Craig
- 16—Michael Thurmond
- 22—Wei Tsun Chang
- 22—Eliseo Rios
- 23—Emily Woods
- 24—Robert Viera
- 25—Mike Medley
- 27—Ted Darwin
- 28—Brenda Smith

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ANNIVERSARIES

- 05—Don and Judy Medley
- 05—Richard and Mary Ann Neil
- 08—Ted and Rosemary Haselton
- 10—Wayne and Susan Hogan
- 11—Wei Tsun and Seanad Chang
- 13—Paul and Anne Thurmond
- 14—Kent and Lisa Dollar
- 15—Albert and Pat Wilhelm
- 24—J. B. and Peggy Rittenberry

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; Peggy Campbell; 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; Jean Metz; Linda Furtsch; Cindy Dyer; Susan Dowland; and the people in the armed services, especially Giles Evans.*

The next newsletter deadline is June 23. Please send your information to:
 Debbie Handlson at (536-5486),
 e-mail (phandlson@aol.com)
 or
 Katie Kumar at (372-6197),
 e-mail (kjkumar@tntech.edu).

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 Mon.-Thur. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
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