

The Messenger

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

November 2011

WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE

The special summer issue of *Presbyterians Today* focused on what we believe as people who identify as Presbyterians. This is an interesting topic since only about half of our congregation has been Presbyterian for a long period of time. Many of our members and friends have joined the church or become regular worshipers from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds. The two most common for us are Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist but there are many others as well.

First, it is important to remember that we share a common faith with all Christians in the saving love of Jesus Christ. His unique and loving sacrifice made everything else possible. We believe that Jesus was fully human and fully divine. He understood what it meant to suffer through the pains of life, and he also manifested for us who God is and how God relates to us. We claim the trinity as part of that relationship. God is made known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit or, in another way of understanding the trinity; God is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

We claim two sacraments, two ways of understanding God's tangible grace. In Baptism, we are claimed as part of God's family on earth as well as in heaven. At that time, we also make a promise to teach children as they grow. We use the water to symbolize the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit as well as the power of water to take life. In communion, we not only remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we also share in the sacrifice, taking responsibility for our sins and rejoicing in the promise of the resurrection.

We recognize the authority of Scripture. Presbyterians may disagree about the literal truth of the Bible, with a wide variety of interpretations of the symbolic meanings of the lessons there, but we all agree that it is in the Bible that we meet Jesus and learn the lessons that God has for us. It is from the Bible that we learn the values that have formed our tradition. And, Presbyterians expect their preachers to know the Bible and apply its lessons to our daily life.

Though the Bible is paramount, we also look to other documents for guidance. We respect the creeds and confessions of our ancestors. The Nicene and Apostle's creeds go back to the early years of the church and we share them with many other Christian denominations. Our own denomination was founded in the time of the Reformation and the Westminster Confession and Catechism, as well as the Scots Confession helped create our Presbyterian identity. In the modern era, the Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of 1967 serve to remind us that God is still speaking to us about the issues we face today.

We are not a hierarchical church, which means we don't have bishops or a pope leading us or making decrees for our local churches. Each church chooses its own leaders and sets its own standards for membership. At the same time, we are connected to one another by our Presbyteries and General Assembly. We elect ministers and elders to represent us at regional gatherings, where discussions are held and decisions about matters of common concern are made.

There is much more that I could say, and I encourage folks to do more research about what it is that binds us together as Presbyterians. I thoroughly enjoyed reading through that issue of *Presbyterians Today* and it is available in the church library. Have a look.

Peace, Pat H

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE SURVEY

Our congregation has been chosen to participate in the largest and most representative survey of worshipers ever conducted in the United States. Our responses will be combined with those of people from many other congregations to provide an accurate picture of people who worship in the United States.

The survey will take place during worship on Sunday, November 6. It will be a communion Sunday, so that we will have a good number of participants. The survey will take the place of the sermon that day. Everyone who attends church is asked to participate, whether a member or friend of the congregation.

Our congregation will receive a summary of the responses of our particular church, showing a profile of who we are, our religious backgrounds and our involvement in the congregation's ministry and mission. We will also see how our responses compare to the national picture of people who attend worship during this time in the life of our nation.

FINANCES UPDATED

At the end of September, the church's overall financial status remains good. Giving for the first nine months was just over \$172,000, about \$2,000 behind our budget. Expenses for the year so far have been just over \$190,000, including about \$34,000 for the new virtual organ components and installation. We will need an extra effort to balance our budget at the end of the year. We also want to be in a good position to plan the budget for 2012.

As we move through the final months of 2011, it is very 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. There has been an increased need for help in our community this year, and we want to be able to assist people in the best way that we can.

There is also a need for contributions in support of the new organ. The session voted to take money out of reserve funds to make sure that all the work could be completed in a timely manner. Now we would like to replenish the reserve funds for future needs. Thanks to all for your generous support of the church.

DINNER OUT?

THE DINNER OUT GROUP will meet on Saturday, November 12, at 5:00 p.m. at the House of Thai, 208 E. 8th Street, Cookeville. The restaurant is just off Dixie Avenue and borders the TTU campus. Please call Annette Coorts, 526-3301 for further information or for cancellations.

WE CARE: FOSTER SUPPORT GROUP

We had our first meeting of foster care families in October and are planning the next meetings now. The group will meet on the third Tuesday of the month, beginning with supper at 5 p.m. After supper, there will be games and movies for the children while parents talk about the issues they face and the needs they have. We will offer tutoring for school age children when that is appropriate and try to meet other needs as they are identified. On November 15, we will have a Thanksgiving theme and the meal will be a turkey dinner. In December (December 20) we will have a Christmas theme and dinner. Talk to Pat Handlson for more details and how to help.

NASHVILLE FLOOD RELIEF

We have another opportunity to help with flood relief in Nashville. The Presbyterian Disaster Assistance teams work out of Westminster Presbyterian Church and generally schedule groups for a week at a time. We are scheduled for the week of October 30 to November 4. Because we are so close to Nashville we have the option of spending the entire week or going down for shorter durations, even a single day. If you are interested in participating in this local mission trip, contact Diane Glasgow or Pat Handlson for forms and more information.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

We have begun our next session of Wednesday night studies with an examination of the landscapes of the Bible. We will explore themes such as: gardens, the wilderness, vineyards, mountaintops, valleys and more. We will discuss these metaphors as they are presented in the Bible and as they relate to our lives today. The study is from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Several folks bring a brown bag supper and share a time of food and fellowship as well. Supper generally begins about 5:45 p.m.

PSA ACTIVITIES

The Presbyterian Student Association has added a new resident to the beautifully renovated back house. The student Thanksgiving Dinner on the 22nd will celebrate this addition and the contributions of First Cumberland and First Presbyterian.

THINK MISSIONS FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Does your Christmas shopping include “alternate giving”? If you purchase some of your gifts from One World Market, you can make a difference in lives around the world.

- Honor your friend with a card from Heifer International, and you will help to provide a livelihood for a struggling family or village.
- A UNICEF Christmas card or calendar will give emergency help in areas of need.
- SERRV international crafts help support fair trade and give much needed work to those in need.
- KROGER gift cards help our church to support the local housing ministry, Creative Compassion.
- Brush Dance cards and magnets help us in our donations to local agencies.
- G. David Campbell’s beautiful cards and donations from some of our membership also help in our donations to local agencies such as Helping Hands and the Rescue Mission.

One World Market will be open on Saturdays (10—2 p.m.) as well as Sundays until Christmas.

NEED A CHUCKLE?

From the latest issue of The Joyful Noiseletter, here are a few tidbits from Bob Reed’s book, “How to Survive Being a Presbyterian,” Presbyterianism is a series of meetings occasionally interrupted by a worship service. For Roman Catholics, a penance is saying three Hail Marys and two Our Fathers; for Presbyterians, it’s going to another meeting. A recent Gallop Poll found that 3.7 million people believed that they had been abducted by aliens but only 2.5 million claimed to be Presbyterian. The General Assembly appointed a committee to study the evangelism methods of the aliens.

PRISON MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Hector Black was a recent speaker at one of our Sunday school classes. Hector is a Quaker who regularly visits inmates on death row for discussion and prayer. He would welcome some company on these visits. Hector generally visits every Tuesday morning. Anyone who is interested in going along for the experience is invited to contact Pat Handlson for more information.

BROAD STREET BOO BASH

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 Walnut Streets for several hours that evening and cars filled with candy and goodies will offer families a safe and exciting experience that evening, from 6-8 p.m.. There will be costume contests for all ages. 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 are collecting candy now and recruiting folks willing to park their cars along Broad Street and hand out candy to participants. Bring your car to church by 5:30 p.m. in order to get properly situated for handing out candy. Contact Pat Handlson for more informa-

THANKS FROM OUR MONTREAT GROUP

Our young people say thanks for the generous support of the congregation during the Epic Sandwich and Soup luncheon. Over \$1,200.00 was raised for next year’s trip to the Montreat Youth Conference. Look for another opportunity to support the youth during the winter months.

READ ANYTHING GOOD LATELY?

by Thelma Johnson

MY READING LIFE, by Pat Conroy

Pat Conroy, who has written many bestsellers, has given us a memoir. This is not a list of influential books, but rather an intimate view of how one's childhood environment, subsequent planned and unplanned events, and a determination to enjoy a fruitful life can work for a boy who went to military school in spite of a penchant for literary pursuits, taught school, survived an abusive father, and then became a writer whose books touch the fears and destroyed hopes of the human heart. This book is an easy read for times between watching football on TV and having the last cookouts of the season. It makes a person want to read through all his other books that have preceded this one.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — David Johnson
- 2 — Tom Furtsch
- 2 — Grace Anna Sine
- 3 — Erin Angel
- 4 — Chelsea Holland
- 5 — Joe Dyer
- 6 — Anne Rose
- 6 — Donna Simpson
- 6 — Gail Turner
- 8 — Jim Greeson
- 8 — Tammy O'Dell
- 8 — Angelo Volpe
- 10 — Sylvia McGee
- 12 — Sharon Myers
- 12 — Charly Wilson
- 13 — Todd Chapman
- 15 — Jim Smith
- 17 — Dori Bullard
- 18 — Bill Swim
- 21 — Emma Angel
- 22 — J.B. Rittenberry
- 23 — Jonathan Angel
- 23 — Carrie Massa
- 24 — Myrna Estes
- 28 — Elliot Woods
- 29 — Claribel Crawford
- 29 — Ginny Langpap

ANNIVERSARIES

- 18 — Bob and Ginny Anderson
- 29 — Rick & Amy Woods

IN OUR PRAYERS

IN NURSING HOMES OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES: Edith Jared, Joanne Miller, and Frances Snyder.

KEEP IN PRAYER ALSO: Mary Armstrong; Mike Birdwell; Cleao & Joyce DuBey; Sam Glasgow; Nathaniel Harmon; Don & Judy Medley; Hugh Piercey; Eliseo Rios; Mary Smith; Grace Anna Sine's brother, Don Green; Linda Wilson's sister, Diane Roby; Barbara & Dave Riddell's daughter, Carrie Lee; Peggy Rittenberry's sister, Linda West; Robert See's & Ginny Langpap's sister, Shirley Nelson; Sharon Myers' niece, Barbara Powers; 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
 home: 526-5486(phandlson@frontiernet.net)
 www.firstprescookeville.org

The next **newsletter deadline** is **November 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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