

The Messenger

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

February 2009

John Calvin turns 500

John Calvin has long been considered the founder of the Presbyterian Church. He was born in France in 1509. His father was personal secretary to the bishop of the region. Because of his father's church connection, Calvin was very well educated and studied for the priesthood in Paris. His father thought it would be more lucrative to study law instead and so Calvin switched schools. The social and religious atmosphere in France during the 1530's was strongly influenced by the protestant stirrings in nearby Germany, led by Martin Luther, and God soon played a role in Calvin's later decision to return to the church, though in a very different way.

Calvin, along with a number of his classmates, mentors and friends, was converted away from the Roman Catholic tradition. He had to escape from France and decided to head for Strasburg, Germany. Along the way, he stopped in Geneva, Switzerland. The local pastor, William Farel, tried to convince Calvin to stay in Geneva and help build a reformed congregation in that city. Calvin was not inclined to stay but Farel said that he would call down a curse from God if Calvin left Geneva and that thought played on Calvin's mind enough that he stayed.

There was no concept of the separation of church and state and Calvin tried to establish a system of government that allowed the leaders of the community to be chosen by the people of the church, rather than by bishops or far away rulers. It was a very strict rule of law that closely followed Calvin's interpretation of the Bible. After two years, many of the business owners were tired of living under such strict laws and they organized a group to run Calvin out of the city. For the next several years, Calvin lived among friends in Strasburg. There he wrote prolifically and was recognized around Europe as a leading voice of the new reformed faith.

Meanwhile, back in Geneva, that city was floundering under the weight of vice and corruption. Many people missed the stern but well regulated style of Calvin and wanted him to return. Calvin came back to Geneva as a hero and quickly went to work building a form of government that we still recognize and use today. Geneva had become a cosmopolitan center, with people from all over Europe being drawn to it. Calvin recruited pastors to serve in the various churches of the city. He took care to recruit pastors that spoke a variety of languages, in order to serve the diverse population of the growing city. The churches elected elders, deacons and teachers. A team of elders and pastors formed what would later be called a session. Religious and business leaders formed the city council.

Calvin's remaining time in Geneva was not without its troubles. There were constant clashes with local folks who did not want to live by such strict moral codes, and, there were always leaders from the Roman Catholic Church looking for ways to bring Calvin down and restore catholic leadership to the city and its churches. Throughout it all, Calvin maintained a rigorous schedule of preaching, teaching, visiting the sick, leading the meetings of pastors and elders, and, continuing to write books and correspond with other religious leaders.

On a personal level, Calvin's friends began to think that he was overworked and needed a wife to help him with his responsibilities. Calvin was not looking for a wife but he was receptive to the concerns of his friends and colleagues. He wrote in a letter that he was no insane lover, smitten by a fine figure. His major concerns were that she be economical, patient, and concerned about his health. I have often thought that Calvin may have inspired the songwriter who penned the phrase, "If you want to be happy for the rest of your life, never make a pretty woman your wife." Debbie loves that story.

Peace,
Pat H.

The Worship Committee Needs YOU

By Marilyn Aitken

If you would like to help pick out new pew cushions, decorate the sanctuary, find liturgists to help with the Sunday morning service, and prepare the sanctuary for special church services, then serving on the Worship Committee is the job for you. Please contact either Marilyn Aitken or Sylvia McGee to start helping today.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

The annual meeting of the congregation will be held on Sunday, February 22, immediately following worship. There will be reports from the session and deacons. The 2009 budget will be presented. Church members will be elected to the nominating committee, and other items of interest to the congregation will be discussed. Please plan to stay after worship that morning to take part in the annual meeting.

2009 Budget Information

The session agreed to a preliminary budget for the year 2009 of \$221,000. That amount is about 10% higher than the budget set for 2008. It is about the amount that was actually spent in 2008 and about \$20,000 less than the money the church actually received during the year. Elders were cautious because of the downturn in the overall economy but also confident because of the pledges received and strong giving throughout the past year. Still, some items were not funded for the coming year including: an update of the sound system, preparations for the 2010 100th anniversary celebration and improvements to the playground. These items, and others, will be reconsidered as we make our way through the winter and spring months of 2009.

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday night suppers and programs have resumed. The next several weeks will be a series of classes on John Calvin and his writings, led by Pat Handlson. These first classes will talk about Calvin and some of the doctrines and issues that are closely associated with Calvin and Presbyterians. Erin Angel will lead a Lenten series, beginning in March.

Suppers for this semester are going to be different than what we have been doing lately. Everyone is invited to bring a brown bag supper and eat together before the study begins. The church will provide drinks and people are asked to sign up to bring desserts.

Youth Activities

By Erin Angel

Youth Meeting

The children of the church will be meeting on Wednesday, February 4th at 6:30 to make Valentine's cards for our church's shut-ins. We will join the Wednesday night group at 5:45 for a "bring-your-own" brown bag supper then go downstairs to work with Diane Glasgow on making cards. Please mark your calendars and plan to come help us with this mission project.

Youth Swim Party

On Saturday, February 21st from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. we will be going swimming at the Tennessee Tech pool. The cost for non-members of the fitness center is \$5.00. We will meet in the lobby of the fitness center at 2:30 p.m., swim for a couple of hours then go to get some ice cream.

PSA Worship Services

PSA students are beginning a new worship service on the campus of Tennessee Tech. The service will be held in Prescott Hall on Tuesday evenings from 7-8pm. This service is a contemporary service that will give students and faculty on campus an opportunity to worship together in an ecumenical setting. It will also be an alternative to some of the more fundamentalist services currently offered on campus.

PSA will continue to meet at the PSA house for supper at 5:30pm on Tuesdays. The supper will be followed by prayers and fellowship at the house, before heading to Prescott Hall. The first service is scheduled for February 17. Leadership during the service will be provided by students, with preaching by the ministers of the various Presbyterian churches in the area. Talk to Pat Handlson for more information.

PSA Meals

There are still some dates available if you would like to help provide a Tuesday night meal for the Presbyterian Student Association. We share this responsibility with the First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. We have divided the semester in half and our church is taking the first seven weeks. We are asking for volunteers to provide a meal for about 15 students on a Tuesday night for their weekly worship service. If you are interested in helping out with this ministry please see the sign-up sheet outside of the sanctuary or talk to Erin.

News From Lesotho

by Sam Glasgow

Lydia Muso, founder of Lesotho Child Counseling Unit (LCCU), in Lesotho, South Africa continues to inspire us. On our recent two week trip to Lesotho we worked with the children of LCCU and tried to help with their disastrous water shortage. Lydia continues to serve as the backbone of the orphanage which she founded in 2002, when she first began to take in orphaned children off the streets into her home.

We were able to facilitate efforts to come up with a short-term solution by providing a 1,000 liter water tank for cooking and drinking. Lydia, however, was the driving force in calling together a meeting of her board, a local NGO, and a geologist, to work out a long-term solution of drilling a deeper well on the grounds of the center, LCCU. Thankfully, our church came through in a timely manner to supply \$2,000 seed money to get the project moving! The first estimate is over \$9,000 to complete the project with an electrical pump and larger water tank. Lydia is seeking a second opinion from another company.

In the meantime, Diane with the help of many volunteers from Cookeville, provided crafts, puppets, and English fun for 15 orphan children, mostly girls, and neighborhood children as well as teaching 15 women from the surrounding community greeting-card making. A television crew from the capital of Maseru came to film the workshop one afternoon, and it was shown on the local Lesotho T.V. channel twice that evening.

Sam tutored, chauffeured English style on the left, was the hit photographer, stressed hygiene, and posted signs in Sesotho and in English, "Did you wash your hands with soap?"

During our two-week stay, Lydia organized two excursions into the surrounding countryside for the children to get out of their routine at LCCU and to develop their unique personalities. The children thrived on these experiences. They learned to conquer their fear of water by wearing life jackets on a short cruise. And they saw how five families live more primitively than they do in caves.

All in all, over the period of two weeks, Diane and I witnessed many inspiring moments in the lives of Lydia's children. It was a productive and worthwhile trip.

Spring Work Trip

A work trip to Houma, LA, is planned for the week of March 8-14. Houma was in the path of Hurricane Ike and the work of reconstruction will be just beginning. We won't know exactly what our work will be until closer to the date, but there will certainly be plenty to do. We will be staying at a nearby Presbyterian Disaster camp, which is well equipped to accommodate our needs. Hopefully, we will have a good mix of college students and adults. Talk to Pat Handlson for more information.

We also hope to have more information soon about a possible work trip to East Tennessee, to work on a clean water project. The session has approved a three year commitment to help with this mission project of the Synod.

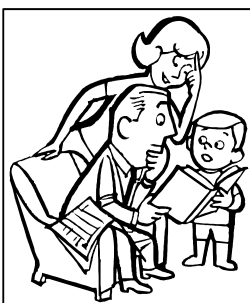
Dinner Out

By Kaye Craig

Come join us on Saturday, February 21 at 5:00 pm for a dinner adventure at Thomas Andrews, 32 West Broad Street. Thomas Andrews has enjoyed over ten years of success. The atmosphere is relaxed with exposed brick, a fireplace and a comfortable Old World feel. They have an extensive menu including steak, seafood and pasta.. Please sign up at the church or, if you have questions, please call Kaye Craig at 537-3714.

Newsletter Editor

Due to time constraints, Anne Thurmond will no longer be helping edit the newsletter. If you can help gather articles, have knowledge of Publisher Software, and can help put the articles to paper, speak to Debbie Handlson about sharing the workload.



Read Anything Good Lately?

By Thelma Johnson

The Private Patient, by P. D. James. This British author has produced many good mysteries and this is one of her best. It is currently on the best-seller list, and features Adam Dalgleish, the intrepid Commander at Scotland Yard. A woman with an ugly scar on her face goes to a private clinic outside London to have cosmetic surgery. She is murdered. Who did it? Almost anybody. James is a leisurely and thorough writer. The detectives frequently have tea with their suspects and are sensitive to the emotions of everyone, including each other. This is not blood and gore, but a very civilized look at how crimes would be solved if everyone were genteel and--well, British. This is a good read for the lull between the holidays and the IRS.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Edith Jared
- 3 — Jeanette Volpe
- 4 — Lenora Hester
- 4 — Patricia Leonard
- 11 — Robert Sommers
- 11 — Rick Woods
- 18 — Kent Dollar
- 19 — Cleao DuBey
- 20 — Judy Medley
- 20 — Ann Turner
- 21 — Marge Rios
- 24 — Mary Armstrong
- 26 — Karen Hansen
- 26 — Marilyn Ledbetter
- 28 — Jon Dugle
- 28 — Sam Glasgow

ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 — Pat & Debbie Handlson

In Our Prayers

IN OUR PRAYERS: PERSONS HOMEBOUND: Mary Martha Bush, Nancy Jarrell, and Jessie Lee Lamb.

IN NURSING HOMES OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES: Beulah Doran, Dorothy Grant, Edith Jared, and Frances Snyder.

Keep in prayer also: Dick Armstrong; Helen Copeland; Nancy Dixon; Lonnie Hester; Don Medley; Merlin Miller; Mary Smith; Emily Stewart; Virginia Throckmorton; Ted Hayes' mother, Ann Hayes; Lauren, Joey and Ellia Pratt who are returning home for three months; Eli Covington who is doing mission work in Nicaragua; and the people in the armed services, especially Paul Evans, Benjamin Crawford.

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 deadline for the next newsletter is December 23. Please e-mail or phone Debbie Handlson (phandlson@aol.com; 526-5486) with any information you wish to have included.

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

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