

### *Spring Work Trip—March 8 - 14*

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.

The deadline for the next newsletter is February 23. Please contact Anne Thurmond (athurmond@tntech.edu; 537-2856) or Debbie Handlson (phandlson@aol.com; 526-5486) if you have any information you wish to have included.

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



### *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; Lonnie Hester; Don Medley; Merlin Miller; Mary Smith; Sharon Mann and her family; Ted Hayes' mother, Ann Hayes; Lauren, Joey and Ellia Pratt; Eli Covington who is doing mission work in Nicaragua; and the people in the armed services, especially Paul Evans and Benjamin Crawford.

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# The Messenger

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

January 2009

## *From the Pastor...*

### *Looking Ahead*

By the time you read this issue of the newsletter, it will be 2009. No one can say with certainty what lies ahead for us but I do want to share some of my thoughts and prayers as we move into the new year. This is the beginning of my fourth year as your pastor and I am deeply grateful for the support you have shown me. I pray that I will continue to be worthy of that support and will be able to demonstrate leadership that will guide us along God's chosen path.

We are a warm and welcoming congregation. Our visitors, and those who have chosen to join the church over the past several years, overwhelmingly comment on the sincerity of our hospitality. Yet, though we are welcoming, we are not good at invitation, nor have we done a good job of following through with people who visit us once or twice. We can do better. The deacons have made a commitment to take the lead in this area by agreeing to call on our visitors and make sure they not only feel welcome but answer any questions they might have and invite them to come again. We can all do a better job of inviting friends and neighbors to give us a try.

Related to the topic of welcoming people is the issue of fellowship. We get to know each other better when we spend time together in addition to worship. Our second Sunday Dinners are wonderful opportunities for growing together. We need a group of folks who will help make sure that everything is ready for these monthly dinners and will take charge of clean up afterwards. Several deacons have taken on this responsibility but they need help and have other tasks on Sunday mornings as well. I hope that we can create a core group that will ensure that our monthly dinners can continue.

In the area of Christian education we have made steady improvements in our program and staffing. We are now fully prepared to serve all ages on Sunday mornings, including three adult options. What we need are more participants. That takes us back to invitation. If you have children, grandchildren or neighbors with children, let them know that we are more than ready to assist them in teaching children about the love of God. I also encourage everyone in the congregation to participate in some kind of education, whether it is on Sunday morning, Wednesday night, or some other opportunity that we haven't yet tried. As a final note regarding education, please make every effort to be on time. That shows respect for those who have prepared the lessons and allows for a better overall experience.

Along with worship and education, Presbyterians have always valued mission. I hope that we will see an increase in the number of people who participate in mission projects this year, as well as an increase in the number and variety of mission projects themselves. The needs of the community will be greater in this coming year than in the recent past and we, who have been blessed with a multitude of resources, can look for creative ways to serve our neighbors.

Finally, not because I'm out of thoughts but because I'm running out of room on the page, 2009 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian tradition. I am a big fan of Calvin and I plan to incorporate his teachings and sermons into worship and study throughout the year. I hope you will all find it helpful and are as excited about our journey together as I am. Debbie and I continue to be blessed by your love. Happy New Year.

Peace, Pat Handlson

### Installation of Officers— January 11<sup>th</sup>

New church officers will be ordained and installed on Sunday, January 11, during worship. We welcome a great new class of deacons and elders. New to the session are: David Johnson, Katie Kumar and Sylvia McGee. Joining the deacons this year are: Myrna Estes, Debbie Handlson, Carolyn Medley, Brenda Smith and Mary Dell Sommers. Please keep them all in your prayers as they begin their work on behalf of the congregation.

### Wednesday Night Programs Resume January 14<sup>th</sup>

We will resume meeting on Wednesday, January 14. The first meeting of 2009 will be a discussion of what we want to see on Wednesday nights. The study on Isaiah was not well received over the long term and attendance dwindled throughout the study. I heard that it was too long, too repetitive, too depressing. It was also increasingly difficult to find volunteers to help with the supper and clean-up. Do we want to continue with weekly dinners and Bible study? Or is there some other plan or program that might be more beneficial and generate greater support? Be thinking about what you would like to see happening at church on Wednesday nights.

### Dinner Out Group— January 17<sup>th</sup>



This popular fellowship event will meet on January 17<sup>th</sup> at the House of Thai, 208 E. 8th Street, at 5:00 pm. Usually held on the third Saturday of each month, the dinner group is open to all adults in the church. House of Thai has a varied menu suitable for any palate and very modest prices. You may sign up at the . If you have any questions, call Kaye Craig at 537-3714.

### 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Korean Student Mentor Families

Last year, there were a number of Korean students who attended Tech for a semester. Several of those students were Presbyterian and attend worship here. We also have several church families with Korean connections. I thought it might be nice if we participated in the University's Friendship International Program as a church family. The purpose of the program is to introduce students to the local community and help them become familiar with everyday life in America. Of course, the host families benefit from contact with people from a completely different culture. We could share some meals together and have a group outing or two during the semester to bring everyone together.

This is not a home stay program and the expectation is that we will have contact with the students once or twice a month. It is also not an evangelism program since the students are only here for a short time and there would be no obligation that any of them attend worship. Still, there is a strong Presbyterian tradition in Korea and we may attract a few to participate in worship on occasion, which would enrich our own worship experience.

Debbie and I had such a wonderful time getting to know several students last year and we are seriously considering becoming an official part of the program. If there are others who are interested, or would like to know more about the program and its responsibilities, talk to the Handlsons or to Katie Kumar.



### A Winter Reading List

Several folks have asked about some of the authors I frequently quote in my sermons. I thought I would list a few of them, along with a favorite work or two:



Viktor Frankl	<i>Man's Search for Meaning</i>
Dietrich Bonhoeffer	<i>The Cost of Discipleship</i>
C. S. Lewis	<i>Mere Christianity</i>
	<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>
Barbara Brown Taylor	<i>Home by Another Way</i>
	<i>Gospel Medicine</i>



Dear First Presbyterian,

I want to personally thank this congregation for the great gifts you have given to Helping Hands this past year. You have given over \$10,000 through the church and others have given money directly to HHPC. That's not to mention the number of volunteer hours that people from 1st Presbyterian have given. And, of course, the food, personal care and household items that you contribute every month have helped hundreds of families in Putnam County.

When the things come in from First Pres and are weighed, they always put a note on my desk saying, "from Debbie's church." It makes me proud to be associated with the people of First Presbyterian.

Debbie Handlson



### BIRTHDAYS

- 5 — Diane Glasgow
- 6 — Charles Dyer
- 6 — Juanita Phillips
- 8 — Ethan Woods
- 14 — Judy Pumar
- 16 — Carolyn Stumpf
- 17 — Paul Burgess
- 17 — Nancy Dixon
- 22 — Laura Aitken
- 23 — Josh Parsons
- 24 — Rachel Dollar
- 24 — Hannah Dollar
- 25 — Thelma Johnson
- 26 — Ted Hayes
- 27 — Nancy Jarrell
- 28 — Matthew Wilhelm
- 31 — Steve Chapman
- 31 — Barbara Greeson

### ANNIVERSARIES

- 5 — Jonathan & Chelsea Holland
- 10 — Dick & Mary Armstrong
- 11 — Chris & Annabelle McCormick

### Special Service for Christian Unity—January 18 - 24

Last year, we hosted a special service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It was a time of singing and prayer, recognizing our common faith as well as honoring our various traditions. We sang hymns, and several area pastors offered prayers. We followed the service with a soup luncheon. We would like to offer this service again and need help organizing and especially preparing the luncheon. If we can put together a team soon, we can start publicizing this event in hopes that it can become an annual event. Let Pat Handlson know if you can be part of this service that celebrates the common faith of our community.

