

The Messenger

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

June 2009

Remembering

It is a drizzly Memorial Day morning as I write these thoughts. Around the nation people are getting ready for Memorial Day celebrations, remembering the sacrifices of those who served their country and didn't come home. I always struggle with the tension between wanting to hold on to what we have and wanting to move into the future. What is it that we should truly remember? Surely people don't want to go back to the days before flush toilets and electricity. And yet, not all modern improvements are wonderful.

I watched a television commercial for a vacation in the Smokey Mountains. There was a happy family enjoying the theme park. The announcer talked about getting away from it all and escaping back to the wilderness. I thought to myself, do we really want to equate a water slide with wilderness? Sometimes I imagine those early pioneers coming over the mountains in their wagons; everything they own was being dragged up and down a true wilderness terrain. Many of them were running away from bad lives, others had nothing to lose. Some were real adventurers, looking for a new life. They could never have imagined what the frontier would become.

I think the same about some of our soldiers who went off to war in foreign countries to preserve and protect our liberty. They could never have imagined the lifestyles that have become so common in our time. I find it hard to imagine that we would be willing to make such sacrifices now. Of course, we still have many brave men and women willing to serve our country but is the country still worthy of their service? Our society has become selfish and polarized. We have also grown weak and dependent. I'm afraid we have lost our sense of being in this struggle together.

I hope that I am wrong. I know that throughout our history, people have worried about our unity and our purpose. We have accused each other of being lazy and unpatriotic. Maybe these times are no better or worse than previous times, only a little different because each generation is unique and faces its own particular challenges. Perhaps we will rise to the challenges of today, just as previous generations rose to face their challenges. Perhaps the lessons of the past will be remembered and taken to heart. But what are those lessons?

For us, at the church, we will soon begin our 100th year anniversary. What is important for us to remember about the people who started this congregation? What have we learned from them? What can we still learn from them? I would like to share some of your thoughts with the congregation and the community. We stand on the shoulders of many witnesses to Christ in this community. Are we still worthy successors to their legacy? Does this congregation have a meaningful place in the community and in the lives of our own members and friends? Does our presence make a difference? I would really like to hear from you about this.

This is also the 500th year since the birth of John Calvin. I want to share with all of you some of the reasons I believe that his messages are still relevant and important. Calvin worked tirelessly to reform a church which he thought had lost its way. He wanted to hold onto many of the timeless values of Scripture and tradition, but he also wanted the church to be meaningful to a new generation of Christians in a changing world. He built a foundation that has lasted for 500 years. Starting on the Sunday after Pentecost, I will begin a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments, using Calvin's own sermons as a base for starting the discussion. I am amazed at his willingness to challenge the accepted interpretations of his time, to examine the commandments in a fresh, new way. And, I am amazed that his interpretations still seem so relevant today, at least in my opinion. I hope you are excited about this next step in our journey and together, we will discover what is worth remembering.

Peace, Pat Handlson

A Note from the Personnel Committee

Congratulations to Erin, who has just accepted the position of permanent Director of Tech's Presbyterian Student Association. For the last two years Pat has covered this ten-hour-per-week position on an interim basis.

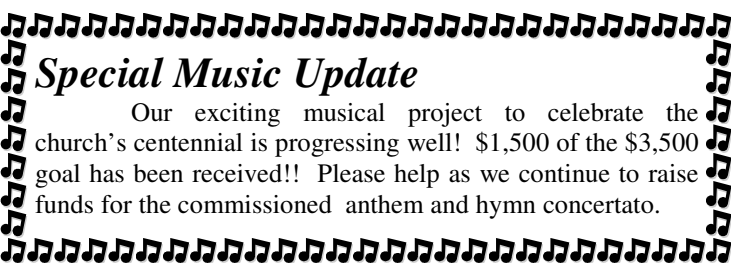
In fact, it was to allow Pat to shift his time toward PSA in this way that we brought Erin aboard as Parish Associate. During this time Erin has handled several roles – preaching in Pat's absence, providing pastoral care to members, presenting Wednesday Night programs, and lots more. But her primary impact has been to revitalize the Christian Education program, which now includes a new level of coordination, new classes, and a renewed Vacation Bible School.

Erin is not leaving us! Her new PSA position doesn't start until fall, so she will still direct this year's VBS. And even after that, Erin will serve in a reconfigured Parish Associate role.

In the last few months we expanded the Parish Associate role from ten to fourteen hours per week; Erin will continue to hold a newly configured, four-hours-per-week position as our Parish Associate. Her main priority will be to cover for Pat in his absence. In addition, she will advise whoever takes over primary responsibility for the Christian Education program.

It's sad to lose "part of Erin," but the CE program now has good momentum. It will take discipline for us to respect these new, tighter boundaries on Erin's time, but others will pick up the load. We are also regaining "part of Pat," who will redistribute his time toward additional FPC priorities.

We wish Erin the very best in her new PSA role. And we're so happy she is still part of this community.



Special Music Update

Our exciting musical project to celebrate the church's centennial is progressing well! \$1,500 of the \$3,500 goal has been received!! Please help as we continue to raise funds for the commissioned anthem and hymn concertato.

Welcome to Our Newest Member!

Peggy Kilgore comes to Cookeville from Maryville, TN, where she attended the New Providence Presbyterian Church. She taught at as well as graduated from Maryville College with a dual degree in English/Art History. Her MA was in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. Moving to Cookeville to teach at TTU, she enjoys teaching composition, World, American, and British lit. She said that her life was incredibly enriched when she began working with International students while teaching ESL and the other courses. "All of a sudden my world became quite large. When I am not teaching at Tech, I tutor Vietnamese children and Chinese adults."

When Peggy came to First Pres, she says she "immediately felt welcomed (due to Whit, Martha Jane and many other cheerful people who greeted me) and knew that I had found my church home. Oddly enough church can be a lonely place for a single person (no matter what the reason for the solitary life is). But not at First Presbyterian!!!"

Special interests include a home in the country, complete with seven rescued animals and the plan for an arboretum and flower gardens to cover the 1/2 acre. Some other interests are photography and music. "The church's music program is a real plus for me."

Vacation Bible School

by Erin Angel

There is still room for you!. We will be having VBS on Monday, June 1, Tuesday, June 2 and Wednesday, June 3 from 5:30p.m. until 8 p.m. each night. We will begin each night with a light meal then proceed to break into age groups for time in Bible study, arts and crafts and music. There will be classes for ages Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade and adults.

Our theme is *On the Move: God's Grace from Place to Place*. Using a Biblical standard, the program focuses on how God's Spirit gave momentum to the Civil Rights Movement in different places, drawing the people of God towards greatness in soul through blessing, justice, truth and reconciliation. The VBS community will listen, pray, move and ride the bus to freedom in Jesus Christ in lessons that promote God's power for life in building up the community, as persons are reconciled to one another and to Jesus Christ. Please join us for VBS 2009!

Summer Sunday School Opportunities

Starting in June, there will be several changes to the Sunday school schedule. Nothing will change for the youngest ages. There will still be a nursery and pre-school class. All of the school age students will meet with Pat Handlson for a time of Bible lessons and discussion.

The speaker's class will not meet during the summer and those who have been attending are encouraged to visit one of the other two regular classes: Bible study or book discussion.

Mission Matters

by Jennette Volpe

Thank you to everyone who supports our One World Market —where giving counts twice. Gift items are from UNICEF and your purchase helps to fund “...life-saving, life-changing programs that reach children all over the world.” Items are also from SERRV (formerly A Greater Gift) where the money you spend on a gift item goes directly to the artisans in developing countries. We also have some Fair Trade items which offer “The opportunity for you to have a direct impact on one of our global market’s great injustices: the inequality of income and quality of life for people living in developing countries.” When you purchase one of the gift items, you are making a difference in someone else’s life. Some international items are donated to the Market. Any profits have been divided between the Rescue Mission and Helping Hands (formerly the Clearing House) as these two missions serve many persons in our community.

The Market is also your place to pick up your Kroger gift cards to help support Creative Compassion and to donate to Heifer International, both mission projects discussed in earlier newsletters.

Some of our folks are meeting to work on a Living Waters” mission project to help provide clean drinking water to persons in East Tennessee and the Upper Cumberland. If you would like to be involved or wish more information, please contact Janis or Bill Swim, 528-7321.

Save this date: August 9, 2009, for a concert at 3 p.m. Wei Tsun and Seanad Chang and friends will be performing a benefit concert for Helping Hands. We won’t want to miss this! More information will follow.

Don’t forget our second Sunday collection for Helping Hands. They can always use toilet paper, diapers and powder laundry detergent. Listen for other special needs.

Dinner Out

by Kaye Craig

Come join the Dinner Out Group at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 20. We will be going to Christy’s Café and Bakery, 1555 Interstate Drive. Christy’s is known for their deli sandwiches and homemade desserts. Sign up sheets are available at the church. If you have any questions, call Kaye Craig at 537-3714.

Request for Ecuadorian Missions

Please save old garden gloves or winter gloves for VBS finger puppet making. We will cut off the fingers, so gloves with holes are still useful! We need 400 fingers for 400 Ecuadorian children who I will teach during a medical mission trip the end of July! Thank you!

Questions? Call Diane at 526-7854.

Read Anything Good Lately?

by Thelma Johnson

RED ORCHESTRA by Anne Nelson

This book, just hot off the press, is the result of twenty years of research by Nelson, who teaches at Columbia University and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. The French Resistance has had a great deal of attention, but this book is about a movement inside Germany devoted to the downfall of the Nazi regime. The Red Orchestra was the name of the group of artists, intellectuals, and bureaucrats, most of whom were women, who were frustrated by Germany's economic instability and academic sexism. Led by a German working mother, Greta Kuckhoff, they supported their Jewish friends and co-workers. They were not successful, but their struggle is inspirational. Their courage is no longer an untold story.

Anne Nelson, the author, is a journalist who has spent many years in countries around the world, many of which have experienced political disruptions, military takeovers, and ideological conflicts. She wondered how Germany could have done a complete overnight turnaround into a nation of murderers.

In her preface she states, "The Holocaust could not have occurred if the Nazis had not succeeded in purging the German legal system of its honorable judges and lawyers. The fascists had to intimidate and silence reports and turn the national media into vehicles for propaganda and mindless entertainment. The Nazis seized upon ongoing international tensions and used propaganda to inflate them into 'threats.' Then they obliged Germans to prove their patriotism by supporting cruel, ill-considered wars that could not be won. Soldiers were ordered to violate the Geneva Conventions, and officers who protested this breach were marginalized or abruptly retired."

This is a frightening book in more ways than one. A wise person said, "If we ignore the past, we are doomed to repeat it." Not a direct quote, but close.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 1 — Raj Kumar
- 2 — Diane Dugle
- 3 — Donna Quillen
- 10 — Christine Hegenderfer
- 10 — Gary Lovellette
- 10 — Mary Dell Sommers
- 11 — Joyce DuBey
- 12 — Kaye Craig
- 16 — Michael Thurmond
- 20 — Merlin Miller
- 22 — Wei Tsun Chang
- 22 — Eliseo Rios
- 23 — Emily Woods
- 24 — Robert Viera
- 25 — Mike Medley
- 27 — Ted Darwin
- 28 — Brenda Smith

ANNIVERSARIES

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

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; Charlie Craig; Nancy Dixon; Lonnie Hester; Krishna Kumar; Don Medley; Judy Medley's brother, Richard McReynolds; Merlin Miller; John Phillips; Virginia Throckmorton; Ted Hayes' mother, Ann Hayes; Eli Covington who is doing mission work in Nicaragua; Lauren, Joey and Ellia Pratt who are in Papua New Guinea; and the people in the armed services.

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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