

The Messenger

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

March 2009

John Calvin turns 500—part two

Trained both as a lawyer and a minister, Calvin had a strong desire to help people understand their faith in a systematic and structured way. From 1536 until 1559, he wrote and continually revised his “Institutes of the Christian Religion.” This major writing sparked discussion and debate for decades and still forms the basis of the reformed faith of our time.

Calvin divided his work into four parts, roughly following the form of the Apostle’s Creed. His first book dealt with the knowledge of God the Creator. Calvin maintained that knowledge about God is evident in nature and that since God’s glory is so clearly visible to all that no one can claim ignorance of God. Beyond that first step, Calvin wrote that we need Scripture to better understand God and our relationship to the Creator.

Scripture guides us in our search for knowledge and a proper lifestyle, reflecting our faith. Like others of his time, Calvin wanted the Bible to be translated into the everyday languages of the people. For Calvin, that language was French but he appreciated the need for the Bible to be written in all the major languages of Europe at the time. Calvin was not a literalist. He believed that the Bible came inspired from God, but had a number of different ways in which it could be interpreted. That ambiguity made worship and Bible study very important, in order that we might help each other along our faith paths.

Calvin’s second book addressed our knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ. He wrote that all humanity is sinful, from the very first sin of Adam and Eve. We are incapable of saving ourselves. No matter how hard we might try, we will always fall short of the perfection that belongs to God. Because of that, we needed help getting back into a right relationship with God and so it was necessary for God to send his Son as a mediator between us and God.

Calvin argued that the Jewish people of the Old Testament received the same message and that there is a great deal of similarity in the purposes of the two testaments. The Law, Calvin argued, was less important as a judgment against people and more important as a guide for living and a hope of salvation that would come in Christ. As part of his second book, Calvin included a major section dealing with the Ten Commandments.

Calvin’s third book dealt with the Holy Spirit and the grace that we continue to receive as we grow in faith. The Holy Spirit is very important in guiding us and in convincing us of our need to continually repent and grow. Calvin used the term regeneration to describe how we gradually make our way toward the kingdom, even though we are surrounded by a sinful world and inevitably fall back into sin ourselves. It is in this section that Calvin wrote more fully about Paul’s idea of predestination. To Calvin, this doctrine was a sign of hope that in the midst of sin, God would pluck out and save some of the people who would otherwise surely perish for eternity.

Calvin’s final book of the Institutes lays out his view of the church and its role in guiding and shaping our faith. Remembering that there was a great struggle going on between the established Roman Catholic Church and the new reformers, Calvin discussed the ways in which we properly worship, administer the sacraments, organize congregations, choose leaders and relate to the world outside the church. This section of his writings grew the most over the years, as Calvin wrote and argued with church leaders from a variety of backgrounds. Some were supportive and some were quite critical. It was a time when disagreement over church matters could lead to prison or execution. We continue to benefit from Calvin’s intelligence, courage, perseverance and love of God.

Peace,
Pat H.

Wednesday Bible Study

By Erin Angel

Beginning, Wednesday, March 4 and continuing for the next four weeks, our Wednesday night Bible study will be engaging in a Lenten Bible study titled, *Alive to God in Jesus Christ*. It is a Bible study written by Joseph D. Small, director of Theology, Worship and Education for the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. The study not only presents an accessible way to nurture our intellectual and spiritual understanding of Jesus Christ, but we are also challenged to explore ways that our faith is lived out in our lives and in the world. Extra books were ordered for the class if you are interested in the study, but failed to sign up, please see Erin.

Holy Week Services

Holy Week services will again be held in our sanctuary, followed by lunch in Fellowship Hall. A number of different ministers and musicians will provide leadership during worship, with a variety of churches providing the meals each day. Worship begins at noon, with lunch following at 12:30pm.

Holy Week services begin this year on Monday, April 6 and conclude on Good Friday, April 10.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

The annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, February 22. There were reports from the session and deacons. The 2009 budget was presented. Church members Ginny Anderson, Charlie Kibbons, Marilyn Ledbetter, and Jack Matson, were elected to the nominating committee. Donna Johnson was elected to fill a partial term as deacon. Thanks to all who made this meeting of the congregation a success.

Web Site Updates

Many thanks to Raj Kumar, Chris McCormick and Carolyn Stumpf for updating our web page. It is now possible to listen to Sunday worship services on your computer. The audio will be added to the web site early in the week following worship. We will keep several weeks of services on the web site for those who may have missed being here in person or who want to follow worship even when far away. Current and back issues of the newsletter are also available, as well as other interesting and useful information about the life of our church. Check it out at www.firstprescookeville.org and let us know what you think. We hope to move toward offering video as well as audio to the web site.

Enrichment and

Inspiration Class

By Erin Angel

You are invited to attend the Enrichment and Inspiration Class during the Sunday school hour. The class invites a different speaker to come and share with us each Sunday. Our schedule for the month of March includes an interesting list of speakers. On Sunday, March 1, Dr. Wali Kharif from Tennessee Tech will be coming to share with us about Islam. On Sunday, March 8, our own Rev. Dick Neil will be speaking. On Sunday, March 15, Dr. George Webb will engage us in a discussion on science and religion. 2009 is the 400th anniversary of Galileo's initial work in astronomy and Dr. Webb will discuss his difficulties with the church. On Sunday, March 22, Bob Armour will join us for a discussion of the Spiritual Journey of C.S. Lewis. Finally, on Sunday, March 29, Dr. Homer Kemp, director of the Upper Cumberland Institute will come and make a presentation on frontier religion in the Kentucky-Tennessee region from a folklorist point of view.

Youth News

By Erin Angel

Youth Retreat

On Thursday, March 19 the youth of the church will be going on a retreat to Cumberland Mountain State Park in Crossville, TN. We will meet in the church parking lot at 2:00p.m. on Thursday to caravan to the park, returning to the church at 12:00p.m. on Friday. We will spend our time in fellowship with one another, participating in Bible study, playing games, and going on nature walks. If you are interested in attending please let Erin know by Sunday, March 15 so we can have an accurate count for food preparation. There is no cost for the retreat so please mark your calendars and make plans to attend this fun event.

Youth and young at heart outing

On Sunday, April 5, all youth and young at heart in the church are invited to a play at the Nashville Children's Theater. We will be viewing *Lily's Purple Plastic Purse* based on the book by the same title written by Kevin Henks. Tickets for the play are \$10.50 if we have a group of ten or more. We will be leaving immediately after worship that Sunday. Those who would like to attend are asked to bring a brown bag lunch to eat on the way to Nashville. On the way home we will stop in Mt. Juliet to eat at Wasabi's restaurant. If you are interested in attending please contact Lisa Dollar by Sunday March 22nd and pay for your tickets so that they can be ordered in advance.

Spring Work Trip

Houma, Louisiana, was in the path of Hurricane Ike and will be the site of our spring work trip, March 8-14. Houma, about an hour southwest of New Orleans, is in the heart of Cajun country and our group will be learning more about the culture as we help to rebuild a number of family homes. We will be staying at a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance relief camp, which was nearly destroyed by the hurricane and had to be rebuilt before work camp teams could return to the area. The camp is now well equipped to accommodate our needs.

Our team consists of 15 members, pretty evenly split between college students and 'older' adults. We have a few team members with moderate experience in rebuilding. The others will learn quickly and we will all be guided by on-site supervisors. While we are working, there will also be other teams from a variety of places around the country, including New Jersey and California, probably about 100 workers in all. Please keep all the team members in your prayers as we continue our planning and make the trip to Houma and back. Of course, financial support is always welcome as we will buy the supplies necessary for our work and provide for our own meals and transportation during the week.

Our team: Robbie Evans, Diane and Sam Glasgow, Pat Handlson, Daniel Keaton, Brien and Katie Lewis, Ginny and Wayne Langpap, Jonathan Mauney, Jeff and Luke McNeese, T. Wes Moore, Carroll Viera, and, Lindsay Watts.

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.



Financial Report January 2009

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Income	\$18,400	\$17,569
Expenses	\$18,782	\$16,904

Dinner Out

By Kaye Craig

Come join us on Saturday, March 21 at 5:00 pm for a dinner adventure at Pueblo Viejo Mexican Restaurant, 410 West Main Street, Algood. They have a varied and affordable menu. Please sign up at the church or, if you have questions, please call Kaye Craig at 537-3714.

Newsletter Editor

Thanks to Anne Thurmond for all her help the past few years on the newsletter. However, due to time constraints, Anne 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. The deadline for the next newsletter is March 23. Please e-mail or phone Debbie Handlson (phandlson@aol.com; 526-5486) with any information you wish to have included.

PSA Worship Services

PSA students have begun 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 was held on 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.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 2— Bob Anderson
- 5— Martha Jane Whitaker
- 7— Bruce Throckmorton
- 8— Mike Birdwell
- 9— Tom Aitken
- 10— Mary Martha Bush
- 10— Lilah Clack
- 10— Joanne Miller
- 12— Richard Neil
- 15— Nathanael Harrison
- 19— Lenola Dyer
- 21— Wayne Meyers
- 22— Mary Smith
- 24— Jonathan Dyer
- 26— Janis Swim
- 27— Debbie Handlson
- 27— Don Medley
- 31— Sharyl Hansen

ANNIVERSARY

- 4— Jim & Barbara Greeson
- 13— Charles & Joane Kibbons
- 21— Malcom & Patsy Williams
- 25— Wayne & Sharon Meyers

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

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

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