

# The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church  
Cookeville, TN 38501  
[www.firstprescookeville.org](http://www.firstprescookeville.org)

November 2009

## *Moving Forward*

It was a bit ironic to spend several days in San Francisco and get away from the rain in Tennessee. We had a wonderful time visiting Zac in his new surroundings and introducing Lucy to one of the great cities of our nation. We saw some of the famous tourist sites as well as getting the local flavor from one who lives there. What a blessing it is to travel to wonderful places and enjoy the beauty and diversity of this great land.

After returning home, it has also been nice to have a few days of sunshine here. I plan to get out and ride my bike and enjoy some of this beautiful time of year. Of course, I don't have to go far. The great big Maple tree in front of the church is now at its peak fall color. It is a gorgeous tree and another reminder of the glory of God's creation. The Bradford Pear trees that line Broad Street are also at their most colorful right now. And, although I miss the Bradford Pears in the parking lot island, I look forward to the Redbuds that will take their place.

The Pear trees in the island serve as a very present metaphor for so much of our church life. They were planted about twenty years ago. I'm sure they were small and insignificant at the time. But, they grew and became spectacular symbols of the vitality of this church. Everyone knew about the church with the beautiful trees that look like snow in the spring-time. I also enjoyed the shade the trees provided for my car during the summer months. As time went on, however, the trees began to push their roots up through the parking lot, cracking the pavement. The trees became overgrown and blocked out the street lamps that gave us light during the evenings, and, limbs of the trees began to split and break off, threatening to damage cars parked in the lot.

To everything there is a season and a time. The season of the Bradford Pear trees is coming to an end. We appreciate what they brought to the church and have great memories of their beauty. We have also learned some lessons about what we want to do in the future. We will replace the pear trees with a smaller tree, that won't threaten the parking lot with its growing roots. We do like the color and variety that trees add to the landscape and our new Redbud trees will help do that for us again. Hopefully, it won't be long before people are noticing our new landscaping.

The church is also at the beginning of a new season of life. We have had a great number of strong leaders who have guided this congregation for 100 years. Some of those leaders are still among us, while many others have gone on to their eternal reward. We have also attracted a new generation of leaders to guide us into the future. I am pleased to be a part of the process. It has been fascinating to learn some of the history of this church and I hope to be a worthy successor to the list of pastors who have led this congregation. I also hope to inspire folks to learn more themselves and to participate in whatever decisions we make about our direction.

Each generation faces a new set of challenges and is equipped with a different set of resources and tools. We will face trials we haven't imagined and we will find strength we didn't realize we had. There is so much need in the world and there is great need right here in our own community. I look forward to identifying our mission and working on building the kingdom here on earth. Of course, one thing doesn't change. God will always be with us, watching over us and supporting our efforts. We never have to worry about being alone. Empowered by that knowledge and God's presence, let's work together in love and joy. We will find God's plan for our church and we will all grow in the process. We are blessed and I am excited to be here.

Peace,  
Pat H.

## *Centennial Notes: November*

By Michael Birdwell

November 1909 marked the groundbreaking ceremony for First Presbyterian Church in Cookeville on the property purchased from entrepreneur Jere Whitson. Real construction, however, did not commence until April of 1910. In the interim, worshipers met at one of the courtrooms in the county courthouse.

November is also the month associated with Armistice Day, now Veterans Day. Over the years members of the congregation have served their country, in uniform or in war-related industries, from the Civil War to the present. Wartime service remains evident every time a person enters the sanctuary. The large brass cross in the sanctuary once belonged to Reverend Hall Barrett. Pilots fashioned it for him when he acted as a chaplain in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He presented it to the church at the first Sunday worship in the newly renovated sanctuary on July 12, 1955. Barrett dedicated the cross to all those who served in the military, living and dead. Ethel Bruner donated brass candlesticks for the chancel. This Veterans Day let it be a reminder once again of all who stood in harm's way. Let it be a reminder of something else celebrated in this month of Thanksgiving.

During the height of the Second World War in 1943 Church Treasurer Eugene Jared requested of the Session that the church facilities be updated. He asked them to fund an annex for the installation of a kitchen and dining room. C.V. Bruner said that money needed to be raised to purchase new hymnals as well. What is striking about this is the fact that these requests for improvement came during the war when things like metal, gasoline, coffee, lip stick, and bacon were rationed. By September the Building Committee (Sam A. McMurray, Eugene Jared, and Dero Darwin) reported that the proposed additions would cost roughly \$400. Construction began in February 1944, initiating the first addition to the church building. With work underway, the Building Committee suggested that the basement be enlarged because the area where the kitchen and dining room had to be dug out and was proximal to the existing cellar. Church member and TPI professor Herman Pinkerton volunteered to help in this endeavor. He brought a pick, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow from his home, and did a great deal of the digging himself. This made it possible to put classroom space beneath the sanctuary. Two small Sunday School classrooms, a kitchen and dining room, a larger basement, and the church's **first** indoor toilets were installed. Work on the addition was completed in June of that year.

Women from the congregation chose the color scheme for the new addition. They chose "pale or apple green" for the walls and cream for the ceiling. The Women's Guild led by its president "Mrs. Eugene Jared" agreed to launch a campaign to collect the supplies needed to outfit the kitchen properly. She appealed to people beyond the church membership. Many local workers, among them Jimmie Joe Scott and his workers, John McCluen, and Borden Electric Company helped attain kitchen utensils.

On June 20 Reverends Ira Sadler, H.M. Brown of Sparta and B.M. Taylor of Alpine traveled to Cookeville for a special service to dedicate the new sanctuary, classrooms, kitchen, and indoor toilets. A special feature of that dedication ceremony was the creation of a photo exhibit of all of the men and women connected with the church who were off serving their country. Ernest Boyd spearheaded the endeavor, and the pictures were framed and hung on the walls of the new basement. People attending the special evening dedication service were encouraged to examine the photos and to write to the servicemen and women, offering moral support and warm wishes.

## *PSA News*

By Erin Angel

I want to send out warm and heartfelt thanks to all of you who provided meals for the PSA students this fall. One thing that is very unique about our church is that when our members provide a meal they stay, interact with the students and join us for worship. This means so much to the students. They realize that our members are taking time out of their busy schedules to get to know them and worship and fellowship with them. This is providing a bond between our church and the students that is very uplifting to my ministry there. While we may not see the direct result in increased church attendance of the students you can rest assured that the bond is still being created. If you didn't get a chance to provide a meal and are interested in doing so, our church's rotation will come around again in January.

My ministry with the PSA continues to be a blessing to me. I thoroughly enjoy the work with the students. We are well into the semester and the students are definitely feeling the crunch of the work before them. However, we are still enjoying good attendance at Tuesday night supper and worship where the students enjoy a time of fellowship and worship and a short break from the pressures of their school work. We always enjoy having visitors from the church with us on Tuesday nights and an especially good night to join us would be on the night we celebrate a Thanksgiving meal together on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30p.m. Hope to see you there!

---

## *Who's Here?*

The session has welcomed outside groups interested in using the church for meetings large and small. Samplings of the groups which have used the building recently include: The Cookeville Camera Club, The Civil War Roundtable, The Bryan Symphony Youth Orchestra, Mediation Services, Narcotics Anonymous, Town and Gown, The Museum Heritage Foundation, The Preacher's Roundtable, and more. It's another way we can serve our neighbors and welcome the community.

---

## *New Officers*

Thanks to our newest class of church officers for their willingness to serve the church in a special way. Our three new elders, elected to three year terms are: Sam Glasgow, Sharon Myers and MaryDell Sommers. Four new deacons will serve three year terms: Peggy Kilgore, Ginny Langpap, Ron Ledbetter and Linda Wilson. Jack Matson was elected to fill a one year unexpired term. Please keep these folks in your prayers as they begin their training for this important service to the church.

Thanks also to the members of the nominating committee who did such fine work identifying our new class of leaders: Michael Birdwell, Patsy Williams, Whit Whitaker, Ginny Anderson, Charles Kibbons, Marilyn Ledbetter and Jack Matson.

## ***Mission Matters***

Last year, the session agreed to support the Appalachian Network of Living Waters for the World. LWW has worked to provide clean water to people in other countries for many years. Now the mission is expanding to include folks in our own region. Many people in rural counties have no access to city water and their wells are polluted. Up to now, the solution has been very expensive but new and creative thinking has found a solution that is both efficient and cost effective.

Each home's water supply is tested to identify the pollutants and devise a plan to remove them. A series of filters is added to the water supply as it enters the house, which cleans the water and makes it drinkable. Volunteers do the testing and the initial installation of the equipment. The homeowners then learn about the pollutants and about the maintenance of their particular system.

Tazewell, TN, in Claiborne County, north of Knoxville and near the Kentucky border, has been identified as a region with a great deal of pollution and we have been asked to work in that area and provide clean water systems in three homes and one small church. We will get to know the families involved and learn more about their particular circumstances. We hope to begin working in November and finish the installation work by the summer of 2010. But, that will not be the end of our involvement. We may find that there are other ways in which we can help the people of this neighborhood as well. And, we want to get to know the people and to make sure that their water systems work well for years and not simply for a few months.

There are many tasks involved in this mission and many ways to support it. We hope to eventually encourage the Appalachian Network to move closer to Putnam County and this may prove to be a great mission for our church for many years to come. To learn more, talk to Bill Swim.

## ***Tazewell Water Mission***

---

## ***A Centennial Plea***

By Michael Birdwell

While I am progressing at a pace in researching and writing the history of First Presbyterian Church, gaps need to be filled. Over twenty years of Session Minutes are missing, among other records. Photographs of former members who played an integral role are sorely needed, and Carolyn has a list of those persons. Likewise images of the church over the years are needed. (e.g. Does anyone have a picture of Kermit Breen building the ramp on the south side of the building?) While some families have been incredibly generous and provided me with ample materials, the history of the church will be better with more information from other members.

Currently the manuscript is roughly 200 pages and counting. In addition to the narrative of the church and the Cookeville community, it will contain short biographies of people associated with the church over the years. Please help in this regard as well. If you have any letters, diaries, or other pertinent material please share it so that this can be a history that will be respected and relevant for a long time.

---

## ***Financial Update***

At the end of September, church finances remain relatively strong and stable. The 2009 budget calls for just over \$165,000 in income and spending for the first nine months. Actual income has been just over \$175,000, with actual spending just over \$165,000.

Several of the special projects that we hope to complete before we begin our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration have been completed or are now underway. These include: an overhaul of the sound system, sealing and striping the parking lot, landscaping and grounds repair, new pew cushions, and, special music for the church. Special offerings for the Centennial Fund are much appreciated. Thanks to all for such generous support of church mission and ministry.

---

## ***Cookeville Christmas Parade***

Each year, the Cookeville Christmas Parade passes right by the church along Broad Street and a large number of folks gather to watch. For the past two years we have provided coffee and cocoa for parade watchers, as well as opening up the building for people to use the rest rooms and get warm. It is one way we can say to the community that the Presbyterians are a welcoming group of folks. The date for this year's parade is Monday, November 30. People start gathering about 6pm and the parade wraps up by 8:30pm. Any who are willing to help prepare and serve hot drinks and act as ambassadors please contact Whit Whitaker.

---

## ***Presbyterian Women***

By Kay Powell

The Woman's Circle meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 1:30. Location of the meeting is announced prior to the fourth Monday in the Sunday bulletin. This year we are covering lessons in the Horizon Bible Study of Joshua--A Journey of Faith. Each month a different person gives us insight into Joshua and his leadership of the Israelites. All women are invited to join our fellowship. If you have questions, call Kay Powell @ 525-1121.

---

## ***Dinner Out Group***

Come join the next Dinner Out Group on Saturday, November 21 at 5:00 pm. We will be dining at the House of Thai, 208 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Sign up sheets are available at both doors of the sanctuary. For more information please call Kaye Craig at 537-3714.

---

## ***New Church Directory***

Do you ever see people and wonder what their names are? Have you ever heard an announcement regarding a member and wished you could put a face with a name? Are you a new member and wish you had something to help you put names with faces? Help is on the way! We are producing a pictorial family album! There is no cost to have your photographs taken, and you will receive a complimentary 8 x 10 portrait and directory for participating. You will be able to view your images electronically immediately after photography. At that time, you will have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits to share with family and friends. Call the church, watch for Sunday sign-ups or visit our website to schedule your own appointment. Photography dates are November 2, 3, and 4. We look forward to seeing you!

**N  
O  
V  
E  
M  
B  
E  
R**

**BIRTHDAYS**

- 1—David Johnson
- 2—GraceAnna Sine
- 3—Erin Angel
- 3—Jeremy Hansen
- 5—Joe Dyer
- 6—Ann Rose
- 6—Donna Simpson
- 6—Gail Turner
- 8—Jim Greeson
- 8—Tammy O’Dell
- 8—Angelo Volpe
- 10—Sylvia McGee
- 12—Sharon Myers
- 13—Todd Chapman
- 15—Jim Smith
- 16—Peggy Kilgore
- 18—Bill Swim
- 21—Emma Angel
- 22—J.B. Rittenberry
- 23—Jonathon Angel
- 23—Carrie Massa
- 24—Myrna Estes
- 28—Elliot Woods
- 29—Claribel Crawford
- 29—Ginny Langpap

***In Our Prayers***

**Persons Homebound:** Mary Martha Bush, 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; Paul Burgess; Helen Copeland; Charlie Craig; Nancy Dixon; Joyce DuBey; Lonnie Hester; Don Medley; John Phillips; Anne Rose; 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.

**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

**Next newsletter deadline is November 23.**

Phone Debbie Handlson at 536-5486 or e-mail (phandlson@aol.com) or Katie Kumar at 528-7968 or e-mail (KJKumar@tntech.edu) with any information you would like to have included.

**ANNIVERSARYS**

- 18—Bob and Ginny Anderson
- 24—Rick and Amy Woods
- 26—Gerald and Sharyl Hansen
- 30—Jim and Thelma Reno

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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Cookeville, TN  
Permit No. 59

