

The Messenger

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

July 2010

To Be Presbyterian

I always enjoy hearing the word Presbyterian on TV. It usually happens in a comic situation when some character wants to point to faith in a superficial way, such as, "I can't do that, I'm Presbyterian." It is just a more interesting sounding word than Baptist, Methodist or Lutheran. Of course, trying to guess the spelling is also generally good for a laugh. In serious situations, I often hear the word in association with a major hospital such as when Bill Clinton went to New York's Presbyterian Hospital for treatment of his heart condition. I am always glad to hear the word because it acts as a reminder that we are still here, even though we are certainly less noticeable and influential than we were a few generations ago. Of course, that is true for almost all religious denominations.

But, to be Presbyterian is about so much more than what we believe or how many members we have at the local and national level. Our basic beliefs are shared with the majority of Christians around the world. Some of the most important distinctions are how we behave and how we order our lives in faith. To be Presbyterian is to know that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves or our local community. That separates us from the many churches that claim total authority for the local congregation, with no accountability to anyone outside the immediate group.

Each of our congregations was started by a combination of local folks and representatives from a regional Presbytery. These people, working in partnership, created the framework for ministry in a particular locale. The local members of a congregation brought their faith and commitment, their resources and energy, and promised to build a church in their community. The Presbytery brought experience and guidance, support and a commitment to a long term relationship between a number of local churches and ministers who served in the region.

That connectional relationship helped create this congregation 100 years ago and is still at work today. When we host the meeting of our Presbytery in July, there will be as many as 200 commissioners, representing over 75 churches and other types of ministry in our area of Middle Tennessee. Half will be elders, and half will be ministers. We may hear from churches wanting to call new pastors, and we will most likely hear from ministers asking for permission to work within this Presbytery. We will also hear from a variety of committees discussing their particular mission work on behalf of the Presbytery. Meetings can be very exciting, and they can also be dreadfully boring but they are always representative of the church at work in our part of the world.

One of the things I most enjoy about Presbytery meetings is being able to see some of the other people who are hard at work in their communities. Years ago, people would travel long hours for the opportunity to worship and fellowship together. Today's modern technology allows us to communicate in seconds and yet, that sense of shared community is still so much better when we can hold hands, worship together, listen to each other, sit down to a meal together and really begin to understand what is going on in the life of another church or church family. It is an important reminder that we are connected to Presbyterians and Christians around the region and around the world. I am so glad that we are hosting a Presbytery meeting during our 100th anniversary year. I believe that it will be remembered for a long time by all who participate.

Peace, Pat H.

A Moment in History (from Michael Birdwell's history of the church and region)

In 1906, following the merger of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church, USA, the Cookeville session agreed to rejoin the mother church and adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith. Half the congregation accepted the merger, while, according to session minutes, the remainder held themselves aloof.

Though now officially reunited, not everyone felt that way in Cookeville or across the state of Tennessee. Those opposed to the merger met in Dickson, Tennessee, in May of 1907. The discussion led to dissension in the congregation and later caused a schism. Cookevillians did not stand alone. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church existed in fourteen states, and congregants from churches in all fourteen states filed lawsuits against the merger. Tennessee was the only state to declare the merger illegal. Supreme Court Justices running for election in 1907 said they would declare the merger unconstitutional and ruled in exactly that way in December of 1908.

The 1908 decision led to a flood of suits and counter-suits as congregations fought over the rights to local church properties. Tennessee Supreme Court decisions throughout 1909-1910 found in favor of the Cumberland church, including the church property in Cookeville. During the legal dispute, both congregations continued to meet in the same building, with the Cumberland congregation worshipping on the first and third Sundays of the month and the Presbyterian USA congregation meeting on the second and fourth Sundays. The USA congregation finally abandoned the fight and surrendered the building in October of 1909.

General Assembly

The first week in July will be the biennial meeting of our General Assembly. Commissioners and observers from around the nation will gather in Minneapolis to discuss important issues in the life of our denomination. Now it is possible to follow the debates, discussions, worship and other activities of the Assembly online. Go to www.pcusa.org for more information. Please keep all of the participants in your prayers throughout the coming weeks.

Financial Update

At the end of May, the church's finances remain strong and we are moving into the summer months with confidence. Church income for the year to date has totaled just over \$131,000, with expenses coming in at just under \$97,000. Several substantial memorial gifts account for much of the difference at this point. The session will soon begin discussing spending priorities for rest of this year. Please remember to keep up your pledges through the summer months. Attendance at church levels off during the summer but expenses remain steady and even rise a bit due to the hot weather. Thanks to all for your generous support of church programs and mission.

Presbytery Meeting

As part of our 100th anniversary celebration, we will host the July 24th meeting of the Presbytery. It is a Saturday meeting, which generally begins at 8:00am and finishes up about 3:00pm. During the course of the day about 200 delegates from the various churches throughout middle Tennessee will be here to worship, hear reports, vote on motions, eat lunch and discuss the business of the Presbytery. We will need lots of help to make sure that everyone has a positive experience that day. From greeting people and helping them find their way around the building and grounds, to leading worship, to preparing and serving lunch, to cleaning up at the end of the day, it will take many hands to make the work go smoothly.

There are now signup sheets for people to help out with parking, set up, registration and directions in the early morning; lunch preparation, serving and cleanup; final cleanup and closing the building in the afternoon. The choir will be here for worship in the morning and will present some of our special anniversary music. It will certainly be a day to remember and we want it to be a day that our friends from neighboring churches remember as well. Talk to Pat Handlson for more information.

Read Anything Good Lately?

by Thelma Johnson

THE MIDNIGHT HOUSE, by Alex Berenson

This is the fourth in a series of spy novels that are a cut (well, several cuts) above the usual run of thrillers. The first is *The Faithful Spy*, in which John Wells of the CIA has been underground in Al Queda for ten years. The second is *The Ghost War*, followed by *The Silent Man*. In his latest adventure Wells does his spying in Cairo, Egypt, as a Kuwaiti. Between trying to maintain his cover, dealing with a hostile CIA director, struggling with the loss of his long-time lover who refuses to marry him as long as he lives in so much danger, and his desire to quit the whole business and retreat to Montana and become re-acquainted with his estranged son, Wells has many complex problems to solve. He is not a superman. He is growing older, and has had many physical injuries that plague him. He rides motorcycles with his eyes shut. He is a spy to watch out for--and to watch as Berenson leads him through his encounters with those who wish to destroy us.

Congregational Art Exhibit

Calling all artists! The third art show planned in conjunction with the Centennial Celebration will showcase the artistic talents of members of the congregation, both present and past. On display will be paintings, drawings, and photographs as well as craft objects. Please deliver your material to the church during office hours the week of July 5-9. The show will be hung on July 10 and open in conjunction with the Second Sunday congregational meal.

Please include with your submission your name, the title of the work, the medium used to create it, and whether or not you wish to sell the piece. If you have questions please contact either Michael Birdwell (birdie@ntech.edu) or Tammy O'Dell (tammyaodell@gmail.com).

News from our Parish Associate Erin Angel

I have missed being in church on a more regular basis, but I have been filling in for various pastors over the past few weeks. During the month of June I have been filling in every Sunday at Rock Island Presbyterian Church as they have just let their supply pastor go and are beginning the process of looking for a stated supply pastor or a commissioned lay pastor. I continue to serve as the moderator of their session and as their liaison to the Committee on Ministry. Please keep this church in your prayers. They are a small, but committed group of people and cannot afford to hire a pastor full-time. They are not unlike so many of the other small churches which seem to be increasing in number within our denomination.

I had the wonderful privilege to attend a retreat for campus ministers in our Synod. I went to Cullman, Alabama for three days and two nights to a lakeside house. It was such a great chance to meet other people who are called to the same ministry I am involved in through the PSA. We are trying to do some exciting things which so far are not being done within the PCUSA denomination as a whole. This includes providing a place where campus ministers can connect, support one another, find resources, participate in continuing education opportunities and of course have fellowship with one another. It is a really exciting time for us. I came away feeling renewed and rejuvenated and with some new ideas for programs next fall.

Clean Water Project by Ginny Langpap

Six members of our Living Waters for the World team traveled to Wartburg, Tennessee in Morgan County to evaluate two homesites where new water filtration systems might be installed. Bill Swim, Bob See, Tammy O'Dell, Ginny and Wayne Langpap, and Diane Glasgow met at the homes with the local LWW contact and determined both families indeed need our help.

Water sample test results will determine what systems we will install in the near future. We look forward to working with these two families, who welcomed us with open arms.

Mission Matters

When you visit One World Market, you will see many kinds of mission opportunities. You are invited to participate in world service agencies such as UNICEF, SERRV, Heifer Project, International, and a project in Ecuador as well as the local missions Helping Hands, Rescue Mission and Creative Compassion.

Participation in these mission concerns could be the purchase of a card or a gift or something as simple as buying a Kroger gift card. (When you shop at Kroger's, the purchase of gas or food can mean a donation to the housing ministry Creative Compassion—at no extra expense to you!) Ask at the Market for specifics.

Would you like to provide a llama for a village in Peru? You could help to provide a life of dignity for those who use that wool in their crafts. With the purchase of Heifer Project cards (in honor or in memory of a friend or family member) you can send an animal of your choice to those in desperate need to support their families.

Another way to help our mission sales is the donation of some craft or international souvenirs for sale in the Market. We look forward to some of Dave Campbell's art in time for the Presbytery meeting on the 24th!

Throckmorton Honored

At the recent Adult High School graduation ceremony, Bruce Throckmorton received the Burks Award for his continuing contributions to adult education. The award was presented to him by Cookeville *Herald-Citizen* publisher Mike DeLapp and Putnam County Executive Kim Blaylock who represented the Burks family.

Dinner Out Group

by Kaye Craig

Come join us on Saturday, July 17th, 5:00pm at Rib City, 780 West Jackson Street next to Kohl's department store. Rib City is known for their ribs, barbecue and also features sandwiches, chicken and a variety of sides. Wayne and Ginny Langpap have graciously opened their home for dessert afterward. Sign up sheets are at both doors of the sanctuary. Please call Kaye Craig 537-3714 or 239-6160 with any questions or if you are unable to attend this event and you have signed up for it.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Johnny Smith
- 2 Julia Boyd
- 2 Gary Dyer
- 6 Donna Johnson
- 8 Charlie Craig
- 13 Bud Sine
- 15 Susan Hogan
- 15 Thelma Reno
- 17 Gordon Hunter
- 19 Charlie Kibbons
- 20 Bob Luna
- 21 Pat Wilhelm
- 21 Amy Woods
- 23 Gary Moore
- 24 Seanad Chang
- 24 Chris McCormick
- 25 John Flanders
- 26 May Reinbold
- 29 Wayne Hogan
- 29 Jack Matson
- 31 Anne Thurmond

ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Ted and Pam Hayes
- 3 Tom and Kaye Powell
- 14 Jerry and Marie Overstreet
- 17 David and Cynthia Boles

In Our Prayers

PERSONS HOMEBOUND: Jessie Lee Lamb.

IN NURSING HOMES OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES: Patricia Elsensohn; Dorothy Grant, Edith Jared, and Frances Snyder.

KEEP IN PRAYER ALSO: Dick Armstrong; Mike Birdwell; Charlie Craig; Helen Copeland; Joyce DuBey; Myrna Estes; Wayne Hogan; Don Medley; John Phillips; Hugh Piercey; Mary Smith; Wesley Henry; Jennette Volpe's uncle, Turner Boyd; Grace Anna Sine's brother, Don Green; Jean Metz; Dr. Jim Bolton; Royce Harris; Tammie Davis; and the people in the armed services especially Giles Evans, Lorelei Hammond and Josh & Ashly McClellan.

The next newsletter deadline is
July 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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