

The Messenger

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

September 2010

Looking for the Big Picture

To say that this has been a difficult summer for me would certainly be an understatement. Between the kidney stones and the bike wreck, I don't remember ever being in as much physical pain. I am mostly mended now and I look forward to a wonderful autumn season. I can easily see how people get depressed when one bad thing happens after another. I talk to people who think that God is out to get them and is punishing them for something. I don't believe that for a minute but I do wonder how people keep their attitudes positive. For me of course, my attitude has faith at its foundation. I can put up with setbacks, trials, and painful experiences because I know that better days are ahead; if not in this life then certainly in the next. I think about Paul writing that all these little troubles are winning for us a reward that is out of proportion to our pain; and he wrote that while suffering imprisonment, beatings and persecution.

Looking at today's big picture is also helpful for me. I don't want to minimize the pain I've suffered over the past couple of months. It has been very real and in some ways quite debilitating. On the other hand, it pales in comparison to some of the suffering we've witnessed around the world. This is the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Many people living along the gulf coast are still trying to recover from the devastation of that event. On top of that, the area is now contending with the BP oil spill. So many lives changed forever in such a short time. I also look around the world and see the effects of natural disasters, warfare, disease and crushing poverty. Millions of people made homeless, losing loved ones and livelihoods. Some of the stories are very personal. I watched a story about a young woman whose husband shot her in the face. She survived the attack and became the first American recipient of a face transplant. It was a remarkable story of courage and resilience. I found it inspirational and I have to admit that I'm not sure I would be able to carry on in a similar situation.

Part of my own strength is borrowed from the people who love me. During this summer of accidents and surgery I have been surrounded by family, friends and church members who have been there to offer love and support. That is one of the reasons that I believe the church is so important. The church is here to offer the support system that everyone needs. Sometimes the need is greater than others but we all need care and we can all offer care. I am proud to be part of a congregation and a denomination that places a strong emphasis on serving others. I think our commitment to service is one of our greatest strengths.

Now we must start to look at our world and our local community in new ways. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever; but the world is always changing and the church must find ways to adapt to the changing needs of God's children. There are so many people looking for a way to connect with God and with their neighbors. I am glad that our church offers lots of opportunities for people to get together. In fact, there are more people in the church during the week than there are on Sunday mornings. Our task as a church is to find ways to help people make the long term connection between such activities and real faith. We must help folks realize that a monthly meeting of like minded people cannot compare to a relationship that leads to eternal life.

As pastor, I welcome your input and ideas about how we can continue to serve the needs of our congregation while also reaching out to invite and welcome the broader community. God has blessed us; now we can look for ways to share the blessings.

Peace,
Pat H.

A Moment in History

By Michael Birdwell

The New Sanctuary (part 2)

Ted Darwin, who played a key role in the sanctuary's redesign, detested the original Akron Plan sanctuary, saying "it really was an eyesore." The renovations followed on the heels of the new house that Dero Darwin built for his family on Dixie Avenue. The company he used to fabricate the wooden moldings, pilasters, pediments, and cabinets of his home, was Rock City from Nashville. Dero donated left over fluted lumber from his home construction to create plant stands still used by the church. The Darwins used their connections with Rock City and encouraged them to fashion the wooden accents for the sanctuary, including all the pediments, the new altar, and pilasters in front of the chancel. Clemma Darwin selected the carpet. It was high quality wool made by Lee's Carpet Company. The Darwins secured the new carpet at a considerable discount. They purchased it from cousins who operated Draper and Draper General Merchandise in Gainesboro, Tennessee. Chairs for the choir came from the Palace Theatre in Monterey, and were un-upholstered curved plywood folding seats connected by interlocking metal and wood side rails. Dero Darwin owned the theatre and donated the used seats to the church. The two chairs in the chancel for the minister and the liturgist are the only remaining pieces of furniture original to the church, dating back to 1910. They were stripped and painted to blend in with the details of the renovation. Wainscoting and chair-rails were installed around the entirety of the sanctuary interior.

The sanctuary was extended approximately six feet to the west to enlarge the chancel and the choir space. Walls behind the choir were curved in order to add depth and to improve the general sound. Pews came from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. The church had limited funds to spend on the pews, so Ted Darwin personally purchased more aesthetically pleasing wooden details on the ends of each row of seats. Inspired by the architecture of the recently completed Colleside Church of Christ, Darwin confessed, "I cheated. I used to go out there and take measurements. I really did. I didn't have anything else to go by." On June 12, the congregation returned to the First Presbyterian Church building for the first time. During worship the congregation witnessed as deacons walked down the aisle with a large brass cross, which they hung in the rear of chancel. It belonged to Reverend Hall Barrett, and was fashioned for him by servicemen while he acted as a chaplain in the Air Corps during World War II. He dedicated it to those who served in the military, both living and dead. The Choir donated brass candlesticks for the chancel made by Virginia Metal Crafters in honor of their former director Ethel Bruner. They were based on a pattern from Colonial Williamsburg.

When the Session convened on August 28, 1955 they expressed their satisfaction with the improvements made to the sanctuary. They were so proud of the new space that they elected to invite the Cumberland Mountain Presbytery to hold its next meeting at the church. They also made it clear that the Methodists went out of their way to assist them while they were displaced. They wanted to show their appreciation and "it was voted to send the Methodist Church a check for \$50 for the light and heat used during our visit with them while our remodeling was in progress." Perhaps it is due to the largesse the Methodist Church showed the congregation when homeless, that makes them feel no compunction to poach our parking lot. Maybe they consider it a star in their crown.

Centennial Calendar

Speakers Series

Hosted in Conjunction with the Friends of the Cookeville Museums
September 16—Fred Prouty, "Civil War Sesquicentennial in Tennessee"

November 4—"The Tennessee Maneuvers and Cookeville"
All events at 7p.m.

Art Show

October 4-December 31— Nancy Dixon Retrospective

Christian Education Committee

On Sunday, September 12, the children's Sunday school classes will resume their regular classes and the Enlightenment and Inspiration class will resume. Congratulations to Dori Bullard, Michael Thurmond, and Julia Reno who will be moving up to the high school class.

Speakers are lining up for the Enlightenment and Inspiration class. Larry Self will be coming to speak on September 12. Suellen Alfred will be speaking on September 19 and Calvin Dickinson will join us on October 3. If you have any ideas for upcoming speakers please give their name and contact information to Erin Angel.

Nominating Committee

It's time again for the nominating committee to identify and recommend people to serve as deacons and elders. Deacons have responsibility for keeping people connected to the church. They divide the congregation into care groups in order to make sure that no one falls through the cracks. Also, as greeters and ushers, they are the first faces seen by visitors to worship. Elders are responsible for the structural work of the church. They oversee the programs of the church, deciding what the priorities of the congregation will be throughout the year, especially in the areas of worship, education and mission. Elders are also responsible for the stewardship of the church's property and financial resources. Without dedicated leaders, a Presbyterian church simply cannot function.

Members of this year's nominating committee are: Michael Birdwell, Sylvia McGee, Ginny Langpap, Mike Medley, Virginia Lovellette, Chris McCormick and Malcolm Williams. Anyone with suggestions of people to serve as deacons or elders is invited to contact any member of the committee. Please keep this group in your prayers as they discover the leaders God has in mind for our future.

Work Day

On Saturday, October 2, 2010, we will divide the bulbs in the iris bed. We'll start at 8 AM and not work any later than 11 AM. Please bring plastic bags for any bulbs you wish to take home or share with friends and neighbors. You'll need a spade and some garden gloves might be a good idea as well. We'll look forward to seeing you there. Robert and MaryDell Sommers

Come ToGather or C2G

By Andy Smith

A small committee of church members and friends are pleased to announce the commencement of Come ToGather, starting August 29th and meeting weekly on Sunday nights in our Fellowship Hall. We hope to create an inviting space in our church that's spiritually and culturally inclusive as we come to gather for a creative, contemporary, and casual worship experience at 6pm, featuring weekly communion and followed by weekly potluck supper and conversation. Other evening activities might occur after dinner as the experience evolves and as members of the new community desire.

Grounded in generosity and grace, we seek a daring and dynamic time of friendship and fellowship where everyone feels at home and is inspired to grow in mindfulness, spirit, and togetherness. One feature of the new service will be creative presentations -- including but not limited to testimonials, "questimonials," "Ask The Pastor Q&A," creative poetic, musical, or dance performances, lessons from other cultures, or whatever members of this new experience bring. While the services will provide a clear Christian message, not all participants will necessarily be Christian. After each week's preaching and teaching message, there will be a brief period for community questions or responses before the community prayer.

Come ToGather (or simply C2G) sees itself as part of a larger "emergent church" movement within the PC-USA calling itself "Presbymergent." The website presbymergent.org offers itself as an online space "for Presbyterians to engage the conversation surrounding the new emergence of church in the 21st century." Already, there are 15 churches, 14 "worshipgatherings," and more than 50 bloggers calling themselves "presbymergent."

We will meet in fellowship hall to create a more relaxed space than our Sunday morning services. Absolutely all ages are encouraged to join us, especially high school students, college students, and young families, including young children accompanied by their parents. A quiet play space will be provided in the same room as worship.

Our core committee includes our pastor Pat Handlson and other church members, but we invite all to come and participate, regardless of affiliation. Leadership duties will rotate among many. Local musicians will take turns leading us in inspired singing. Please contact Pat Handlson or Andy Smith (professor.andy.smith@gmail.com or 615-869-9705-cell) if you'd like more information, wish to join our core committee, or want to help with any aspect of making this new experience a joyful success.

Financial Update

At the end of July the church's finances remain strong and we are moving through the summer months with confidence. Church income for the year to date has totaled just over \$164,000, with expenses coming in at just under \$132,000. Several substantial memorial gifts account for much of the difference at this point. The session is now discussing spending priorities for the rest of this year. One potential difficulty has been a problem with the air conditioning, which could have a significant impact on future spending. Another topic of discussion is what to do about our ailing organ. Paul Thurmond has presented the session with several possibilities. Still another topic revolves around the lack of space for our crowded adult Sunday school classes. It may be time to identify a group of folks to help us with a medium to long range planning process.

In the meantime, 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.

Dinner Out Group

By Kaye Craig

Come join us on Saturday, September 18th at 11:00am (note the time change) at Made With Love, 428A East Broad Street, Cookeville. Made With Love is located across the street from Helping Hands. Made With Love is known for their wonderful breakfasts as well as their country cooking entrees and reasonable prices. Sign up sheets are at both doors of the sanctuary. Please call Kaye Craig at 537-3714 or 239-6160 with any questions or if you are unable to attend this event and you have signed up for it.

Looking ahead, the Dinner Out group will be going to Cumberland County Playhouse to see Brigadoon on October 16. The play begins at 2:30 and afterwards we will dine Italian at Stagecoach Cafe. Tickets for the play are \$26 for adults, \$25 for seniors and \$14 for children/students and payment must be made by October 6. Call Diane Glasgow with questions at 260-9350.

The TN Kidney Foundation

The annual "Cookeville Gift of Life Walk" will be held Saturday, October 2, 2010, at the Quad on the campus of TN Tech. Angelo and Jennette Volpe have been asked to get a group together to participate. From the comments and prayer concerns of some members of our congregation we think many may want to support the walk. Registration begins at 8am and the walk at 9am. For further information or to sign up to participate please contact the Volpes at 526-9543. By the way, it is not necessary to actually walk.

Presbyterian Student Association

Classes at Tennessee Tech resume on Monday, August 30th which means that activities at the PSA house are resuming as well. We will be meeting Tuesdays at 11:00 for lunch and Bible study, Tuesday evenings at 5:30 for supper and worship, and Thursdays at 11:00 for lunch and fellowship.

We have a great board serving the PSA this year. Members representing First Presbyterian include Jim Greeson, Jack Matson and Andy Smith. Please keep them and all of our board members in your prayers as we engage in another year of guiding the PSA.

You can become involved in PSA by providing a meal on Tuesday evenings. While I don't have an accurate count of how many to prepare for at this moment, I will know once we get a little into the semester. I will be placing a sign up sheet on the table outside of the sanctuary for you to look over and pick a night you would like to bring a meal.

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BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Nasser Keshmiri
- 7 Dick Armstrong
- 10 Hae Soon Dyer
- 10 Rosemary Haselton
- 17 Tom Powell
- 18 Billie Cameron
- 19 Gloria Thomas
- 20 Annette Flanders
- 21 Shirley Klug
- 24 Virginia Lovellette
- 28 Peggy Campbell
- 29 Cynthia Boles

ANNIVERSARIES

- 3 Barry & Gail Turner
- 4 Burl & Melba Smith
- 4 Whit & Martha Jane Whitaker
- 6 Bill & Shirley Klug
- 14 John & Sylvia McGee
- 16 John & Juanita Phillips
- 17 Eliseo & Marge Rios
- 29 Wayne & Ginny Langpap

In Our Prayers

Persons Homebound: Jessie Lee Lamb.

In Nursing Homes or Assisted Living Facilities: Patricia Elsensohn, 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; Tammie Davis; and the people in the armed services especially Giles Evans, Lorelei Hammond and Josh & Ashly McClellan.



Hot Dog Day

It will soon be time again for the Handlsons to celebrate the end of summer with a day of eating and fellowship. Our annual Hot Dog Day will be on Saturday, September 11, from 2-5pm. Come over to our house (315 East 14th Street) and enjoy hot dogs with all the fixings and those great cookies!



**Next newsletter deadline is
September 23**

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

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