

FPC NEWS

First Presbyterian Church, Toccoa, GA

From the Pastor

I remember working with the session at one of the churches where I was previously the pastor. We were seeking to understand “How” the church had changed. One of the elders who had participated in that church for over a quarter of a century made the comment, “We aren’t nearly as close as a Christian Community as we were when I first joined the church here.” The following question seemed to me to be the perfect follow-up, “What do you do differently now than you did then?” I will never forget the response. “Well, we have begun to pay for things that we used to do ourselves. I guess we have just gotten too busy.” When I asked what kind of things, the following story came: “During the summer time, when the grass grows quickly, the men and youth would arrive at the church at

about 8:30 AM on Saturday mornings. Somebody would bring doughnuts and juice, the coffee was always on when we arrived, and by 9:00 AM we would be out in the cemetery and church yard mowing the grass, doing the necessary trimming and edging. With a crew of 20-25 it never took very long. By lunchtime, many of the wives came and brought food and we would lay out under the pine trees admiring our work and sharing our food. Before heading for home, the kids and some of the adults, would play catch or if there were enough there, baseball. We would go home tired, but well-fed. Those Saturday mornings were precious to us. And, on Sunday’s when we would drive up to the church, the yard always looked so inviting.”

When the idea came up before

the Congregational Care committee about renewing the Dinners for Eight, I heard stories so similar. Those dinners were so much fun, built lasting and powerful relationships and brought a sense of joy to those who participated. It was “the church” being “the church!” We all recognize that we no longer live in a world that prizes relationships, yet God and the called followers of Christ are in the relationship business. I think all who participated in the reception honoring Vernon Smith on the last Sunday in July, received a sense of the blessing of church people gathering to celebrate “being the church.”

One of my seminary professors told us of losing his first wife to cancer. He taught us something remarkable.

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Volume 25, Issue 8

August 2010

Special points of interest:

- All are invited to meet on Thursdays, August 5 and 19 at 11:00 AM for Prayer with Pastor.;
- We have the privilege of leading the residents of the Clary and Wilkinson Centers in worship on the fourth Sunday of each month. Attendance has been low for the last several months. Please consider joining us for these monthly services.

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Thank You

Vernon Smith and the Smith family send special thanks to Jennifer Bell, my sons, Pastor David and Mona, the Women of the Church and my church family and friends for the many cards, hugs, love, joy, laughter and comfort for me in this time of my life.



The family of Vernon Smith gathered with his church family on Sunday, July 25 to celebrate Vernon Smith's 97th birthday.

Congregational Care

ICE CREAM SOCIAL/HYMN SING



You are invited to join us on Sunday, August 1 at 6:00 PM in the church fellowship hall for an Ice

Cream Social followed by a Hymn Sing. Specific individuals have agreed to bring ice cream. All oth-

ers attending are asked to bring cookies. Please join us for an evening of fun and fellowship.

DINNER FOR EIGHT

Anyone wishing to sign up for Adult Dinners for Eight can still do so until August 15th. At that time the groups will be formed so that dinners can begin in September. Meals are held in homes with the host providing the main course and beverages while others bring the remainder of the

meal. Each group is responsible for their own plans and scheduling. This is a short commitment, lasting only 3-4 months till each member has served as a host. This is a good way for couples and singles to become more acquainted with fellow church members. Please sign up on the bulletin board downstairs by the Pond Street doors if you want to join us. For more information contact Lynn Newsom at 706-754-1510 or lnews@windstream.net.

Importance of the Unimportant

The greatest forces in the universe are never spectacular. Summer showers are more effective than hurricanes, but they get no publicity.

The world would soon die but for the fidelity, loyalty, and consecration of those whose names are unsung.

“It is so easy to exaggerate the importance of the seemingly important; and to underestimate the importance of the seemingly unimportant.”

There is, therefore, no life however humble, but may take its place in the

building of a better world and a more beautiful tomorrow.

It is so easy to exaggerate the importance of the seemingly important; and to underestimate the importance of the seemingly unimportant.

- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Choir Members - Past, Present and Prospective

An end of the summer party is being planned for choir members. This invitation is not only extended to present choir members, but also to those who haven't been to choir lately, and to those who might be interested in joining the choir. The party will be held on August 7, from 6 until 10 PM, at the home of Bill and

Martha Hunt, 604 South Yow Mill Road, Toccoa, Ga. Please bring your spouse or a guest and a swimsuit and towel if you want to swim. Food and beverages will be provided. For more information or to R.S.V.P. please call Cherri Cope at 706-779-7187.

Coffee Fellowship

Volunteers are needed to host the Coffee Fellowship for Sundays in August. If you can help, please sign up on the sheet provided on the bulletin board at the Pond Street Entrance. Thank you.

July Session Notes

The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Toccoa met on Thursday, July 15, 2010, at 6:30 pm. All Elders were present except Erik Bolstad and Bob Buchanan (excused). Clerk McDonald, Moderator, Rev. Keister, Choir Director Sharon Morden and Fred DiMaio, who is working to become a Commissioned Lay Minister, were also present.

The Session learned that:

- The 2013 Elder Nominating Committee is at work and will begin meeting in August;
- A called session meeting will be held on August 1 following Sunday School for the purpose of receiving four new members;
- A Presbytery Records Review meeting will be held in August ;
- Personnel Committee reviews will begin in September;
- The Clerk and Pastor will begin Roll Review in early fall;
- Columbia Theological Archives stores some of our older rolls, minutes and special papers. Copies are continuing to be made to get all of our records to CTS Archives;
- September 15 Fellowship Dinner program will feature our youth participating in Karaoke and musical acts.
- The Children and Youth will participate in the Back to School Bash, downtown Toccoa, on August 7;
- A Children/Youth Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, October 16;
- Sunday, August 1 will be an Ice Cream Social and Hymn Sing at 6 PM;
- The annual leaf-looking adventure will be either Monday, October 18 or November 8;
- Progressive dinners for young couples is being organized;
- Dinner for Eight will begin in September;
- A program to teach better greeting skills is being developed;
- The Alfi Mikhail Library project is completed. Restocking the shelves in underway;
- Accessing and bids are still being sought on the major roof repairs;
- Repair to third floor windows will continue in cooler weather;
- An electrician will be secured to provide exit light connection;
- Bids are being sought for Pond Street bulletin board improvements;
- Committees are to prepare proposed budgets to submit to the Stewardship Committee by September 16;
- The Worship Committee is responsible for the November 17 Family Night Dinner;

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From the Pastor Continued...

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He said, "I knew that my faith was strong, and that God was going to heal her because of that faith. When she died, my faith died with her, but the faith of those who were around me remained strong-----and for a time I lived on their faith until my own returned." This is the church at it's best. A church that not only be-

lieves in the words of the Bible and the living word who is Jesus Christ; but a church that supports each other in the difficult times, carrying each other in our own times of pain.

I have always thought that one way of describing the power of the church is to understand that in our sorrows, the pain can be shared

with others and divided amongst us and likewise, our joys can be shared with others and multiplied.

I hope you will sign up for Dinner for Eight and give it a try. Make the commitment, take the time, slow down; and as Lexsy told Lucy a few weeks ago, "smell the hay."

God bless you all! Pastor David

Music Notes

There are three things I want to share with you today. First, there is a subcommittee of the Worship Committee which deals specifically with the music in our worship services and with the music program of the church. Our member-at-large is Evan Hellenga, and if you have any concerns or comments, you are invited to share them with him. Of course, you may also contact Leah, Frank, or me directly, as well.

Secondly, I want to remind all the ladies of the church that they are invited to participate in our women's choir on August 1st. Please meet in the choir room to practice at 10:15 that morning. I'm looking forward to it!

Finally, I recently read an article which likened our church hymnal to a "musically embellished *family album for the people of God*." I found this to be a compelling comparison. Consider Mary Louise Bringle's description: "...a hymnal is one of the primary ways we follow the direc-

tive of Psalm 71:18: to 'proclaim God's mighty acts to all the generations to come.' Singing hymns is, after all, an *intergenerational* affair: It is something fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and older generations in general have long done to offer up a legacy to their children. In a hymnal we find mementos of those who lived in generations before us: whether the *subjects* of hymns (Abraham and Sarah; David; Mary and Joseph; Jesus...) or the *authors* of hymns (Martin Luther and [allegedly] John Calvin; Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts; Fanny Crosby...). The small print in the hymnal hints at story after story of what our distant cousins and aunts and uncles and great-great-great grandparents did and sang about on their journeys of faith."

While hymnals of many denominations share some of the same hymns, each one also has its special songs, reflecting its own branch of the family of God. Learning the old hymns

ties us to our heritage and teaches our children the lessons to which our predecessors have given witness in their songs of faith; they teach theology; they encourage and strengthen us and our convictions as we sing their words of faith and experience. Newly-composed hymns and songs help us to express our own faith at this point in history, and songs of praise from Christians of other cultures remind us that we are part of the body of Christ which is made up of some "from every tribe and nation."

A new Presbyterian hymnal is under development, and we have been asked to participate by using some of the songs being considered for inclusion and then giving our feedback to the hymnal committee. This is one way we can serve our denomination. If we are actually chosen to do this, I will keep you informed and will solicit your input. I hope it will be an enjoyable experience for all of us. Sharon Morden

From the Church Secretary

BULLETIN INFORMATION

Please submit bulletin information by 8 AM on Wednesday mornings. Thank you.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION:

Please submit information for the September Newsletter by 8 Am on Tuesday, August 24th. Thank you.

FINANCES

Budgeted Monthly Expense
\$16,795.28

June Budgeted Receipts \$15,669.77

Difference of -\$1,125.45

What is Life?

Life is not so much—

A fight to be fought,
A game to be played,
A race to be run,
A prize to be snared.

It is more nearly —

God's will to be sought
A course to be laid,
A work to be done,
A gift to be shared.

July Session Notes continued...

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- Presbyterian Women are responsible for the December 15 Family Night Dinner. A handbell concert will be the program.

Session Approved:

- Withdrawal of \$2,885 from the World Wide Benevolent Interest Fund for dental work for a church member;
- An Organ Recital by Frank Johnston, Sunday, October 24, 4 PM, with a love offering received to benefit Redeeming Love Women's Ministry on Savannah Street. A reception will follow.
- Late summer youth swimming

party at the Hunt's home;

- A White Water trip on July 31. Youth Admission is \$26.97;
- A trip to tube in Helen on August 5th;
- A bowling trip on August 17;
- Youth attending Toccoa Fest at Grace Baptist Church on August 28. Admission cost is \$5 per person;
- A September 11 youth trip to walk Tallulah gorge;
- A Facebook youth page administered by Leah Snyder;
- Withdrawing \$500 from the Lo-

cal Benevolence Interest Account for corporate sponsorship of the Kickin' It Walk;

- Withdrawing \$200 from the Local Benevolence Interest Account to purchase pencils for the Back to School Bash;
- Use of the building by Christy Mazingo for a shower on July 31, 1-5 PM;
- Developing a Stewardship program that sends letter to the congregation from each ministry to culminate with a congregational dinner to share financial budgeting for 2011.

Christian Education

TUBING

A trip to tube in Helen has been planned for Thursday, August 5. We will leave from the church at 12:30 PM.

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

The children and youth of our church will distribute pencils to children in our community at the Back To School Bash in downtown Toccoa on Saturday, August 7.

CAR WASH

The youth will hold a Car Wash on August 14 from 8 AM—3 PM. Stop by and support the fundraising efforts of the youth and go away with a

sparkling clean car.

BOWLING TRIP

The children and youth will go bowling on Tuesday, August 17. We will leave from the church at 5:30 PM.

TOCCOA FEST

The youth of the church will attend the Toccoa Fest Concert on Saturday, August 28, hosted by Grace Baptist Church. The cost for admission is \$5 per person.

SEPTEMBER FELLOWSHIP DINNER

Fall is right around the corner, though I doubt if any of us really believe that with all of the hot tempera-

tures and long steamy days and nights we are currently experiencing. Still, September will be here before we know it and that means the return to our regular schedule. The Christian Education Committee will host the first Family Night Supper in the fall. The program will be "Karaoke/Musical Acts" More will be said about the program in days to come. Go ahead and mark your calendar now and plan to be with us on September 15 to enjoy a good meal and a memorable evening filled with great fun.