



# First Press

The First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

August 2006

Rev. Dr. Bob Smith - Interim Pastor  
Rev. Dr. John R. Harland - Parish Associate

The Christian Education Committee proudly presents:

## RALLY DAY 1

Sunday, August 13th



Middle School, Senior High, Elementary, Kindergarten and Preschool, it's time to rally back to Sunday School for a new fall program. There's something exciting for every age group beginning with a **Breakfast Picnic** on the grassy plains of FPC. Meet in the Sanctuary at 9:45 a.m. to grab your Sunday School teacher and a yummy picnic basket. Bring your Moms & Dads too! Parents get to eat inside (JTH) and then visit your classrooms. Surprises and Treats for everyone!!! Don't miss it! Bring a friend or two.

## RALLY DAY 2

Sunday, August 20th **Adults Only**

All adults, male and female, wise and wondering, are invited to a scrumptious breakfast and presentation of small group studies available this fall during the Sunday School hour. Please gather in Jim Thomas Hall at 9:45 a.m. to meet facilitators, ask questions and preview materials. Bring your appetite for good food and challenging study. All adults are welcome: friends, family, and slight acquaintances; bring them all. Come and see what Sunday School at First Presbyterian offers you to grow spiritually and mature in faith.

## Welcome New Choir Director

We welcome to our choir and church family a new choir director - Gabriela Stegman. Gabriela and her family moved to the US from Argentina four years ago; her husband is a professor at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. She has a broad background in music, with a professional classical music degree, having studied with some of the great masters of music in South America. She is very interested in the broad variety of music that our choir enjoys and looks forward to working with our wonderful group to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord."



Gabriela has work experience as a piano teacher, choir director (leading six choirs in twelve years) and is an accomplished vocal arranger; she promises to bring a new dimension to our music program. In addition to her music studies, Gabriela has done extensive and advanced study in the treatment of autism. Please make her feel welcome as she joins us in August.

Gabriela and Carol are planning our musical year and would like to start out with some choir (and congregation) favorites, so please make a note of your most memorable anthems and mention them to Carol to help get started. Choir rehearsals will begin Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m. All voices are welcome.

Please submit articles for the newsletter as early as possible, but no later than the 20th of each month.

## FPC Church Mission Statement

As part of the body of Christ, The First Presbyterian Church family is called together to worship God, to nurture one another, to discover together where God is leading us; to plan effectively how to witness to our faith; and to teach and carry out the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ to the best of our ability. Our outreach is to our families, our church, our community, and to all the world.

### Creation! Celebration!

This was the theme for the triennial Presbyterian Women's gathering held in Louisville from July 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>. Six from FPC (Diane Paseika, Sandi Neal, Mary Williams, Lisa Flick, Linda Laine and Jane Lindberg) spent five unbelievable days of sharing, worshipping, singing, and learning in the company of over 3,000 women from all over the world. We began each day with a worship service followed by a morning plenary session. The afternoons consisted of workshops, then back for the evening plenary.

In addition to English, we heard readings in Arabic, Korean, Mandarin and Cantonese, Navajo, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili. The Book of Genesis became our daily companion with a storyteller, dancer, music, drama, and a Gathering Woman pulling objects from a trunk to illustrate the stories of Eve, Ruth, Hagar, and other women from Genesis.

The mission for the gathering was to collect shoes and socks to be distributed to needy children in the Louisville area. And, did we get shoes and socks – more than 7,200 pairs of shoes and 40,000 pairs of socks! A gathering offering was taken and resulted in over \$60,000 to be shared by Rural Coalition and Agriculture Missions, Inc., valued members of the Presbyterian Rural Ministry Network and the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

But the real highlight of the event for those of us from First Presbyterian and Providence Church was singing the theme song of the Gathering written especially for the Gathering by Jane Lindberg. We shared so many moments of joy, renewal, friendships made and renewed, and were reinforced with the understanding that Presbyterian Women rock!



### *Presbyterians support frontier mission*

In 2005, Presbyterians continued their longstanding heritage of sharing Christ's good news with people who have never before heard it, as witnessed by a total of 36 PC(USA) mission workers serving in frontier mission among 24 people groups in 15 countries.

The PC(USA)'s support of frontier mission, spearheaded within the Worldwide Ministries Division, is carried out through grants to partner organizations, which extends the denomination's frontier work even further – into a total of 66 people groups in 40 countries. Thank you for your faithful stewardship that supports this continuing outreach.

### *Top "Learnings"*

Two months ago Rich Ufford-Chase completed his two-year term as Moderator of the General Assembly of our church. He recently provided his top 10 "Learnings" from that experience. Here's #2 on his list:

"The churches that are most alive, whether they are large or small, rural or urban, conservative or liberal, are the ones that are insisting mission cannot be done by proxy. They are getting out of the pews and into the world."

### *Nassau County Council on Aging*

We are very grateful to the VBS children from your congregation for their selection of Nassau County Council on Aging as their mission project and their very generous donation of \$480. The group of children sent by you to present the gift to us proved to be very caring and honorable representatives.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our dedicated staff, and our many volunteers and most importantly, our senior clients, I express our sincerest gratitude for your interest and generosity.

My sincere thanks!

Al Rizer, DSW

Nassau County Council on Aging

## Where in the World is Logan, West Virginia?

Tucked into the lower southwestern corner of West Virginia, it's nearly as close to Kentucky as it is to Tennessee in the Appalachians. It's where the famed feud between the Hatfield's and McCoy's took place. It's on the Guyan-dotte River, and it's the county seat of Logan County. Maybe this clears up where Logan is, but certainly not why Logan was the destination for the High School Mission Trip 2006:

- 23% of Logan's population lives below the poverty line (compared to Nassau County at 8.9%).
- Only 38.3% of households consist of married couples living together.
- 28.2% of people over age 25 do not have high school diplomas.
- The average annual income is \$19,300.

Unemployment, poverty, deplorable housing, dreadful living conditions, heart disease, diabetes, hopelessness...these are the issues and obstacles for the people of Logan. So, off we went with open hearts, minds, arms, our Bibles, and God. Of course, we also took along paint brushes, scrappers, masks, snacks, and cameras. We were the first group of three to arrive at our location which meant we got first pick of sleeping quarters (a first). The first night was easy unless you had on a "red shirt". Red shirts had dining room clean up/dish washing duty. Also on the first night we were told exactly how many of our youth would go to which work site, and we joined with folks from other groups (Illinois Presbyterians and Wisconsin Methodists) to form the Coal Miners, Thundering Herd, or Mountaineers. Our group of ten was split in half, and we became a Coal Miner or a Thundering Herd. These were the people you got up early with on your day to fix breakfast (6:15 a.m.), or cleaned the bathrooms and showers, or cooked dinner, or cleaned the dining/common areas. Every crew had daily "chores" before and after "working" at their primary work site. "Open Your Eyes to Beauty, Justice, Mercy, Humility and Possibility" was the overall theme on which daily Bible studies focused.

The Coal Miners worked to clean the mold and mildew from the outside of a trailer, made minor repairs, put on a coat of fresh paint, and cleaned debris and trash from around the dwelling of a very appreciative elderly couple. What a contrast from beginning to end. Our Thundering Herd crew was assigned work at the Appalachian Dream Center which is a huge depository for food, clothes, furniture...like Barnabus, but on a much larger scale. The Herd crew fed lunch to folks coming through a "hot meal" line, made "take-out boxes" for disabled, sorted and separated "stuff," and passed out non-perishable items to cars lined up for about a half mile. And they painted too. Both crews had ample time to interact with local adults and play with local children.

Evenings were filled with a local cultural activity, a quick snack, then "Club" (a time for sharing, singing, and Bible study with a lesson from a staff member), followed by Church Group time the day's events and the Bible lesson from Club were discussed.

High School Mission Trips are long, hot, crowded, tedious times. They are also rewarding, satisfying, heart-wrenching, loving, valuable learning times for our young people....our future leaders. Please join us when we share our story on August 6<sup>th</sup> in Jim Thomas Hall.



# What Happened at the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly?

*A Note from Pastor Bob Smith*

Because our Presbyterian family is so large and diverse, we often disagree about significant issues. Some families fight privately, but our denominational family discusses and debates publicly every two years at our national General Assembly. As we all know, newspapers and other media love controversy. Unfortunately they don't always get it right. This was certainly the case in the recent reporting of our 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly that met in Birmingham, AL.

First, our church has not changed the name of God or the traditional naming of the Trinity as "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." A theological paper about the Trinity was not "adopted" but "received" by the General Assembly. This paper and the actions of the General Assembly do nothing to change our orthodox understanding of or language for God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That Trinitarian formula was reaffirmed and is the only one in which we are authorized to baptize. Scripture is, however, full of images for God that remind us that God's being is far more than our minds can grasp. The paper lifts up a number of those images in ways that call on us to remember the character and qualities of God revealed in Scripture.

Secondly, it was reported that the General Assembly has now allowed local congregations or presbyteries to ordain self-affirming, practicing lesbian and gay persons. This is simply not true. Our official constitutional ordination standards remain the same: Our Book of Order states "Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life of obedience to scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or in chastity in singleness..." Overtures to remove that provision from the Book of Order were defeated. All acts of ordination of elders and deacons by church Sessions and of ministers of the word and sacrament by Presbyteries will be reviewable by higher governing bodies regarding their compliance with our denomination's constitutional standards. It is likely that this process will be tested in upcoming months.

I am also grateful to be a part of a church that affirms we are "reformed, and always being reformed, according the Word of God and the call of the Spirit," i.e., willing to check our lives, words, and actions against what the Bible has to say. "Reformed, and always being reformed" is a call to continually ask, "Do we have it right?" We have done this many times in the past over significant issues such as slavery, ordination of women, etc. We are committed to seeking God's leading in the future.

*(On Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, at 9:50 a.m., Pastor Smith will be discussing the actions of the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in the Saltshakers Class. Interested persons are invited.)*

## Flower Calendar

- August 6<sup>th</sup> - Cynthia Sapp, Linda Love and Andy Allan in loving memory of their parents, Sara and Andrew S. Allan, Jr.
- August 13<sup>th</sup> - Mike, Marsha, Pam and Nancy Daniel in loving memory of their mother, Ann.
- August 20<sup>th</sup> - In loving Memory of Bob Turney from his family.
- August 27<sup>th</sup> - Mary Jo Griffin in loving memory of her husband, Ranson Griffin.



## August Communion

Communion will be served on August 20<sup>th</sup> at both Services.



## Notice to Elders and Deacons

If you do not yet have a personalized name tag, please contact Mac Noden and let him have your name as you would like it to appear on your name tag.

- Home Telephone 491-3816.
- E-Mail [malcolmn@aol.com](mailto:malcolmn@aol.com)



## Word from the Pastor

*"God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105)*

The other evening I saw a rerun of the film *Titanic*. No doubt you've see it, winner of many Oscars, including Best Picture.

The young couple whose romance forms the heart of the plot is fictional. Everybody else in the movie and every other detail of the story is accurate – even the china pattern used in the dining room.

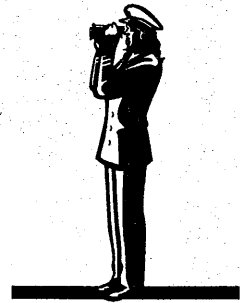
The film brings out clearly the causes of the disaster – a misguided sense of invincibility, too few life-boats, and a distracted wireless operator among them.

And this. One lookout on the bridge asks the other if he has the **binoculars**. No, he answers – they haven't found the pair since leaving Southampton. Later, at the official inquiry, it was determined that using binoculars would have enabled them to see the iceberg well enough in advance to turn the ship out of its path. By the time they saw it with unaided vision – it was too late.

An ocean liner and 1,513 people went two miles to the bottom of the Atlantic partly for want of a single pair of binoculars!

Peering half-distracted and unaided into treacherous waters can bring anybody down. For Christians, the Bible offers a looking glass to show us where we are going, where we ought to go, and God's recommended way to get there. *"God word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105)*

**Rally Day** on Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, kicks off a new year in our Christian Education program. Wonderful Church School opportunities will be offered for children, youth and adults. A light for our paths!



Sincerely,  
**Bob Smith**

P.S. See you at 9:45 a.m. on Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>!

## The Da Vinci Code Cassettes and CD's

I regret to advise that due to technical problems with the original recordings, we are unable to produce the promised cassette or CD's copies of the Da Vinci Code discussion series that was so informatively facilitated by Pastor Bob Smith. I have already apologized to Pastor Bob. I also want to offer my apologies to those of you who placed your names on the list to receive copies, and who have waited so patiently for them to be produced. Upon reflecting about the circumstances that caused this unfortunate situation, I am reminded of the simple but ever present truth contained in the words of Thomas a Kempis, (1380-1471), who in his seminal book entitled, "Imitation of Christ", opined that, "Man proposes, but God disposes."

Malcolm Noden  
Chair Communications Committee

## Decolores

*You've seen the bumper sticker...What does it mean?*

Decolores, the slogan of the Cursillo movement means, "all is color". With the symbol of the rainbow, it represents the full spectrum of God's love for His people and all creation. The "Cursillo" movement with which our church participates is called "Sonshine North Via De Cristo". Three-day weekend retreats are held twice a year for men and women as an opportunity for Christians to deepen one's knowledge of the Christian faith, to enhance one's spiritual life, and to help the participants become more active as servants in God's Kingdom.

The fall weekends are scheduled for November 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> for men and November 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> for women. For more information about these weekends, please call Sally or Bill Ericksen. (261-2329).



**MEET & GREET**  
  
**Our NEW Members**

**Charles Robbins** (by transfer from Summerville Presbyterian Church in Summerville, SC). Charles moved here in June, 2005 to be near his son. He enjoys golf and is retired from Kmart management.

**Stephen Andrew Noden** (by transfer from 1st Presbyterian Church of Ulysses in Trumansburg, NY). Stephen, an ordained Presbyterian Elder, is the son of Malcolm and Barbara Noden. He has many varied interests, including music. Stephen sings with the FPC choir.

**Sharon and Jay Scherer** (by transfer from Beckley Presbyterian Church in Beckley, WV). Sharon and Jay moved to St. Marys, GA in September, 2005. Sharon, a retired teacher and Jay, a retired attorney, both enjoy reading and traveling. They have one son who lives in Raleigh, NC and a daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren who live in Jacksonville. Sharon and Jay are ordained Presbyterian Elders.

**Presbyterian Women's News**

Ladies, please mark your calendars for September 14<sup>th</sup> for our annual Presbyterian Women's Kick Off Luncheon. It begins at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary with a short business meeting and presentation of the first chapter of the 2006-2007 Horizon's Bible Study: "In the Beginning: Perspectives on Genesis." Jeannie Langley will lead us in this chapter entitled, "Perspectives on Creation." A luncheon follows with PW members bringing salads to share. We hope to see you there. Presbyterian Women continue to collect personal hygiene items for Barnabas. These items may be placed in the green box marked "PW" in the JT Fellowship Hall.



**Communications Committee**

*"..and a little child shall lead them"\*\*\**

Recently I received a letter from an old friend who lives in the farm country of upstate New York. She was reflecting upon the ways in which we all slowly lose our child-like appreciation of God's creations, and how we need to observe and listen to our children as they experience their version of reality. With her permission, I share with you part of what she wrote:

*"When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over my yard. My kids see flowers for Mom and blowing white stuff you can wish on. When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who probably wants money, and I look away. My kids see someone smiling at them and they smile back. When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm so I sit self-consciously and listen. My kids feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them they make up their own. When I feel the wind on my face, I brace myself against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk. My kids close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it, until they fall to the ground laughing. When I pray, I say "thee" and "thou" and "grant me this"; "give me that". My Kids say, Hi God! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to Heaven yet. I would miss my Mommy and Daddy." When I see a mud puddle I step around it. I see muddy shoes and dirty carpets. My kids sit in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross and worms to play with. I wonder if we are given kids to teach or learn from. No wonder God loves the little children! Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things. I wish you big mud puddles and sunny yellow dandelions."*

When I read this letter I was immediately struck by the universal nature of the experience that every parent has had when they find themselves learning from their children. Perhaps such experiential learning is one of the better ways that God uses to get our attention. The philosopher Schiller when once confronted with this phenomenon, opined that, "O the idea was foolish, but divinely beautiful." Let us all listen and watch attentively for the next divinely beautiful vision from our kids.

Mac Noden, Chair Communications Committee

\*\*\*Isaiah 11:6

## Session Notes

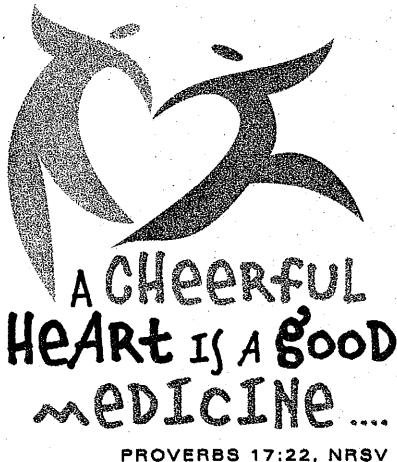
The June 20<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of Session was opened with a devotional and prayer offered by Elder Annette George.

- Presbytery representatives Rev. William Emery and Rev. Gabe Goodman outlined the process for the Triennial Visit. A questionnaire was given to each elder and a return visit was scheduled for August 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. During the return visit the results of the questionnaire will be discussed and the relationship of the church with the Presbytery will be part of a dialogue.
- The Treasurer reported that although our budgeted income is below budget, the expenses are also, creating a positive cash position.
- The Deacons reported that some are involved in a Summer Drop-In Program held Monday-Thursday afternoons in the FPC Anchor.
- Stewardship Sunday was scheduled for November 12<sup>th</sup>.
- The Christian Education Committee advised that Vacation Bible School was a great success. Church School Summer Session teachers have been enlisted.
- Upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee, Doris Davis was employed as Christian Education Director/Program Coordinator. She will start August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Gabriela Stegmann was employed as our new Choir Director.
- Communication Committee presented the Session with a proposal for mentoring/sponsoring new members for the first 90 days after they join.
- The Youth Committee reported that the mission trip was going well in West Virginia and that additional outings were planned during the remainder of the summer.
- Rev. Bob Smith gave an update on the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Birmingham, AL. Mac Noden was elected as our commissioner for the July 8<sup>th</sup> Presbytery meeting in Lake City.
- The next Session meeting will be August 15<sup>th</sup>.

First Press is published monthly as part of the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

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Sunday Worship Hours: 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday School: 9:50 a.m.  
Thursday Morning Prayer Group: 8:00 a.m.