

# THE FIRST PRES

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September 2008

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## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Friends,

The summer has drawn to a close as Hannah blew through and schools are in full swing. The church is busy gearing up for a fine fall season. Inside is information about Rally Day and the Sunday School Picnic. Please plan to attend both for a renewed life together at First Presbyterian.

The Session has called a **Congregational meeting** on **Sunday, September 14 at 12:00**, to elect Elders, Deacons, and a Trustee. The Congregational Nominating Committee has listed a slate which was in last Sunday's bulletin. Everyone is reminded that if you wish to nominate someone, please be sure you have their permission.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have completed three of the Aloha Mission Study Team's Listening Events. If you have not signed up, please check the invitation which was sent to you and **call the church office or sign up on the wall outside the Fellowship Hall**. We need **everyone's ideas** as we move toward completion of the Mission and Vision Statements for Session and presbytery approval before we can elect a Pastor Nomination Committee to prepare a Church information form for presbytery to approve. When all of that is done, the Pastor Nomination Committee can begin the search for a new pastor.

It has been great seeing folks trickle back into worship from the summer vacation time. You are needed in worship, either at the First Fellowship or Traditional Service. The past two Sundays we have had more children and youth in worship which has been exciting for me during the Children's Time in the Traditional Service. You have been missed and needed. September is a good time to return to worship and praise God, learn more of Jesus, and allow the Holy Spirit to bring you peace, courage and wisdom. See you Sunday!

Peace,  
George

P.S. Many thanks for everyone for your words of encouragement and prayers as I recover from the wreck which totaled my car at the end of July. I am learning more about the "insurance world" than I really wanted to know. Also, Jaynelle and I are grateful for your words of encouragement to her since a disc in her back flared up. She is on the mend and looks forward to soon returning to worship and seeing everyone.

## CHURCH PICNIC



Our annual picnic will be held at City Park in Portsmouth on Sunday, September 21, at 2:00 until 5:00. Attendees are asked to bring cole slaw, salads and desserts; meats and drinks will be provided. Please contact [Cameron Russell, 638-1075] to let her know what you plan to bring. This is always an afternoon of fun and fellowship; please mark your calendar now and make plans to attend.

## RALLY DAY

On Sunday, September 21, Rally Day for our Sunday School will be observed immediately after First Fellowship. Breakfast will be served and family and friends are welcome. There will be no regular Sunday School classes that day. Traditional Worship will be held at 11:00, as usual.

## CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



Former members **Christian and Kimberly Hearn** are the proud parents of a healthy new baby boy, Keith Patterson Hearn, II, born August 27, 2008. Congratulations to them and welcome to the new little engineer!

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH COOKBOOK



**Cameron Russell** says that pre-orders for the cookbook will be taken starting now. The total cost

of each book will be \$12.00. Please indicate how many books you want and put the correct amount in the offering plate on Sundays clearly marked: Cookbook Purchase. Checks can be made out to the church and marked as above. The Cookbooks will be available before Christmas for gift-giving and holiday cooking or keepsakes.

**Thanks** to all who contributed recipes. Thanks to Cameron, also, for coordinating the project. The Cookbook is a success because of all of you. Cameron Russell may be contacted at 638-1075 if you have questions.

## JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU...

**Beverley Byrd** reports that as soon as she announced that there had been no referrals from Social Services to our church for families in need of food and other assistance, several referrals came in. This important mission is “up and running” as of late, and we are happy that we can be of service to those in need. After all, that is one way Christ Himself identifies for us to serve Him.

## MEALS ON WHEELS

Volunteers are always needed and welcome for this important ministry. This requires spending a few hours with us on the third Thursday morning of each month.

If you can volunteer, please contact the church office to offer your services. May God continue to bless all the folks who volunteer.

## SERVICE AT OASIS

Groups from our church serve breakfast at Oasis on the third Monday of every month throughout the year. **Karen Diggs** coordinates the scheduling. A good, nutritious breakfast is served to the homeless and others in need.

Please consider volunteering—we always need people to make breakfast casseroles (baked at your home and can be frozen), shop for milk and juice, or actually show up at 6 am to serve. Those who can help should contact Karen through the church office.

Karen would like to thank the following groups and persons for their help:

Everyone from the Mary Rice class who helped on June 16, 2008, by either preparing a breakfast casserole and/or going down to Oasis to serve. Also, thank you David Stuart for coordinating and purchasing everything that was needed for that day.

Elizabeth Fitzwater for coordinating and purchasing everything for the Youth, who served at Oasis on July 21, 2008. The following persons helped on that day.

### Preparing Casseroles

Mike Taylor  
Todd Taylor  
Anne Porter  
Elizabeth Fitzwater  
Paula Fuss  
Laura McRary  
Karen Diggs

### Serving

Todd Taylor  
Collin Taylor  
Jay James  
Mallory James  
Elizabeth Fitzwater  
Grady Fitzwater  
Duff Porter  
Wynester Askew  
(Elizabeth's  
colleague and her  
Teenage sons,  
Jordan and Tyler)

All those who prepared casseroles and served at Oasis on August 18, 2008.

### Casseroles

Cynthia Deller  
Anne Porter  
Pat Sparks  
Burma Smith  
Alice Simpson  
Todd Taylor  
Karen Diggs

### Servers

Pat Sparks  
Duff Porter  
Megan Diggs  
Alice Simpson  
Rudy Simpson  
Karen Diggs

Also, thank you Pat Sparks for helping me purchase the items for that day.

**And a Big Thank You to Duff Porter** for always being willing to help each and every month and for going down to church early in the morning to pick up casseroles, paper products, juice, milk and anything else to bring to Oasis.

## MUSING: THE HYPOCRISY SYNDROME

**What is it? Let's start with a couple of dictionary definitions:**

**Hypocrisy** is “a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral principles, or religious beliefs... that one does not possess.” (Interestingly, the word originated from a term for acting in a play – pretending to be something one is not);

**A syndrome** is a “pattern of [behaviors or] symptoms that characterize or indicate a particular ... condition”.

**I suggest that all of us are affected by the Hypocrisy Syndrome to some degree.**

**For example, when our outward actions or words are not consistent with what is in our hearts and minds.** It's hypocrisy when there's a smile on someone's lips but those same lips speak hatred for a certain person or category of people. Now, the problem here is not with the smile, or even with the lips, but

with the heart that harbors such feelings. Jesus tells us in Matthew 15 that it is not what goes into a person's mouth but what comes out of it that makes that person "unclean." The heart needs cleansing so the lips don't say things that contaminate the whole person.

**Sometimes people make bad choices or poor decisions** and bring troubles upon themselves. It is hypocrisy to look at them and think that we are better because we would never do what they have done. We are "good people" who have been "saved." For one thing, none of us is "good." We haven't been saved because of our goodness. Salvation is not our doing and we deserve no credit for it. For another thing, salvation should make us feel humble and compassionate toward other sinners, not superior. We are still susceptible to temptation and sin and an absence of humility is a bad sign. It's when we think we're "good enough" that we're most at risk.

**It's also hypocrisy when we say that we are followers of Christ,** yet fail to follow all His teachings and apply them to our lives. Christianity isn't meant to be easy. Christ expects nothing less of His followers than complete transformation – a change in the way we think and speak and act. He has given us the instructions for making that change – and the rules for living thereafter. To fail to follow all His teachings is to fail to follow the instructions. We all know what happens when we don't follow the instructions. We might end up with something resembling what was intended, but then again we might not. We might have forgotten an important piece, or we may have it all wrong.

**Denouncing a particular behavior or lifestyle** while we ourselves are engaging in the same behavior also is hypocrisy; doing so loudly or publicly just brings more notice to the hypocrisy. Using adultery and murder as examples, Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount that even fantasizing about such a thing is the same as doing it. Of course, our own hypocrisy needn't rise – or sink – to the

level of adultery or murder. It may be a "little" thing in our minds. Our culture teaches that we should "look out for ourselves" – usually euphemism for taking advantage of someone else. Cheating, whether in games or in life, isn't admirable or clever – it is a type of theft. Denouncing other's theft while engaging in such behavior would constitute hypocrisy.

**Christ offers us a chance to get well,** but the treatment will involve altering our behavior. Public confession might be required. It definitely requires honesty with ourselves and with our Lord, not to mention repentance and forgiveness.

**Being members of a Christian church or publicly claiming Christianity as our faith** doesn't guarantee that our behavior will be Christ-like, or that the world will accept our actions or our words as righteous or even well-intended. Some people in this world see Christianity and Christians as particularly hypocritical. They feel this way because many folks loudly proclaim that they are Christians but their behavior isn't consistent with Christ's teachings. Some wag has said that sitting in a church doesn't make you Christian any more than sitting in a garage makes you a car.

**We are all vulnerable to the pretense that is hypocrisy;** we must constantly guard against it by seeking the help of the Holy Spirit. Without God's help, we may succumb to the hypocrisy syndrome.

Lane Pittman

### **DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

The deadline for submitting information or articles for the newsletter each month will be the 21<sup>st</sup> of the month prior to the month you want the article to appear.

Information for the newsletter should be submitted directly to the newsletter editor

whenever possible. Submissions may be made by U.S. Mail, telephone, or e-mail.

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614 Chandler Harper Drive  
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E-mail: slp4149@aol.com

Everyone's cooperation on this will be greatly appreciated.

### **OCTOBERBLEST BAZAAR**



**This year's bazaar is Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 PM until 6:00 PM and Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM.** The money

raised will be used to repaint and do other things to spruce up all of the entrances to the church. **Clara Spanos** is chairing the event again this year.

Donors are asked to please bring bazaar items to the church, in boxes if possible, and to please place items in the room with the handicap bathroom (the last room on the left past the water fountain). Thanks to Laura McCrary, Linda Hackworth, and Diana Taylor, and to members of our Youth group for their help in unpacking and packing the rooms where bazaar items are stored.

Please **do not bring clothing** items for the bazaar. There is no space at the church for long-term storage of furniture and other bulky items. Bulky items such as furniture will be picked up on one day the week before the bazaar. Arrangements for this should be made through Clara. Those folks who want to arrange delivery on their own may do so, of course; but such deliveries must be made to the church during the week before the bazaar. Please advise Clara of these arrangements.

Please begin now to look through your attic, closets and garage for items to be contributed.

October is just around the corner, so it's time to start collecting them now.

Of course, help, donations, and prayers also will be needed to make this bazaar successful. A bazaar is a project that needs a lot of volunteers. We all know the saying that "The Lord will provide," but often, WE are what He provides! Please volunteer.

### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN**

The new program year for the Presbyterian Women begins in September. Any woman who wishes to affiliate with a Circle is requested to contact the PW Moderator, Anne Porter at 399-1658. Please join one of our two Circles to experience fellowship, Bible study and an opportunity to serve your church and community.

Currently, Circle No. 1 meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the church. Their September meeting they will be on Tuesday, September 9.

Circle No. 2 meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM in members' homes.

When requested, Presbyterian Women provide food or refreshments for a bereavement meal or reception. Anyone who is willing to assist Presbyterian Women by preparing a dish is requested to contact the PW Moderator, Anne Porter (399-1658) to have your name added to a "Call List".

### **SESSION ACTIONS**

There was no stated Session meeting in August.

A special called meeting of the Session was held on August 31. At that meeting, the Session approved the renewal for another year of the contract with Dr. George Oehler as our Intentional Interim Minister.

## THE TWO WOLVES

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two "wolves" inside us all.

One wolf is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.

The other wolf is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

## STEEPLE TO STEEPLE CHURCH TOUR



A walking tour of historic churches in Olde Towne, Portsmouth, VA will be held on Saturday, October 4, 2008 from 9:00 am to 2:45 pm. Seven historic churches in Olde Towne will be on the tour and the historic orthodox synagogue. The tour is lead by costumed guides and each place of worship will have docents participating. Proceeds from the tour will benefit the HER Shelter .

Please join us to learn some history, be entertained and see our beautiful treasures with Colonel Crawford, the founder of Portsmouth, as your tour guide. **Pre-registration is strongly recommended prior to October 1, 2008.** The tour is limited

to 100 participants. Cost: \$20.00 pre-registration or \$25.00 at the door for those who have not preregistered. The tour begins at St. Paul's Catholic Church, 518 High Street at 9:00 am the day of the tour. A Brunswick stew luncheon will be provided as a part of the tour by Monumental United Methodist Church.

Please call Dean Burgess at (757)393-0973 or E-mail: [redlion3@juno.com](mailto:redlion3@juno.com) for additional information and to register for the tour. Checks should be made out to Kiwanis Club of Portsmouth VA, Inc. and mailed to: P.O. Box 126, Portsmouth, VA 23705-0126.



## BIRTHDAYS

### September

17	David Stuart
19	Alec Council
20	Pat Rayburn Karen Diggs
23	Pat Powell Patrice Winkler Al Fry
24	Leon Smith C. C. Smith
26	Deanna Sammons
28	Agnes McFadden

### October

3	Michele Graupmann Barbara Bond
4	Sharon Bailey
11	Robby Pond