

First Presbyterian Church
515 Court St.
Portsmouth, VA 23704-3605

Pastor: Rev. Kerry Knox Westerwick

FIRST PRES

Lane Pittman, Editor
Email: Editor@FPCPorts.org
Phone: 757-397-3622
Fax: 757-393-6610

July, 2010

Kerry-Gram

I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth, says the Lord. Zephaniah 1:2

Zephaniah is issuing a common prophecy to the nation Judah – “repent or else” is a simple way of putting it. The imagery this prophet employs is a divine housecleaning; indeed, the Lord will sweep away people and animals, birds of the air and fish of the sea. I imagine the earth as one big closet that hasn’t been opened in years *except* to throw something else into it.

We know this closet, don’t we? Most of us have a closet (or a drawer or a room) where we store the stuff we don’t know what to do with. In my house, we have a junk drawer in the kitchen, a hall closet, and even “upstairs” – places to which we banish the unsortable but not quite “throw-away-able” household detritus. Though these items are hidden from view, their presence weighs me down. Every six months or so, I sweep them out, utterly.

It feels good to undertake this extreme housekeeping. It opens up spaces I forgot existed and I sense new possibilities. A nook for my grandson and me to read books together thinned out closet racks that permit me to find items quickly. It feels *good*, like I’ve made progress.

This long summer and its oppressive heat has slowed everything down and driven many of us indoors. This long summer mark the months the Church calls “ordinary time” when there are no holidays to prepare for or celebrate. Why not use this less-hectic time to do some spiritual housecleaning, to utterly sweep away the cobwebs that have dusted the corners of your spiritual self. Toss out the clutter. See if you find that space you forgot you had, the space where you and God may be together. Read scripture. Pray. Contemplate Jesus. Work on that spiritual discipline you always wanted to have.

It’ll feel *good*.



Follow Pastor Kerry’s blog on the Web at:
revkerry.blogspot.com

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

We congratulate the following upon graduation from high school:

GABRIELLE FURMAN, who graduated from Woodrow Wilson, and will attend Tidewater Community College;
ROBERT McARDLE, who graduated from Norfolk Collegiate, and will attend the University of Richmond;
COLLIN TAYLOR, who graduated from Western Branch, and will attend George Mason University; and
MEGAN NEWSOME, who graduated from Great Lakes, and will attend William and Mary.

We also congratulate:

RICHARD GRIFFIN, who graduated from Hampden-Sydney College, and is presently employed at Towne Bank; and
JOHN FAY, who also graduated from Hampden-Sydney.
May God bless each of them in their future endeavors.

PEACE AND HAPPINESS

COME NOT FROM HAVING,

BUT FROM GIVING

OF WHAT WE HAVE

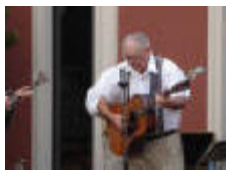
COURTYARD CONCERTS CONTINUE

FOR FIFTH YEAR

Our summer Courtyard Concerts continue in July. Each summer, the Music Ministries presents a series of eclectic performances in the Friendship Courtyard located on Court Street. These concerts are open at no cost to the public. While the performers are screened to eliminate inappropriate material, the performances are not necessarily religious in nature.



Each concert is preceded by a dinner in the church Social Hall for which reservations are required. If you would like to join us for dinner, please contact us at 757-397-3622 or Secretary@FPCPorts.org at least three days prior to the concert so we can prepare enough food for everyone. While the concerts are free, there is a minimal charge for the dinner. All dinners start at 6:00 PM. The concerts start at 7:00 PM and last about an hour.



This year's schedule includes:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| July 7 | The Top Hats big band |
| July 24 | String Ties bluegrass |
| August 4 | 2 for Fun, Beach Music |
| August 12 | Swing Time traditional jazz with Sandra Strenga |

SITUATION IN CONGO CHURCH NEEDS PRAYER

The Witness Committee received this note dated Tuesday, May 11, 2010:

Dear Pastors and Clerks of Session of PEVA churches that participate in the PEVA Congo Partnership:

Some of you may have received a letter from **Mr. Jeff Boyd, our PCUSA General Assembly Central and East Africa Coordinator.**

Mr. Boyd has pointed out some serious disagreements that are going on within Communauté Presbytérienne de Kinshasa (CPK) which, as you all know, is in a special Partnership with our Presbytery. We have been made aware of the concerns and issues and have been in constant contact with our partners in Kinshasa. During this time we need to keep our brothers and sisters in prayer, with the hope that they will be able to come to a fair and equitable solution to their disagreements.

Our PEVA mission trip (July 17- August 1) to Kinshasa will give us the opportunity to hear more about these concerns, and hopefully will be used by God as agents of peace and reconciliation. Our delegation will also work with CPK toward clear, reliable, and proper distribution of donated funds received from our PEVA churches that are sent to their CPK sister churches for assistance and mutual project development.

We have forwarded Mr. Boyd's letter to CPK and have requested a quick reply from them. As soon as we hear how this issue has been handled, or how it is being handled, we will let you know. In the meantime, please be in prayer for our CPK partners in ministry.

Grace and peace,

Etienne Bote 'Tshiek

J. Richard Short

We have Mr. Boyd's letter, also. It is much too long and detailed to publish or summarize here. The problem is not that different from issues the PC-USA has dealt with over the years.

Please pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as our sisters and brothers in the CPK seek a solution.

SESSION ACTIONS

The regular stated meeting was held on Monday, May 17, 2010, with Reverend Kerry Knox Westerwick moderating. Rev. Westerwick led the Session in a short Bible study from Ezekiel 43.

Communications:

The Session voted to give \$50 from the Christian Education budget in response to a letter from the Theological Education Fund requesting a donation. Rev. Westerwick informed the Session that the General Assembly no longer has a line item contribution to seminaries.

Notice was received from the PCUSA Investment & Loan Program that an adjustment to the terms of our loan has been approved.

Presbytery's Certificate of Review of Sessional Records for 1/25/09 through 1/25/10 was returned and approved with one exception.

Pastor's report:

The Session approved the Baptism of Elizabeth Turner on Sunday, May 23. Rev. Westerwick has been working with Elizabeth and instructing her.

The Session approved the request from Grace Curry Yingling for transfer of her membership from Mt. Zion Methodist in Grandy, NC.

A new custodian, DeShawn Harris, has been hired.

Diaconate report: Minutes from the last Diaconate meeting were circulated. In addition, the Diaconate served breakfast at Oasis this morning (May 17) and served approximately 94 folks.

Through a Girl Scout project our Operation Attack food closet received about \$500 worth of food supplies.

Session Committees:

Property – New benches were purchased for the courtyard and have been assembled.

Grounds – Moss was cleaned from bricks in the courtyard and sand was replaced; shrubs were trimmed; landscaper removed some plants from the King Street side of the church and amended the soil. The Youth Group is going to make a kitchen garden to the right side of the King Street entrance.

Stewardship & Finance – Receipts were down a lot in April; expenses were down some also.

Witness – There will be a Southern style dinner when we host Dr. Daniel and Carol Adams on Tuesday, June 15. A retirement gift of \$400 from the Witness budget will be given to them and the Presbyterian Women will also be giving a gift of \$100. **The Session approved** offering an opportunity for others to make contributions to the monetary gift for the Adamases.

There is unrest in the CPK Congo Church and prayers are requested for our sisters and brothers there.

Worship – The Steeple to Steeple Tour took place on Saturday, May 8. Approximately 80 people toured our Sanctuary and received information from Anne Porter, Kerry Westerwick and Edna Broadhurst.

There have been good comments about the early service in the courtyard.

Youth – The Youth, middle and high school, had its first Youth Meeting on Sunday, April 25. They had a light lunch, a brief lesson and ended with a planning session. Some of their planned activities: prepare breakfast for Mother's Day and Father's Day with proceeds going to Camp Fund; work on church model with David Turner; plant and nurture a kitchen garden; an outing to King's Dominion; serve at Oasis; outing to Virginia Beach to play Laser Tag; a day at beach for a picnic; visit shut-ins. Church participation: serve as lay readers, ushers, acolytes. \$43.00 was raised for camps through the Mother's Day breakfast. The camps and campers information is being published in the church bulletin.

Presbytery Report – General Presbyter Richard Short reported on the loss of membership and giving in the Presbytery and the reduction of staff in the Presbytery office. He suggested three options to address the problem: 1) do nothing; 2) cut back on programs, i.e. Makemie Woods and campus ministries; or 3) close smaller churches that are "non-productive" and merge their memberships with remaining churches. These suggestions were discussed in small groups. No action was taken at Presbytery, but our Session will discuss these suggestions at the retreat on June 5.

New Business: Consecration Sunday has been set for October 31.

OASIS

Serving a hot and nutritious breakfast to the folks at Oasis is one of the very important ministries of our church. Various church groups are scheduled to take turns performing this service.

If you wish to take part, you can volunteer by calling the church office or by making it known next time your Sunday School class or other group is scheduled to serve. Also, please remember this ministry in your prayers.

YOUTH GROUPS

Did you know that our church has two different groups for our youth? We have one group for middle school and senior high school aged kids and one for 7-10 year old kids. Even though these two groups are separate, they share an emphasis on service and fellowship. They also share lunch – on the fourth Sunday of each month, they meet after worship and eat lunch together before separating into the two groups.

Adults who are interested in preparing or assisting in preparation of lunch, or who have a child who would like to join in either group, should contact Pastor Kerry through the church office or by email at Pastor@FPCPorts.org.

Planned youth activities include planting and tending a garden, serving at Oasis, participating in worship as ushers, lay readers, and acolytes, day trips together, and visiting.

CALLING ALL YOUTH!

Mark your calendars for Laser Tag after worship on July 25th. RSVP *now* to [Karen Diggs](#) and let her know whether or not you can come, so appropriate plans can be made. Volunteers are needed to chaperone and for transportation. Youth are required to have parental consent. Consent forms are available in the church office or on the church [website](#).

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MEALS ON WHEELS

This important mission to our community requires just a few hours each month. Meals are delivered by volunteers from the First Presbyterian Church family on the third Thursday. It means a lot both to the recipients of the meals and to the ones who deliver the meals. The Meals on Wheels program is always in need of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the church office.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

New officers for 2010-11 are:

Co-Moderators – Penny Brangan and Alice Butler;
Treasurer – Anne Porter;
Search Chairman – Cynthia Deller;
Family Outreach – Mike Taylor;
Missions Abroad – Pat Sparks;
Community Missions – Claudia Laughlin;
Circle One Chairman – Agnes McFadden
Circle Two Chairman – Clara Spanos.

The PW program year ended after the circle meetings in June and will resume in September.

NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS PLANNED

The Christian Education Committee announces the formation of a new class to begin in September. It is for younger adults who are not already members of a Sunday School class. The class will be led by three teachers-- Susan Fay, Paula Council Fuss, and Todd Taylor, who are hard at work researching needs and wants and coming up with plans for *more* than just a class that meets on Sunday mornings. So, if you are young (or not so young, just young at heart) and searching for a group where you fit in, we just may have the group for you, and it's *not your Mama's Sunday School class!!* More information will be coming your way soon.

MUSING – PRAYING FOR PEACE

WE ASK GOD FOR PEACE. *Dona nobis pacem* is Latin for “Give us peace.” Christ is called “Prince of Peace” because of his promise to give us peace. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” “...in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble.” [John 14:27 and 16:33]. We are told that the Holy Spirit brings “... life and peace...” [Romans 8:6]. As Christian believers we hope to gain the peace that Jesus promises. However, it may be what we are looking for.

THE PEACE THAT COMES FROM GOD is not world peace, but peace within. This kind of peace is not the absence of conflict that we usually think of as peace, but the ability to be at peace even in the middle of conflict. Jesus said, “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth” [Matthew 10:34]. Jesus doesn’t promise world peace, and neither is that the peace that the Holy Spirit brings.

WORLD PEACE IS NOT AN ACHIEVEMENT – a goal we attain and then are done with. It is a process we must constantly work at. World peace relies on a particular way of life. Conflict and war in this world result from the sinful nature all humankind inherits; by the same token, world peace lies with us who live in the world. It is our responsibility. As long as hatred, greed, deceit, and vengeance are in the world, conflict also will be with us. COMPASSION, CHARITY, FORGIVENESS, LOVE for our neighbors – these are things Jesus teaches us as the way we should live. If we do the things that Jesus teaches, the world will know peace. We might not see world peace in our lifetime, but some day it will come. First, people have to live right - to live as Jesus teaches.

EACH OF US HAS A ROLE in bringing that about. “A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step” we are told, and that ancient proverb (attributed to Confucius) applies here. Someone has to take that first step. As followers of Christ, we are held accountable for our lives. Do we promote peace in the world or not? How do we treat others? Do we live according to the way Christ teaches? The song says, “Let peace begin with me.” We each need to take that to heart, not just sing it.

HOWEVER, SAVING THE WORLD and bringing peace to it are not burdens that any of us can take up or accomplish

on our own. While we continue to pray for peace in the world, this prayer of ours has been granted already. Jesus has saved the world and shown it the way to peace. As his followers, we are called to obey his teachings and to spread that good news.

Lane Pittman

DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER

Articles or information to be published in the newsletter must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor no later than the 25th of the month before the item is to appear. Submissions may be made by U.S. Mail, telephone, or email.

Mailing address: Lane Pittman

614 Chandler Harper Drive
Portsmouth, VA 23701

Telephone: 757-405-3554

Email: slp4149@aol.com

Your cooperation on this will be greatly appreciated.

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JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES**Birthdays**

| | |
|----|--------------------------|
| 1 | Don Taylor |
| | Peggy Norfleet |
| 5 | Mary Johnson |
| 6 | Megan Diggs |
| | Thomas Powell |
| 7 | Billy Taylor |
| 8 | Dale Pendergraft |
| 12 | Keith Hackworth |
| 14 | Christie Norfleet Wilson |
| 15 | Ann Hagerty |
| 21 | Ryan Baggett |
| 22 | Russell Hackworth |
| 25 | Mary Rice |
| 26 | Robert Norfleet |
| 28 | Corey Powell |
| 31 | Beverly Byrd |

Anniversaries

| | |
|----|---------------------|
| 28 | Hunter & Trudy Webb |
|----|---------------------|

CHURCH SCHEDULE for JULY 2010

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sunday, July 4 | 9am | First Fellowship-A Moment Apart |
| | 10am | Sunday School |
| | 11am | Worship |
| Monday, July 5 | Independence Day-Church Office Closed | |
| Wednesday, July 7 | 6pm | Dinner |
| | 7pm | Courtyard Concert |
| Sunday, July 11 | 9am | First Fellowship-A Moment Apart |
| | 10am | Sunday School |
| | 11am | Worship |
| Sunday, July 18 | 9am | First Fellowship-A Moment Apart |
| | 10am | Sunday School |
| | 11am | Worship |
| Monday, July 19 | 7pm | Session Meeting |
| Tuesday, July 20 | 7pm | Diaconate Meeting |
| Wednesday, July 21 | 6pm | Dinner |
| | 7pm | Courtyard Concert |
| Sunday, July 25 | 9am | First Fellowship-A Moment Apart |
| | 10am | Sunday School |
| | 11am | Worship |