



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

Greenwood, Mississippi

December 29, 2011

DENOMINATIONAL HAPPENINGS

Back in October, I wrote you about a fledgling group of Presbyterians meeting in Minneapolis called The Fellowship of Presbyterians. Some two thousand Presbyterians gathered, making this the largest meeting of Presbyterians anywhere in 2011. They gathered largely in response to recent changes in ordination standards in the PCUSA. The “fidelity and chastity” standard for church officers was removed from “The Book of Order,” thus opening the door for individual sessions and presbyteries to ordain elders, deacons, and ministers who do not live in fidelity in marriage or chastity in singleness. On October 8 in Madison, Wisconsin, John Knox Presbytery ordained Scott Anderson as a minister, an openly gay man, living in a committed relationship. In our Presbyterian system of government, we are a “connectional” church. We are not separate, autonomous congregations like the Baptists. The persons PCUSA presbyteries ordain in Madison, New York, or Vidalia are ordained in the name of the whole PCUSA. Some of you are aware that the Presbyterian Church of Mexico has now broken off a 139 year old relationship with the PCUSA because of our passage of Amendment 10-A which opened the door for the ordination of self-affirming, practicing gays and lesbians. Other international churches in Africa and Korea are considering following suit. They believe we have made a terrible error and have gone against the clear teaching of Scripture in this regard.

The Fellowship of Presbyterians is organizing in January in Orlando into an official “association”. A separate new Reformed body, in essence a new denomination, is also going to be constituted in Orlando as well, for congregations and ministers who believe they must depart from the PCUSA. The Fellowship and the new Reformed body are two separate entities, but related in their central beliefs.

The “essential tenets” of The Fellowship have just been published in draft form and will continue to be discussed and debated in good Presbyterian fashion.

The Fellowship is affirming the PCUSA Book of Confessions as an appropriate theological expression of our confessional heritage. In addition they have set forth their “essential tenets”, which have never really officially been set forth in the northern or southern Presbyterian Church. I thought their essential tenets were an excellent summary of the core beliefs of our Reformed theological heritage. Neglecting these tenets is part of the reason many believe we got in the situation we are in now. You can read the draft of the theology of the Fellowship of Presbyterians at their website, under “Documents” at www.fellowship-pres.org.

The Session voted in December, although not unanimously, to join the Fellowship as an “association”. This is not the same as joining the new Reformed body. Joining as an association means some “differentiation” from those who celebrate the passage of Amendment 10-A. Elder Richard Oakes, Elder/Clerk of Session Cathy Jennings, and Elder Elizabeth Melton and I will be attending the Orlando meeting in January.

Make no mistake about it, the passage of Amendment 10-A, which deleted a national ordination standard, has not been received well by the conservative, evangelical wing of the PCUSA. Changes are coming. Two presbyteries have already put forth overtures related to “gay marriage”, which will be debated at this summer’s General Assembly. My grandfather was an Elder Emeritus in the southern Presbyterian Church, the old PCUS. I sometimes wonder what he would say about where we find ourselves now.

Blessings,

Rusty Douglas

THE LORD'S DAY

(If you are unable to serve, please find a replacement.)

January 1, 2012
1st Sunday after Christmas

9:30 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture: Joshua 1:1-11
Sermon: "Living in the Past"Dr. Rusty Douglas
Children's SermonDeacon Jim Becker
Prayer of Dedication Elder Charles Peel
Greeters: Barrett Daughtery and Howard Davis, Jr.
Sue and Steve Scott
Children's ChurchNo Children's Church

January 8, 2012
Baptism of the Lord

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Scripture: Mark 3:13-30
Sermon: The Difficult Sayings of JesusDr. Rusty Douglas
1. "The Unforgivable Sin"
Children's Sermon Rev. Ray Smithee
Prayer of Dedication Elder Solon Scott
Greeters: Vivian and Tom Calhoun
Ashley and Stephen Farmer
Children's Church — Room 102 Susie and Leland Walker

January 15, 2012
2nd Sunday after Epiphany

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship
Scripture: Matthew 5:27-30
Sermon: The Difficult Sayings of JesusDr. Rusty Douglas
2. "Plucking Out the Right Eye"
Children's Sermon Rev. Sydne Allen
Prayer of Dedication Deacon Linda Pruett
Greeters Willie Sheppard and Nancy Walker
Romney and Don Brock
Children's Church — Room 102 Katherine and Drew Howard

January 22, 2012
3rd Sunday after Epiphany

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship/Communion
Sermon: Rev. Travis Allen
Children's Sermon Elder Don Brock, Jr.
Prayer of Dedication Deacon Beverly Quinn
Greeters Susan and Tommy Gregory
Susi and Leland Walker
Children's Church -- Room 102 Jamie and Trey James

January 29, 2012
4th Sunday after Epiphany

9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship
Scripture: Matthew 23:23-39
Sermon: The Difficult Sayings of JesusDr. Rusty Douglas
3. "You Brood of Vipers"
Children's Sermon Elder Bill Crump
Prayer of Dedication Deacon Lane Thompson
Greeters Polly and Johnny Henson
Patricia and Jeff Lambdin
Children's Church — Room 102 Allison and Taylor Calhoun

Church Office Closed Monday, January 2nd

FROM THE MUSIC MINISTRY

December was a busy month for the music ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Our Choristers Choir did an outstanding job leading us in worship on the First Sunday of Advent.

The 31st Annual Singing Christmas Tree performance was presented. It takes many many folk behind the scenes to ready the tree stand for the performance (or to move everything across the street in the event of rain). Thanks to Charles Covington, Larry Crawford, Jimmy Lott, Timmy Lott and Richard Oakes for set up and break down.

A big thank you to Lina Elfert and Presbyterian Women for preparing and serving food for after the performance. Also, to Bob Singh for providing hot pizzas!

A word of thanks also goes out to Marion Howard and Tommy Gregory for organizing the nativity scene and getting all the costumes out. Susan Gregory helped with the publicity, and we appreciate her efforts very much.

Randy Clark did an excellent job leading us through the program. Having done this for many years, Randy brought capable and enthusiastic leadership to the performance. Thanks for your good leadership Randy!

Thanks to Lisa Cookston for serving as our narrator, and Connie Black for once again thrilling our souls with "O Holy Night".

A big thank you to Liz Barrett and Susan Blasingame for coming the day after to sort, hang and box up the robes and collars.

A huge thank you needs to go out to all who came out to sing on the tree. Without you we wouldn't have a program! I'm sure I have left out others who helped in capacities that even I am not aware of, to you let me also say thank you.

Later in the month the Chancel Choir presented special Christmas music in worship on the 18th. They did their usual outstanding job as did all our guest instrumentalists.

I hope as you see these mentioned above, that you will extend your personal "thank you" to them for all they have done to help make December a great month for music here at First Presbyterian Church.

Now onto to Lent and Easter!

Ray Smithee

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



The Noon and Night Circles collected institutional size canned goods for their mission work which were given to the Community Kitchen.

CONGRATULATIONS

Marion Howard, Bill Crump, and Pann Powers were included in the Delta Business Journal's Top Volunteers of the Delta. Congratulations and thanks to these Presbyterians for their leadership roles in our community!

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY

The Christian sympathy of our congregation is extended to: *Ann and Brett Person* in the death of her mother, Lucy Tucker, on December 8, 2011.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CORNER

“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.” Matthew 2:10-11

Hello, 2012 – what did you do with 2011? The New Year, especially the month of January, is the time in which we think about the future, make changes, and resolve to improve upon our lives from the previous year. But, in order to look ahead, we also have to look back to see from where we have come – what has God done in your life over the last year? Where is God calling you in the New Year?

Don't forget that the wise men came to find the *child*, Jesus – he wasn't a newborn when the wise men fell to their knees and worshipped the Son of God. For us, there is still wonder left to reflect upon – to see the Christ child as he took his first steps and said his first words; to fall on our knees to offer our gifts, though they may not be frankincense or myrrh; and to ask God to continue to transform us through Christian discipleship and education. **Young Adult Survey:** The Young Adult Task Force has been hard at work to research, discern, and pray about ministry to young adults, and we need your input. If you are a Young Adult (between the ages of 21 and 40), a brief online survey will be sent to you in the coming weeks.

Here is what you need to know:

QUICK - *The survey will take no more than 10 minutes.*

RELEVANT - *From worship to programming and fellowship to workshops, the survey is designed to help us better understand how to minister to you.*

ANONYMITY - *The survey is being programmed, monitored, and analyzed by a research professional, with whom the Task Force has been working for quite a few months. Your answers will be completely anonymous from any staff or other member from First Presbyterian. We hope you will participate as together we see how God is transforming the lives of young adults in our church!*

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the survey.

Thank you to all who came to and participated in the ADVENT Event! We had a great turnout and created some really great crafts, including a new Christmas banner! If you are interested in helping out next year, please let me know.

Mark your calendars, one and all – the Presbyterian Women's Study Day is scheduled for Sunday, February 26! More details will be forthcoming.

Are you interested in teaching Sunday school? Or helping out with Vacation Bible School? It's time to start early planning for next year, so please let me know if you feel a tug to use your gifts and talents as a Christian Education volunteer!

Rev. Sydne Allen

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS - DECEMBER 2011

1. Approved 3 sets of minutes.
2. Noted reception of a nominations form for a Youth Advisory Delegate to serve at next year's General Assembly (referred to the Youth Committee.).
3. After much discussion, voted 12-5 to join the Fellowship of Presbyterians as an "association" in January in Orlando. This is not the same as joining the "new Reformed body" that will also be constituted then. Joining this association is a way to "differentiate" us from those who support the recent changes to our ordination standards. Also appointed Elder Richard Oakes, Cathy Jennings, Elizabeth Melton, and Dr. Douglas to attend the Fellowship of Presbyterians' meeting in Orlando.
4. Approved having 3 faith testimonies given in worship by church members, one a month January—March, to last approximately 5 minutes.
5. Approved the hanging of a banner in the sanctuary, prepared during this year's Advent Event, to be hung from the balcony rail for the worship services on December 24 & 25.
6. Approved a Gideon representative to receive funds, standing in the narthex with a Bible on January 29, in support of their ministry.
7. All one thousand Christmas cards depicting the sanctuary at Christmas have been sold!
8. Approved a budget for 2012, noting that for the first time in its history, this church has pledges of over \$700,000 towards a budget of \$791,112.00.
9. Elected Elder Jeff Lambdin and Elder Charles Peel to serve as the two elders on the Nominating Committee for new officers with Jeff Lambdin designated as chair.
10. Called a Congregational Annual Meeting for Sunday, January 15, 2012 in Shuler Hall, following morning worship for the purpose of : a) hearing annual reports, b) hearing a report from the Denominational Relations Task Force about the Fellowship of Presbyterians c) voting on changing the financial terms of call for the pastor.
11. Reviewed the monthly financial statements, noting that some \$40,000.00 is still outstanding in pledges with one Sunday left in the year, and some \$40,000 of benevolences have yet to be paid by year end.
12. Placed a number of persons on the "inactive roll", a roll no longer required by the new Book of Order, but a roll that is still in use here.
13. Noted that Trish Rodgers and David Camp are the two persons who will serve on the Nominating Committee from the Christian Education Committee.
14. Noted that the survey has now been prepared by a professional, and will be emailed to our young adult members, ages 21-40, at the first of the new year.
15. Set aside \$500 in a restricted fund for use by the Design Team.
16. The painting work in the Choir Room is almost complete; radiator covers for radiators in the sanctuary were approved, new shelves will be added in the Flower Guild Room soon.
17. A youth mission trip will take place March 14-18, 2012, involving Palmer Home and Camp Hopewell.
18. Turnrow Books sponsored a book fair at this year's Kindergarten Christmas Program.

THANK YOU

The family of Alice Herring Andrews wishes to express our deepest gratitude for the gracious manner in which we have been ministered to during our time of loss. Our hearts have been comforted by your generous outpouring of love, support, delicious meals and prayers. This church is a beautiful example of the Body of Christ at work and we are thankful to the Lord for you all.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
P. O. Box 485
GREENWOOD, MS 38930

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YOUTH NEWS

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

Junior High
 6:00 p.m.

Senior High
 7:00 p.m.

January 4th No Bible Study
 January 11th Douglas', 902 Robert E. Lee
 January 18th Jarman's, 1303 Robert E. Lee
 January 25th Flautt's, 607 Robert E. Lee

PYF SCHEDULE

Junior High
 5:00 p.m.

Dinner
 6:00 p.m.

Senior High
 6:30 p.m.

January 8th Recommitting in the New Year
 January 15th Fellowship/Movie Night
 January 22nd Service - Blessing Bags
Combined
 January 29th Study on Worship



January 8th 12:15 - 1:30 p.m. - The Shed
 January 15th No Class - Annual Meeting
 January 22nd 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
 January 29th 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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www.firstpresgwd.org

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 C. Ewing - firstpres@bellsouth.net
 C. Ewing - fpcbooks@bellsouth.net
 L. Crawford - fpcbg@bellsouth.net

Pastor Dr. Rusty Douglas
 Co-Associate Pastor Rev. Sydne Allen
 Co-Associate Pastor Rev. Travis Allen
 Director of Music Rev. Ray Smithee
 Kindergarten Director Nancy Tollison
 Office Manager Cheryl Ewing
 Financial Secretary Cheryl Ewing
 Bldg. & Grounds Supervisor Larry Crawford
 Custodian Charles Covington

Clerk of Session Cathy Jennings
 Board of Deacons Beverly Quinn
 Church Treasurer Steve Lary
 Presbyterian Women Lina Elfert
 Endowment Committee Mike Sturdivant, Jr.
 Pastor Emeritus Dr. David Freeman
 Missionaries Dr. Peter Lim, China
 Rev. Amos Yam, Campeche, Mexico
 Rev. Ben Mathes, Rivers of the World

St. Andrew
 Presbytery

Synod of
 Living Waters



January 2012

First Presbyterian Church Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship New Year's Day!	2 Church Office Closed	3 9:00 AM PW Coordinating Team 11:00 AM PW Bible Moderators	4 10:00 AM Liturgy Meeting 12:00 PM Noon Bible Study Lunch 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal No J./S. High Bible Study	5 5:30 PM Kindergarten Board Meeting	6 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study/Breakfast 11:30 AM Community Kitchen/FPC serves	7
8 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 12:15 PM Confirmation Class/ Shed 5:00 PM J. High PYF 6:00 PM PYF Dinner 6:30 PM S. High PYF	9 9:35 AM Staff Meeting 12:00 PM Noon Circle 5:00 PM Christian Education Com 5:00 PM Worship & Music Com 5:15 PM Youth Committee 6:00 PM BSATr. 200 6:00 PM Night Circle	10 9:15 AM Kindergarten Chapel 10:00 AM Morning Circle 5:30 PM Buildings & Grounds Com	11 10:00 AM Liturgy Meeting 12:00 PM Ministerial Association 12:00 PM Noon Bible Study Lunch 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM J. High Bible Study Douglas' 7:00 PM S. High Bible Study Douglas'	12 5:30 PM Administrative Committee	13 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study/Breakfast	14
15 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 12:15 PM Congregational Lunch/ Annual Meeting 3:00 PM Indywood S. S. Class 5:00 PM J. High PYF 6:00 PM PYF Dinner 6:30 PM S. High PYF	16 5:30 PM Deacons' Meeting 6:00 PM BSATr. 200 6:00 PM Session Supper 6:30 PM Session Meeting Martin Luther King Birthday Church Office Closed	17 9:15 AM Kindergarten Chapel	18 12:00 PM Noon Bible Study Lunch 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM J. High Bible Study Jarman's 7:00 PM S. High Bible Study Jarman's Fellowship of Presbyterians Meeting, Orlando, FL	19 Fellowship of Presbyterians Meeting, Orlando, FL Newsletter Info Deadline	20 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study/Breakfast Fellowship of Presbyterians Meeting, Orlando, FL	21 Fellowship of Presbyterians Meeting, Orlando, FL
22 9:45 AM Sunday School 10:35 AM Communion Assignments 11:00 AM Worship/ Communion 3:00 PM Confirmation Class/ Shed 4:00 PM Chorister's 5:00 PM J. High PYF 6:00 PM PYF Dinner 6:30 PM S. High PYF	23 9:35 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM BSATr. 200	24 9:15 AM Kindergarten Chapel	25 10:00 AM Liturgy Meeting 12:00 PM Noon Bible Study Lunch 6:00 PM Choir Rehearsal 6:00 PM J. High Bible Study Flautt's 7:00 PM S. High Bible Study Flautt's	26	27 6:30 AM Men's Bible Study/Breakfast	28
29 9:45 AM Sunday School 11:00 AM Worship 3:00 PM Confirmation Class/ Shed 4:00 PM Chorister's 5:00 PM J. High PYF 6:00 PM PYF Dinner 6:30 PM S. High PYF	30 9:35 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM BSATr. 200	31 9:15 AM Kindergarten Chapel				

2011 ADVENT EVENT

