

Happenings

On The Hill

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PCUSA • STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI • SEPTEMBER 2009

From The Pastor



Olin McBride

Sometimes the needs of the poor, the refugees, those afflicted by floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, wars, famine and other traumatic events seem enormously overwhelming in scope and severity.

The needs often appear so great that we may feel rather helpless in the face of them. And the needs seem to be increasing. We are told that there are now 6 billion people crowding the earth and more on the way.

Mother Earth, the environmentalists tell us, is already greatly taxed to provide enough food, enough trees for shelter, enough clean fresh water, enough oil and enough coal to make electricity to satisfy the world's appetite for these necessities. An Inter-



Compelled to be compassionate

net service, *Religion Today*, reports that some 6 million children die each year mostly due to hunger-related causes. Worldwide, some 32,000 children under 5 die daily for lack of food. Considering all these needs, what are Christians to do?

In Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament, we find Christ telling us how we will finally be judged. Judgment, Jesus indicated, would center on how we meet the needs of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, those without adequate clothes, those who were sick or imprisoned. Christ's word was "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

The model for Christian compassion was and is Christ himself, the one who fed the hungry, healed the sick, accepted the rejected, offered comfort to those who had lost a loved one, blessed children, and provided the way out of darkness for those trapped in confusion and sin. Writer Robert C. Roberts puts our Christian mandate for compassion in these words:

"When a person acknowledges that Jesus is Lord, he no longer has any choice about how far to go in identifying himself with weak, suffering or sinful people. Because there is no person too lowly for his Lord, there is none too lowly for him either." We are compelled by the compassionate Christ to follow in his steps.

THE FAST THAT FEEDS THE SOUL

Fast from criticism, and feast on praise.

Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy.

Fast from ill-temper, and feast on peace.

Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment.

Fast from jealousy, and feast on love.

Fast from pride, and feast on humility.

Fast from selfishness, and feast on service.

Fast from fear, and feast on faith.

OPTIMISM

Count your blessings instead of your crosses,

Count your gains instead of your losses,

Count your joys instead of your woes,

Count your friends instead of your foes,

Count your smiles instead of your tears,

Count your courage instead of your fears,

Count your full years instead of your lean,

Count your kind deeds instead of your mean,

Count your health instead of your wealth,

Count on God instead of yourself.

FPC is second largest in St. Andrew presbytery

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Membership year-end 2007 – 517

- 2008 losses – 20
- 2008 gains – 56

Membership year-end 2008 – 553

Membership year-end 2008 – 553

- 2009 losses – 11
- 2009 gains – 41

Membership as of 08/31/09 – 583

2009 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Total revenues
through July 31, – \$682,490.80

Total expenses
through July 31, – \$626,661.16

LIGHT LINES

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. – Albert Einstein

Nothing in your life is so insignificant, so small, that God cannot be found at its center. – Mother Frances Dominica

When we petition God without thanks, we are mere spiritual consumers. – Matthew Fox

F&F RESUMES

Friends and Family, our Wednesday meal and program resumes Wednesday, Sept. 16, at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

BETH MOORE STUDY

Wednesday, Sept. 16, marks the beginning of the next women's Bible study, which is "The Inheritance" by Beth Moore. This group will meet each Wednesday night at 6 p.m. in the Parlor following the **Friends and Family** meal. This is a nine-week topical study of the Inheritance throughout God's Word. Each session is approximately one hour in length and there is no homework associated with this study.

Our key study verse will be Psalms 16:5-6, which says, "The lines have

fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance."

To order a listening guide or for questions, please contact Orly Hardin at 323-4498 or send her an e-mail at obh2@msstate.edu.

The nursery, as well as children's choir and youth program are available during the study time.

NEEDED

A volunteer is needed to coordinate the children's meals for the 10 **Friends and Family** gatherings on Wednesdays beginning Sept. 16 and ending Nov. 18.

This volunteer would purchase (via charge account at Piggly Wiggly), prepare, and serve the food for about 15 children each week.

Easy meals such as chicken strips/tater tots or hot dogs/chips are the usual fare.

Won't you please consider this service opportunity? Maybe get a friend to do it with you.

For more information, contact Anna Marie Rasberry at 323-4098 or anna_rasberry@yahoo.com.

HISTORY HAPPENING HERE

The public is invited to attend a meeting of the Oktibbeha County Historical and Genealogical Society on Sept. 24 at 7 p.m. at the Starkville Public Library.

The program will be "Merchants on Main."

FPC has significant "growing gains"



Did you know that First Presbyterian Church of Starkville, is the second largest church in St Andrew Presbytery and the third largest PCUSA in the state of Mississippi? Of all the PCUSA churches in Mississippi (109 churches), we received the most new members in 2008 (56).

Here are the five largest PCUSA churches in Mississippi and their membership growth in 2008:

- Oxford, First Presbyterian Church – 660 members, 40 new members in 2008, 122 losses
- Vicksburg, First Presbyterian Church – 580 members, 10 new members in 2008, 24 losses
- **Starkville, First Presbyterian Church** – 553 members, 56 new members in 2008, 20 losses (our current membership is 583, 41 new members in 2009 and 11 losses as of 8/30/09)
- Tupelo, First Presbyterian Church – 546 members, 15 new members in 2008, 10 losses
- Greenwood, First Presbyterian Church – 437 members, 8 new members in 2008, 20 losses

In Memory

Sam Thornton

May 6, 1923 – Aug. 4, 2009

Honduras missionary work ongoing despite politics

The last few months have been extremely tumultuous in Honduras, with tremendous political unrest, but the Honduras Agape Foundations work has continued unabated, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual support, mostly by way of several local congregations around the South, including FPC.

The foundation's outreach traditionally has been through medical, dental and housing services. More recently, "medical brigades" (traveling teams of local professionals) have been added to the effort to offer basic help in remote villages that might otherwise not have any medical options. The "Quimistan Valley Scholar" program has also been established, in cooperation with Hon-

durans business leaders to help bank-roll a basic college education for top-notch students who otherwise could not continue their schooling.

Also, what has become known as "the highway ministry" provides one hot, nutritious meal per week for people who survive, just barely, by digging through a local garbage dump in search of something to eat or sell.

Plans are coming together for more HAF mission trips in the months ahead. Groups of volunteers, working in partnership with Hondurans, vary widely in age range and usually focus on such projects as building a sturdy, simple home or a school facility, helping with water purification, or providing simple medical

and dental help, all as a means of showing and telling of Jesus' love. Volunteers are not required to be able to speak Spanish, but are expected to be patient, flexible and willing to work and live in a rustic but decent setting. The cost of participation, including travel, room and board, varies widely (usually \$500 to \$1,000), depending mostly on airfare.

Firsthand information is available from either Anne Buffington, Melanie Mullenax or Rev. Olin McBride. The web site also offers more background, at www.hondurasagape.com.

Bill Bengtson, HAF board member
Aiken, S.C.
(803) 648-4937 (residence)
(803) 279-2793 (work)

Opportunities for mission work await FPC volunteers

PROJECT AIM

After a successful year, Project AIM is seeking returning and new mentors to work with individual Starkville-area students. If you're interested in mentoring a local young boy or girl, please contact Cathy Curtis at (662) 418-4021 or e-mail her at catcurtis@bellsouth.net.

HONDURAS PROJECT

There are openings for volunteers for an 11-day trip starting Dec. 29. Please contact "Jim" McBride for more information.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Work continues on various Habitat homes. Contact Freddy Rasberry or Pat Kuykendall to volunteer.

CASSEROLE KITCHEN

This successful new mission is ongoing and growing. Contact Paul Millsaps for information.

George Light
Local & Global Missions

FPC to hold blood drive in memory of Frances Wells

Our regularly scheduled churchwide blood drive will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, Sept. 9, from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m. (The last appointment is at 6:40 p.m.)

This blood drive is in memory of Frances Taylor Wells, and her family will receive credits for every unit of blood collected to help defray her medical expenses. Our goal for this drive is 30 units.



There is always a great need for more blood to supply the blood bank. Those units collected at our church drive all come back to our local hospital for use. Please come and give if you are an eligible donor. Invite friends, neighbors and other family to give.

To make an appointment, go online to www.bloodhero.com (sponsor code: M1680). If you plan to give, but do not wish to sign up for a specific time, sign the sheet posted on the Parish Nurse bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, so that United Blood Supply can plan adequately.

Jane Zitta, Parish Nurse

PW members have dates to remember this month



IMPORTANT DATES

The PW coordinating team will meet Sept. 1 at 5:15 p.m. in the parlor.

The 60th anniversary celebratory weekend of Camp Hopewell begins Sept. 11.

Circle lesson: Lesson 1 – Who is the God of Joshua? Joshua 1:1-9 and verse 23.

Study guide is \$6; available at circle. The PW directory is \$4.

Monthly Mission – Jon Wagner (seminary student) and “Least Coin”

CIRCLES AND ACTIVITIES

Sept. 13, 8 a.m., parlor

Sept. 14, 10 a.m., parlor

Sept. 14, 2 p.m., parlor

Sept. 16, 6 p.m., Room S6

Sept. 18, Keenagers, 2 p.m. at FPC

The Monday 10 a.m. circle will help with the Sept. 20 church night supper.

THE MESSAGE

“We are Presbyterian Women. We believe in Jesus Christ, the son of the living God. We were created by God and designed to be a helper. We are exactly alike and completely different. We are daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers and wives. These roles are all busy. Our life’s roles include a variety of stages, such as being single, being married, being a mother, a stay-at-home mom, a working mom, retired, enrolled in school. We are overworked and underpaid, we are young, we are old, we are busy, we have schedules, we have appointments, we have responsibilities, we laugh, we cry, we have great compassion each day, we listen, we talk, and communicate, we cook, we clean, we shop, we spend, we save,

and then we go to bed and we do it again the next day.” – Sheree Bouchillon, Faith and Peacemaking

A NEW YEAR

As we begin a new year of service to our Lord, I welcome everyone back into the life of the church. As summer has come to an end and vacations are now behind most of us, we settle down and begin the routine of scheduled lives. The business of daily living may seem to be out of our control. Do not allow the “Martha worries” to take over. I encourage you to sit with Jesus, daily, and allow Him to restore your soul, refresh your spirit, and enjoy the day! Most of us enjoy our circle activities for this very reason. We gather together and reassure each other – in good times and bad.

As Olin stated in his sermon on Aug. 23, seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while he is near! Come to FPC and find Jesus in every heart you meet.

Many people benefit from putting in your 2 cents worth once a month

Many of you have probably noticed folks walking forward to the pulpit and depositing something in the offering plates during the final hymn on the final Sunday of each month. Why? They are participating in our local 2-Cents-A-Meal Program.

WHAT IS 2-CENTS-A-MEAL?

It is our local version of PCUSA’s “Cents-ability Program,” a small first step in the fight against hunger and poverty. Every member in a participating congregation is invited to contribute a few cents at every meal. This simple act is an expression of thanks for what we have received. It is also a commitment to share with others in response to Jesus’ command “You

give them something to eat.” When members bring their offerings to church on the appointed Sunday, all of those coins “make a joyful noise unto the Lord” as they are received and dedicated.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

These small acts of faithfulness can add up: One hundred persons in a congregation will contribute \$180 a month at two-cents-a-meal. That’s \$2,160 dollars a year. A 30,000-member presbytery has the potential of raising over \$1.6 million annually at a nick-a-meal.

Our Presbytery also notes a changing role for hunger action programs in 2009 and beyond. The common

perception of who uses food pantries is changing. No longer do you just see elderly, single parents, the poor or the handicapped but also you are seeing middle income families who have lost their jobs or even their homes. While these new users are stressing the capacities of our local pantries, the volunteers are still working hard to do the work they have been called to do

HOW DOES IT WORK AT FPC?

On the appointed Sunday, congregants come forward during the final hymn and leave their 2-Cents-A-Meal offering. Our church is traditionally the largest contributor in our

Two cents continued on back page

We “wanna” have your children come to AWANA



AWANA got off to a great new year Aug. 16. We have 43 children currently registered and participating! We are excited with the turn out but know we are missing some children. It's not too late for children to join us.

We need volunteers to help us out with handbook time and occasionally filling in when a leader needs to be out. At handbook time we need extra help with working with the children one-on-one as they learn their Bible verses. The leaders will

show you what to do and then you'll be set to help out. You'll also be learning verses along with the children.

When a leader needs to be out, we'll need a substitute so we'll have enough adult help in the clubrooms. Don't worry about having to teach as the other leaders present will take care of those duties they'll just need you to assist them. If you can help us please come fill out a volunteer form so we'll have your contact information and will be able to reach you when we need you.

We are thrilled to announce our AWANA staff for this year:

- Commanders: Cameron Beaty, Vivian Cade and Ellen Goodman

- Cubbies Leaders: Pat Owen, Patti Drapala and Marcia Watson
- Sparks-Kindergarten Leaders: Dianne Faulk, Bettie Cummings and Cyndi Sullivan
- Sparks 1-2 Grade Leaders: Rebecca Banzhaf, Sara Fowler and Cecelia Cook
- Truth and Training Leaders: Kim Jones, Robbi Lepard and Donna Guest
- Games: Jamie Jones, Cameron Beaty, James McKell and Anthony Quinn

We are blessed to have our returning and new leaders. It will be a great year of AWANA.



God's principles do not change to suit our whims



Parish nursing is concerned with the whole person: mind, body, soul and spirit. Certainly the environment we live, the status of our country and our world view affect our health. There have been many recent exhortations for clergy, other Christian leaders and laymen to PRAY for our country. The following text is taken from an article written by Charles F. Stanley.

Interceding for Our Land

What does it take to motivate you to pray? For some people, prayer is an everyday priority. They cry out to the Lord on a regular basis – for their own concerns, but also for the needs of their country and the world. For others, prayer is a last resort. They turn to it only in times of emergency, when all other avenues of help have been exhausted.

No matter which category you fall into, there is no time like the present to lift up our nation to the Lord. Economically, we are facing one of the most difficult times since the Great Depression. Morally, we are experiencing the devastating consequences of forfeiting our belief in God and failing to live according to His standards.

Christians often feel helpless to stop the moral decline we see in America today. But you and I can help improve the condition of our country by crying out to God on its behalf.

What should motivate us to pray?

The condition of our nation is evidence that we need to pray for God's intervention. Many families are struggling economically; mortgage

and banking industries are in crisis; politicians make decisions based on what is best for themselves or what is popular. Families are weakened by divorce, abortion and promiscuity; terrorism and natural disasters threaten our security. Many people and even some churches are redefining morality based on what is popular or convenient.

Biblical warnings should also motivate us to pray. Moses warned the Israelites, "It shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish" (Deuteronomy 8:19). In 2 Chronicles 7:19-20, the Lord told his people, "If you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot you from my land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for my name I will cast out of my sight and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples."

How does this apply to us as believers? The United States has enjoyed prosperity – more than almost any other nation – as a result of God's favor upon our country. We have experienced spiritual abundance, too: numerous churches preaching the Word, abundance of Bibles and resources, and media to broadcast the gospel. Instead of basing decisions on God's principles, Americans tend to act according to personal preference or popular opinion.

The principles of God do not change.

Some might argue that the two passages above refer specifically to the Israelites and cannot be applied today. But I believe these verses out-

line an important biblical principle that endures for all time and in all situations.

We also see these warnings echoed in the New Testament. Galatians 6:7 states that what we sow, we will reap. Jesus said, "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell – and great was its fall." – Matthew 7:26-27.

If God allowed adversity to come to His chosen people because of their sin and idolatry, why would He withhold it from America?

What will it take for God to hear and answer our prayers?

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, it says, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land." This promise is threefold: God will hear our cry, forgive our sins and heal our land. But we must humble ourselves, repent of our wrongs and lift up our nation to Him.

The time is now.

Do you love this country and the independence it provides for us? Then I challenge you to kneel before the Lord and cry out to Him on behalf of the United States.

Ask the Lord to awaken American spiritually and call her to repentance. If we do that, He has promised to hear from heaven and heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

May each of us take this challenge seriously.

Diaconate bids goodbye to Andrew Fountain

The Diaconate recently celebrated the service of Andrew Fountain, a fine young man. Our church has been blessed to have Andrew as a member. His election to this board has served the Lord well. Andrew has accepted a job with the federal district court in Greenville and is returning to his hometown there. We will miss you, but we want the best for you.

The Diaconate will meet at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Lunch will be provided by Janice Kinard. Those who cannot attend should e-mail Janice.

LOCAL & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Pat Kuykendall reminds members of this committee to check your e-mail for notice of the monthly meeting. Those who are not receiving notices should contact Pat Kuykendall or Brad McKenzie for the date. Habitat for Humanity is building a new home for a Starkville family with the help of MSU students, but all volunteers are encouraged to participate.

VISITATION

Volunteers on this committee seek to encourage members of the church family. It is the time they give, in addition to the FPC Staff, which provides support to members of the congregation. Please contact Patti Drapala about Visitation Committee membership and mission work.

FELLOWSHIP

The annual fish fry and gospel sing-along will be Sept. 20 at 5:30 p.m. at Robinson Lake. In case of rain, the event will be moved to the Fellowship Hall.

Come and enjoy the lake, the Gospel songs, and the fish. Don't forget your lawn chairs! Check the bulletin for more details on the menu.

TRANSPORTATION

If the van is needed by any member

of the church or any organization of the church, please contact the church office, or Andrew Martin. If personal transportation assistance is needed, help is available. We do need advanced notice of a few days for each request.

USHERS & GREETERS

The church needs more ushers and greeters for early and regular morning worship services. Please contact Laura Bryan or the church office, to volunteer for either of these important church activities. The 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. services required the following: 2 greeters and 4 ushers. The Deacon of the Month is responsible for the church facilities. Your service is in support of this officer.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership is growing. Rev. Olin McBride reported that FPC is now the second largest church in St. Andrew Presbytery.

HEALTH

A blood drive is scheduled Sept. 9 in memory of Frances Taylor Wells.



We welcomed several new members this summer:

In July we were pleased to receive **Mandee and David Lewis** into membership. David is working in Iraq as an International Police Adviser with Dyn-corp, and Mandee works at Occasions. They have a year-old son, Preston, who attends FPC Childcare, and they live at 102 East Pointe Dr.

William Ashmore comes to us by transfer of membership from First Presbyterian Church in Grenada. He is a senior at MSU, majoring in business information systems.

Kathryn Green, daughter of Sara and Robert Green, joins us by transfer of membership from Trinity Presbyterian Church in Starkville. Kathryn is a senior at MSU, majoring in communications and lives at 1234 Oktoc Road. Kathryn and Will Ashmore will be married in May of 2010.

Paula Elliott joins us by transfer of membership from Grace Presbyterian Church in Starkville. She is retired and lives at 108B Helen Circle.

John and Carmen Rodgers come to us by reaffirmation of faith. They have a 15-month-old daughter, Amelia. John is an associate professor of geosciences at MSU, and Carmen is a registered nurse at Oktibbeha County Hospital, where she works in Labor and Delivery. They live at 1238 Hillcrest Circle.

Jordan Graham joins us by transfer of membership from First United Methodist Church in Starkville. He is a junior at Starkville Academy and an active member of our youth group.

Members of the Diaconate are:
Class of 2009
 Vivian Cade
 Peggy Johnson
 Janice Kinard
 Mickey Montgomery, Moderator

Class of 2010
 Patti Drapala
 Billy Harrington
 Ginger Jones
 Pat Kuykendall
 Andrew Martin

Class of 2011
 Richard Blackburn
 Laura Bryan
 Cecelia Cook
 Andrew Fountain
 Brad McKenzie



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Newsletter Editor: Patti Drapala

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CHURCH STAFF

Rev. Dr. Olin McBride, *Pastor*

Rev. Joey Sherrard, *Associate Pastor*

Vicki Schramm, *Church Administrator*

Sandra Upchurch, *Church Secretary*

Cameron Beaty, *Director of
Children and Youth Ministries*

Dr. Craig Aarhus, *Music Director*

Ellen Boles, *Children's Choirs*

Sue Burkhalter, *Organist*

Betty Black, *Pianist*

Jennifer Blackbourn, *Pianist*

Jane Zitta, *Parish Nurse*

Jennifer Kouns, *Childcare Director*

James Nelson, *Sexton*

Ellen Mauldin, *Church Librarian*

Jon Wagner, *Seminary Student*



SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Early Worship – 8:30 a.m.

Sunday School – 9:45 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Fellowship – 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Morning Worship – 11 a.m.

AWANA – 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Contemporary Worship – 6 p.m.



DEADLINE FOR NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Friday, September 25, by 3 p.m.

E-mail articles/photos to both:

Patti Drapala

Whitehoot@yahoo.com

Sandra Upchurch

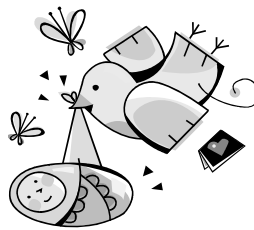
Sandra@fpcstarkville.org

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FPC Recycling Day is Saturday, Sept. 5

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT



Magdalene Shaw Cox was born
Aug. 2 to Matt and Lady Cox.

and support you have given us the
entire year. We are blessed to be a
part of such a giving and gracious
church community.

Warmly,
Matt and Lady Cox

Two cents continued from page 4

Presbytery. Last year we raised
\$5,869.54 for this project. Our 2-
Cents-A-Meal offerings go to sup-
port the St. Andrew Hunger Action
Program regionally.

Please consider joining with us in
this righteous effort.

George Light
Local & Global Missions



A THANK YOU NOTE

Dear First Presbyterian Family,

Thank you so much for all of the
diapers and wipes you provided for
our family. We want to thank you
also for all of the encouragement