



SteepleTalk

August 2006

First Presbyterian Church
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Member Care Volunteer for August

Katherine Burris

Deacon of Month/ Visiting Deacons

Becky Burris
Alex Quarles

Steepletalk Deadline

August 25th

Circle Meeting

Circle will resume in
September

Pastor on Vacation:
Dr. Cheetham will be on
vacation from August
14–20. If you are in
need of a pastor during
this time, please contact
The Reverend Amos
Wilson at 615-377-1146.

From the Pastor...

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.” (Hebrews 11:1-2)

An old saw has it that “there are no guarantees in life.” Another quotation that often accompanies the one about guarantees is, “Nothing in life is certain except for death and taxes.” How universal is this sentiment? A family I once visited had a refrigerator magnet with these words emblazoned on it: “Life is uncertain, eat dessert first!” What each of these concepts holds in common is a universal human tendency to desire an ironclad agreement between life and us. We want to know what we can count on so that we may leave the rest to chance. However, as the quotations suggest, between life and us there are few ironclad agreements made.

Truthfully, all people need a foundation from which to operate in life. Some things we seem to count on without much thought. For one, most of us upon waking do not worry much about whether or not our heart will beat throughout the day. We take this fact of our physiology for granted. Likewise, few of us have anxiety that suddenly the laws of nature, for example the reality of gravity, will somehow be other than we have always known it to be. Do you worry about whether or not the sun will come up? Do you persistently concern yourself about the ozone layer or the atmospheric pressure of the earth, or even the polar ice caps melting soon?

Clearly, there are a million and one things that could drive us absolutely insane if we worried about each of them constantly. Mercifully, however, there are things that we simply take for granted in living life. If we could not count on some things being constant, then we would go mad. Yet, in the wisdom of creation we can count on some things. We can have confidence that generally speaking we can rely on the sun rising in the morning—and in the east—and we can assume that our hearts will continue beating rhythmically and regularly until our cardiologists tell us otherwise. It is these kinds of assumptions we make that constructs a life bearable and worth the living. When these taken-for-granted realities are no longer in force, then we are all in trouble.

Where does faith fit into this picture? Some people settled their questions about faith in God and life long ago in Sunday school. For some, belief in God is not something to question. The reason: Once we begin asking the deep questions about God, our whole world view begins to unravel like a ball of twine. Indeed, the philosophical questions that life poses can so torture some people that they can literally go mad. The deeper mired in the questions these people become the nearer they move toward the edge of insecurity, anxiety, disbelief; all of which may eventually lead to insanity. Thus, is it better to just not ask? Our scripture seems to suggest that faith is far too important for people to take it for granted.

Continued on page 2

Hebrews 11:1-2 tells its readers, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.” Most people I know, and this includes pastors, need people and promises that they can count on. We also know that, in the church, however, there are two kinds of people: promise keepers and promise breakers. Preachers generally embrace the former and avoid the latter, however un-theological it may be. After all, preachers are human too. We want to deal confidently with folks who are in ministry with us. Yet, we all know the all too human short-coming of forgetting what we promise or simply refusing to do things that we had committed to earlier. We all want to count on promises made by others. This is especially true about the promises God makes to us.

Generally the feeling of assurance is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Some people get it immediately upon conversion, while others search for it for many years. My guess is that assurance is like the missing remote control for the television. About the time we stop looking for it, it finds us.

Assurance is the calmness that people sense and feel when they know that God has sent Jesus to save us and redeem us. It is an inner testimony by the Holy Spirit that God loves us and offers us salvation in Jesus. But assurance is not an equivalent to knowledge. Rather, assurance is more like a promise that we wholly and fully believe, accept, and trust. This “faith” then gives us the confidence to lead lives that befit the gospel. As Paul himself says, “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

As believers, the bedrock of our ability to live abundant lives is to have that certain confidence or assurance that God revealed in Jesus Christ. Every other idol, whether in nature or our own success, is a chimera. These objects of false confidence are fleeting and untrustworthy. Faith in Christ is the only trust in abundant life that we believers can grasp.

As people of faith we live between two alternatives. One alternative leads to countless questions that eventually bring us back to where we began. The other alternative is to live in faith until the Holy Spirit grants us that inner peace with God, which we call assurance. I like this second alternative because, after all, hasn't God already given us everything else? Maybe assurance, too, merits a pillar in abundant living. Amen.

Grace and Peace,
Dr. Cheetham

Summer Stewardship

Summer is the middle of the year and a time for vacations. But let's not take vacation from our financial support of the church. The Session is monitoring our expenditures and they are in line with our budget. Our contributions are generally meeting our financial needs if they stay at the present level. But if the contributions “go on vacation,” we may have to reprioritize our expenditures. So as you travel and enjoy the summer, don't forget to continue your support of the church and its programs in this vacation time.

Sunday School Teachers

Attention! In order to stay fresh and enthusiastic, Sunday School leaders need breaks from their teaching. If you have an interest in leading an adult class or team teach 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-6th grade, or the Junior/Senior High classes, please contact Deborah Sanders (444-5429) or Kristy Stevens in the church office (444-1360) or email the church at office@fpclebanon.org

Brazil Mission Trip

On Thursday, July 27, Joe Adams, Amy Adams, and Hugo Sandoval left for a 10 day mission trip to Brazil. Remember to keep them in your prayers as they develop relationships and participate with global partners in God's mission.

Wendell Kopp Memorial Blood Drive First Presbyterian Church Monday, August 28, 12-5:00 p.m.

Our church will host the 2nd annual blood drive in honor of Wendell Kopp. Wendell was a long time blood donor and he knew the importance of helping the Red Cross. Please make plans to participate in this event and help this worthy cause.

Welcome New Members

We extend a warm welcome to the newest members to our congregation. Jan Hale and Patricia Williams joined the church by profession of faith on Sunday, July 23rd.

Bible Quiz

In 2 Samuel is a story about one of King David's sons who rebelled against his father. There was a battle in the forest of Ephraim between men who were faithful to David and those who followed the rebellious son. David's soldiers won the fight, and David's son fled riding a mule. The mule ran under an oak tree and David's son caught his head in the thick branches. He was left hanging there, trapped but alive. His father's soldiers came upon him and ended his life. King David was heart-stricken when he learned about his son's death. He cried, "O my son _____, my son, my son _____! Would I had died instead of you, O _____, my son, my son!"

What was the son's name?

- A. Amnon
- B. Absalom
- C. Solomon
- D. Daniel

Miss Martha's Ice Cream Crankin'

Sunday, August 6, 3-5 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Nashville

The 21st annual Purity Miss Martha's Ice Cream Crankin' is ready to churn out over 500 gallons of fresh homemade goodness on the grounds of First Presbyterian Church, Nashville. All proceeds go to support the work of the Martha O'Bryan Center, whose mission is to support and empower individuals and families in need in the James A. Cayce Homes and surrounding east Nashville. The cost for tasting all the ice cream you can is \$8.00 for individuals and children under 4 years old will get in free. Tickets will be on sale at the site.

Youth News

- **August 4-5** Friday, 7 pm through Saturday, 8 am
MTSU Lock in with PYC
- **August 12** College Event at the Lake
- **August 14** PYC Meeting, 5-7 pm at FPC Franklin
- **August 26** Youth Movie Night

For more information, contact the church office at 444-1360.

Bible Quiz Answer: B

Lectionary Readings

- August 6 2 Samuel 11: 26--12: 13a
Ephesians 4: 1-16
John 6: 24-35
- August 13 2 Samuel 18: 5-9, 15, 31-33
Ephesians 4: 25-5: 2
John 6: 35, 41-51
- August 20 1 Kings 2: 10-12, 3: 3-14
Ephesians 5: 15-20
John 6: 51-58
- August 27 1 Kings 8: (1, 6, 10-11),
22-30, 41-43
Ephesians 6: 10-20
John 6: 56-69

The L.E.A.D. Event

Saturday, August 26

First Presbyterian Church, Nashville

This workshop is a leader enrichment and development event for teachers of children, youth, and adults. The \$40 registration includes lunch; free childcare is available.

Deepest Sympathy to:

Elizabeth Stuart Spencer and family upon the death of her father, John Spencer, Jr., on July 8 in Virginia. A memorial service was held in Virginia on July 11th.

Alex Quarles and family upon the death of his father, Silas Quarles, on July 17. The funeral service was held on July 21 in Soddy Daisy, Tennessee.

the family of June Eck of South Williams Port, PA who died on July 13. June and Ray were members of our church during the early 1980's.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will comfort them during this time of bereavement.

Cedar Forest Ministry

A few volunteers are still needed for our Cedar Forest Ministry. Please check the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

August 2006

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

<u>Sunday</u>		1	2	3	4	5
8:45 & 11:00 Worship 9:45 AM Church School			7:15 Choir	6:30pm Contemp		
		Brazil Mission Trip				
6 Communion	7	8	9 7:15 Choir	10 6:30pm Contemp	11	12
13 6:30 pm Session	14 6:00 pm Southern Starrs	15 9:00 am Preschool	16 7:15 Choir	17 9:00 am Preschool 6:30pm Contemp	18	19
	Dr. Cheetham on Vacation					
20	21	22 9:00 am Preschool	23 6:00 pm Personnel Meeting 7:15 Choir	24 9:00 am Preschool 6:30pm Contemp	25 Steepletalk Deadline	26 6:00 pm Youth Movie Night
27 5:00 pm Worship Committee 4 Cents a Meal	28 12:00 noon Wendell Kopp Memorial Blood Drive	29 9:00 am Preschool	30 6:00 Bell 7:15 Choir	31 9:00 am Preschool 6:30pm Contemp		

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