

Firs Word



February, 2012

Lenten Luncheons

Beginning at Noon on Ash Wednesday (February 22)

and continuing each Wednesday through March 28, the Deacons will again sponsor the Lenten Lunches.

A brief worship service and meditation by our own pastor (and visiting pastors/speakers) will begin at Noon followed by lunch. Each week lunch will include a choice of 2 homemade soups, 2 different sandwiches, fruit cup, cake and beverage for \$5.00.



The Lenten Lunches are the Board of Deacons only fund raiser each year to help support the food pantry. Please mark your calendars and come each Wednesday during Lent for some spiritual food, physical food and support the Deacons.



Spring Bash

Experience God in a fun, exciting, and beautiful setting at Cedarkirk's Spring Bash. Bring your 2nd through 5th grade Sunday school classes for camp activities like zip-lining, rock climbing, group games, crafts, and worship! This 24-hour retreat also includes an adventurous night in a Rustic Cabin and an opportunity to meet new friends in Christ. Due to this camp's popularity, you have 3 dates to choose from. Sign up today for this exciting weekend. March 23-24; April 20-21 & April 27-28 — \$60 per person—more information at www.cedarkirk.org

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

*Rev. John W. Caster
February, 2012*

***For everything there is a season, and a time
for every matter under heaven
A time to be born and a time to die...
...God has made everything suitable for its
time; moreover he has put a sense of past
and future into their minds, yet they cannot
find out what God has done from the begin-
ning to the end.***

see Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As you are aware by now, I have been sidelined after suffering a heart attack on November 26. I expect to return to work around the time you receive this newsletter. If all goes according to plan, I will be in the pulpit on February 5. I am looking forward to returning to ministry with you.

This has been quite a journey. I think what troubled me most was the speed with which events unfolded. I went from relaxing and having a cup of coffee at home to being near death in the emergency room in a matter of minutes. It happened so suddenly there was no time to prepare (I guess that's why they call it ("sudden cardiac" arrest). My cardiologist tells me that only about 10% of people in my condition survive. The care I received from the first responders, my doctors, and the staff at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills was exceptional. Some have called my survival a miracle.

Just one month after my heart attack, I learned that a colleague of mine, who was the same age as me and who I had served with in Michigan, died suddenly from a heart attack. Unlike me, he had no prior history of heart issues and was riding his bicycle when he was stricken.

That leads to the age-old question of why? Why does one person survive and another in similar circumstances die? The "why" question is perhaps the most difficult of life's many mysteries.

It's not the first time I've pondered that question, as I'm sure many of you have at some point in your lifetime. When we lost our daughter Julie in an auto accident in 2003 I asked that question again and again. It is certainly not that the person who survives is a better person or has led a better life. I do not believe that God cares more about one life than another. Yet I know there is no satisfactory answer. There are some things that are beyond human ability to understand.

The futility of the "why" question is frustrating. We can't know the answers to this question, but it may lead us to another question. In light of the fact that life is uncertain and not one of us is guaranteed tomorrow, the more productive question might be "How shall I live?" We often need to be reminded that each new day is a gift. No one is guaranteed tomorrow, but we can live each day with gratitude. We can try to live the kind of life Christ would have us live.

I don't know the answer to most of the perplexing questions of life. But I do know that God is good and God's grace is what sustains us through the most difficult times. Thanks be to God for each new day, and for life together in Christ.

May you be blessed each day to know the love of God.

Faithfully,

John



Visit the web site at
www.firstpcz.org



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

From the Desk of the Moderator

Lynda Caster, Moderator

Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Women of Tampa Bay Presbytery

We are honored to host the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Women of Tampa Bay Presbytery February 18th, beginning with registration and lasting through lunch. This is the annual business meeting along with a worship service and guest speaker. The cost is \$8.00 and all women are invited. Please see Lynda Caster to sign up.

Cookbook

The 50th Anniversary Cookbook is still available. It will delight any cook, no matter what his or her skill level in the kitchen is. The cookbooks are available for sale after worship service in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is \$10.00. Proceeds from the sale will help offset the cost to those women wishing to attend the Churchwide Gathering in July.

Crafts and Sewing

We have a faithful group of women who meet twice a month on Wednesdays to work on crafts that we sell at our annual bazaar. Please see Kay Haas for more information

Gifts of Women

On March 4, 2012, the Presbyterian Women will celebrate the Gifts of Women during worship services.

Circles

Circles continue to meet the first Tuesday of each month; the morning circle meets at 10:00 a.m. and the evening circle meets at

7:15 p.m. The study on *Confessing the Beatitudes* continues to be an exciting and informative look at this book of the Bible. Please join us. Don't worry if you've missed a meeting because each session is self-contained and you can easily follow the study.

Churchwide Gathering

The Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women will be held in Orlando from July 18 through July 22, 2012. The registration booklet and scholarship application can be downloaded at

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/pwgathering>.

Online registration has begun or you can mail your registration. If you would like more information or plan to go, please talk with Lynda Caster.

Peace be with you.

Lynda Caster, Moderator



Do you like to crochet? Join us

Saturday, ***February 25 at 10:00 a.m.*** in

the craft room on the

2nd floor. We will begin crocheting motifs for a project for the Presbyterian Women's Bazaar in November. We will provide the pattern and the crochet thread. You need to bring a size 4 crochet hook. Hope to see you there! If you have any question, please see ***Kay Haas or call her at 813-788-3454 or 813-469-2225.***

Senior Singles

The Senior Singles Group met on January 9 and 22. Our meetings in February will be the 12th and 26th. Join us when you are able!

Audrell Howard



Thank you so much for the comforting thoughts and prayers received from everyone for my daughter's unexpected passing.

Martha McLaughlin

The Choir will have a roast beef dinner on Saturday, February 11 @ 4:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Partnership with Woodland Elementary School

First Presbyterian Church and Shining Lights Adult Discussion Class have begun a contractual agreement with Woodland Elementary School to continue our support for the Drumming for Dreams program from Sunday School Offerings. As a part of this contract and in return for our support, the name of First Presbyterian Church will be included as a sponsor in the monthly newsletter, brochures, program, the school marquee and school website. Woodland Elementary will provide student-made art work and/or student group live performances for our programs as they have in the past.

Pancake Breakfast to Benefit Drumming for Dreams. On Saturday, February 4, teachers and parents of the youngsters involved in Drumming for Dreams will be offering a pancake breakfast in our Fellowship Hall from 7 to 10 am. Please plan to support this fund-raising event by attending. If you wish to help in any way, please contact Debbie Edwards or leave a note in the offering plate.

Clean Used Blankets Needed

We still have several weeks of cold weather coming. As you begin your winter or spring cleaning please remember to donate your clean used blankets for the children at Lacooshee Elementary School. Many of their homes are unheated and it is difficult for the children to perform well as students when they cannot sleep due to the cold. Blankets may be deposited in the large plastic bin in the Fellowship Hall.

February 19 is the deadline for the March issue of the First Word!

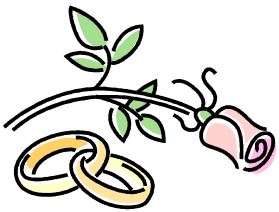


Happy Birthday



- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 04 Mary Ellen Badgero | 12 Donna Engelbrecht | 22 Jack Young |
| 05 Nancy Hill | 14 Cliff Martinson | 23 Vera Wilson |
| 05 Ian Gaal | 16 Stu Daume | 23 Janet Horak |
| 05 Bill Hughes | 16 Marilyn Wood | 23 Rosanne Vogel |
| 07 Kevin Finn | 16 Manny Lopez | 26 Bill Brooking |
| 07 Maggie Andersen | 18 Don Seymour | |
| 08 Joann Wuerfel | 19 Maxine Stevens | |
| 08 Joni Roberts | 19 Sandra Beattie Stevens | |

Happy Anniversary



- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----------|
| 13 | Gordon and Joyce McDonagh | 52 Years |
| 24 | Roger and Rebecca Rognas | 44 Years |
| 26 | Joe and Anna Angello | 19 Years |
| 28 | Bill and Donna Brooking | 58 Years |



Alice Jones
October 13, 1922

January 14, 2012

Jean W. Tilburg
July 6, 1936

January 10, 2012

Coffee Hour



Every Sunday after worship services, as most of you know, we get together as a congregation to socialize over coffee and a snack in the Fellowship Hall. We do this most Sundays and need many hands to continue this. If you haven't yet signed up to help host a coffee hour or better yet become one of our *Bright Spirits*, please consider it. Once you've done it, you will see how easy it is. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. See you after church!

HOSTING A COFFEE HOUR - FAQs

What food and drink do I provide or prepare?

In coordination with the *Bright Spirits* leader, cookies are suggested (Some members provide other selections of foods, **but it is not required**). Make regular and decaf coffee, ice tea, and lemon aide.

Who are the *Bright Spirits* members and can I be one?

Currently, the members are Maggie Andersen and Megan Hall, Lynda Caster, Fran (and Merle) Crum, Orma Moon, and Rosalyn (and Charles) Pugh. You can find their phone numbers on the sign-up sheet. Fortunately, we have plenty room on our member list and if you would like to join this group, please see Lynda Caster.

How many people should I expect at coffee hour?

A guesstimate is 60-80. Numbers vary with the day and season, with fewer coming during the summer months.

What supplies are provided and where are they?

Coffee, tea, sugar, and creamer are in the kitchen cabinets which are labeled. The pitchers for the cold drinks and serving plates are also in the cabinets. Paper cups and plates and napkins are in the pantry.

How do I set up in Fellowship Hall?

Put out paper supplies, food, drinks, etc. on serving tables

What time should I come to Fellowship Hall?

An hour before church starts is about the right amount of time to make the coffee and cold drinks and to put the snacks on serving plates. Towards the end of the church service (usually at the last hymn) come to the Fellowship Hall to serve.

What about clean up?

Pretty much what you would expect – put all unused paper products away, wash and dry any serving dishes/pitchers, unplug the hot plates, bag the garbage and take it to the green dumpster, and wipe down the serving tables. Any food that is left over should be taken home.

Where do I sign up to volunteer to host a Coffee Hour?

A calendar is posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall where you can sign up for an open date that you would like. Please call the *Bright Spirits* member (the phone number is posted) to coordinate that day's snacks.