

CLARKTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

NEWSLETTER

Volume 20, No. 7

September 2015

From the Pastor

*“Holy Father, protect [my disciples] in your name that you have given me,
so that they may be one, as we are one...
I ask not only on behalf of these,
but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,
that they may all be one.
As you, Father, are in me and I am in you,
may they also be one in us,
so that the world may believe...”*
John 17:11b, 20-21

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all—

As I expect you all know by now, I’ve accepted the call to serve as pastor of Grace United Presbyterian Church in Wayne, NJ, and my last Sunday in the pulpit here will be September 27th. Which means that as I sit down to write this, I’ve begun my last month as your pastor. This is a complex and difficult time as I live with one foot in two different worlds, and lean into the hope, anxiety, excitement, and fear that come in the midst of such a huge transition. And as hopeful, excited, anxious, and scared as I am about the changes in my life and that of my family, I also have hopes and fears for you all and for Clarkton Presbyterian Church.

As I reflect on the last two years, and the conversations I’ve had and heard just over the last couple of months, my prayer for you all is the same one that Jesus prayed for his disciples on their last night together: **that [you] may all be one** (John 17:21).

If we take Jesus’ words here seriously, the most important witness of the church is not what we say, not the theological, social, or political positions we take, but rather how we live together. This, more than anything else, is what Christ hoped would reveal the truth of his presence in and with the church to the world. The unity-in-diversity that the triune God reveals to us was Jesus’ best hope and prayer for his disciples and all those who would come after them. Including us.

Manifesting the visible unity that Christ prayed for has never been easy for the Christian community. Acts chapter 15 tells the story of the first major church fight, over what Jewish ritual practices the new Gentile believers needed to observe in order to be welcomed into the community. Jesus had been gone only a few years, and already his followers were fighting amongst themselves! Later, almost all of Paul’s letters were written to address specific and divisive conflicts in the churches he had founded. We’ve never been able to figure this whole unity thing out. But for the sake of the Gospel, we need to try, at least on a small scale.

Friends, there are unhealed hurts and deep divisions in our own congregation that are more harmful and urgent than disagreements over theology or polity. I don’t have a full enough picture at this time to weigh in on what happened in the past. And honestly, I don’t think What Happened is as important as what happens now and in the future. Assigning blame isn’t going to help things; neither is denying or ignoring these deep wounds. We need to acknowledge this deep woundedness and find ways to be together--to be one—again.

As has ever been the case, I don’t have the answers for you. I’ve heard great, faithful, creative, intelligent suggestions to build community from many of you, and so my only suggestion is this: show up. Be together. Come to church. Be the church. Greet one another with the peace of Christ. Come with your ideas. Say “yes” to serving in whatever way you are asked, and do it with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Go outside your comfort zone. Widen your circle. Be present. Be with one another. Show up. You matter in the life of this congregation. We are (only, ever) the church together.

I love each and every one of you, and this church as a whole, and so I hope and pray for health, wholeness, and life abundant as you grow into the fullness of the body of Christ. But above all, I pray that you may all be one.

Shalom, y’all!
Andy

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FROM THE SESSION.....

A called meeting of the Session was held Wednesday, August 19 and the stated meeting was held on Sunday, August 23. At the called meeting we learned that Andy had received a call and been elected to ministry at Grace United Presbyterian Church in Wayne, New Jersey. Andy and his family will be so missed because they have been greatly loved by our church family and so many in our community. We wish them every blessing as they follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The search continues for education volunteers. Please consider serving if you are asked. Rally Day will take place September 13. Dr. Stephen Bridger will be the substitute musician for Randy on September 6. Communion will be held on October 4 and we will have a supply minister that day. The Bladen Parish Fifth Sunday Worship will be August 30 at Acme church with Becky Raynor, CRE, preaching. The following florists will have keys to the church for the delivery of worship flowers - Memory Love Blossoms in Whiteville- Bladenboro Florist- Elizabethtown Florist. The Choirs and Wednesday Night Bible Study will begin in September. There will be a Bladen Parish picnic and hymn sing at White Plains PC on September 20.

A called Congregational Meeting will be held on August 30 for the purpose of voting on the request for dissolution of our pastoral relationship.

The 2015 Nominating Committee will begin its search for the Class of 2019 Ruling Elders. Please prayerfully consider how God is calling you to lead and to serve at this time in the life of our Congregation. The committee will also be finding members for the Cemetery Committee and the At-Large members to stand for election for the 2016 Nominating Committee.

Hold in your thoughts and prayers the many on our prayer list.

THE SESSION

Session Members

George Barber - 645-6695

Johnny Cox - 647-2251

Chuck Heustess - 645-6631

Linda Clark - 645-4509

Allison Priest - 645-4669

Greg Brown - 647-0367

Julie Cox - 647-2751

Dan Ward - 647-7357

Lynn Clark - 647-3951

Roxane is in the Office:

Monday and Thursday - 8:30 am to 2:30 pm

Wednesday - 8:30 am to 11:30 am

'Will be out of the office September 17th.

September CALENDAR

8 - PW Circle 1 at 10:30 am at home of Joyce Ward

9 - Adult Chancel Choir will resume 7pm.

13 - Rally Day

14 - PW Circle 2 at 7:00 pm at home of Christine Marlowe

16 - Children's Choir will resume 6pm.

20 - Farewell reception 3pm to 5pm

20 - Bladen Parish Annual Picnic & Hymn-sing, 5-7pm at White Plains Presbyterian Church.

A farewell reception will be held for Andy and his family on Sunday, September 20 from 3pm-5pm in the Fellowship Hall.

****These florists have keys to the church for the delivery of worship flowers: Memory Love Blossoms in Whiteville, Bladenboro Florist and Elizabethtown Florist. ****

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The Presbyterian Women food item for the Bladen Crisis Center is **dried pasta and beans.**

Circle #2 will meet on Sept. 14th at 7 pm at the home of Christine Marlowe.

The morning circle (Circle #1) will meet at 10:30 AM on Sept. 8th at the home of Joyce Ward.

In our Prayers

Kerry Priest, Emily Owen, Billy Whitehead, Jimmy Whitehead, Linda Howell, Ronald Tuton, Rebecca and Happy Lashlee, Marvin Burney, John and Mary Ward, Marion Hardee, Shirley McDonald, Eunice Singletary, Giles McAulay, Gerry Carey, Cody Clark, Ken Boykin, Arsula Williamson, Brad Zimmerman, Donald Grainger, Glenda Nobles, Kelly Smith, Bill Jackson, Abe Wilson, Betty Priest, Carolyn Scoggins, Juanita McGraw, Gene Weldon

New Address

Rebecca Lashlee
Rm 328
Highsmith Rainey Specialty Hospital
150 Robeson St.
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Cards would be appreciated.

September Service

Flowers: 6 – Shirley McDonald
13 –
20 – Rusty Marsh (In honor of Mother's Day)
27 – Becky Brown

Nursery: 6 – Wendy, Lauren, and Addie Bowen
13 – Camille Campbell and Melody Cribb
20 – Kelli and Anna Grey Heustess
27 – Gail and Allie Marsh

Acolyte: Hannah and Abby Smith

Greeters: Alicia, Abby and Hannah Smith

Ushers: Chuck and Greyson Heustess
Barry and Jacob Priest

Children's Sermons: 6 – Iris McEwen
13 – Barry Priest
20 – Denette Jackson
27 – JoAnn Cox



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU

Prayerfully consider serving God by serving as a Sunday school teacher and/or a youth group leader for 2015-2016. Please let Linda Clark or Greg Brown know, if interested!

E³

Together Educating, Equipping, Empowering Disciples ... With topics ranging from youth to elder ministries, from stewardship to grants, from PW to PM, from preaching to listening, **the Learning Fair is happening Saturday, Sept. 19, in Elizabethtown**—it is designed with you in mind! Learn more and register online at www.presbycc.org/2015/e3/ or call the Presbytery Office.

Rally Day will be Sunday, September 13.

In worship we will celebrate the past year's educational and youth ministries, and commission our Sunday School teachers and other leaders for the coming year; **and** after worship we will celebrate with food, games, and fellowship!

Clarkton Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 663
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