

SONSHINE NEWSLETTER

A Publication of Rocky Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church

August 2012

“Sharing, Preparing and Caring in Jesus’ Name”

321 Rocky Grove Avenue, Franklin, PA 16323

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Worship - 10:00 a.m.

(June – July – August)

Reverend Sue Nageotte, Pastor

Rhonda Rust, Secretary

Edith Richards, Organist Emeritus

June McClintock, Organist

Janet Bish, Assistant Organist

Scott Donaldson, Custodian

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Thursday 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

The General Assembly Gathering of Your Denomination

by Rev. David Oyler on behalf of the Coordinating Committee

Your congregation is one church of the more than 10,000 churches that make up the Presbyterian Church (USA). You stand in a wonderfully rich tradition that includes about 1.9 million members. Your denomination includes congregations from all 50 states as well as in Puerto Rico.

Once every two years the Presbyterian Church (USA) gathers in a General Assembly to worship, re-connect, commission missionaries, deliberate and act on business that has been brought forth from the presbyteries. This year the 220th General Assembly convened in Pittsburgh. Due to the proximity of the General Assembly gathering more than 100 people from the Presbytery of Lake Erie were able to participate in at least a portion of the gathering. Many found it to be a rich experience as they interacted with people from around the world or discovered new insights through deep conversations with those who made information available in the Exhibit Hall. In the official deliberations the Presbytery of Lake Erie was represented by five commissioners – Teaching Elders Mary K. Crom (Honorably Retired) and Susan Speakman (Pleasant-ville), Ruling Elders Charlie Blanchard (Belle Valley) and Doug Megill (North Warren) and Young Adult Advisory Delegate Becca Schuster (Oil City, First).

These five commissioners gathered with almost 900 other people representing the 173 presbyteries. The task of commissioners is to discern the will of God in a wide range of issues. Some of the work is not controversial yet never-the-less important. For instance, the General Assembly ratifies the election of the presidents of PCUSA affiliated seminaries. And they receive information from our ecumenical partners around the world as they proclaim the Gospel.

Of course, the commissioners also waded into issues on which there are divided opinions. Those are the matters that gain the headlines.

Conscientious Christians can arrive at different conclusions. Several of the outcomes were extremely close; the shift of 2 or 3 votes would have changed the decision. Topics that drew particular energy this year were:

- **Reaffirmation of the current structure for receiving the special denominational offerings.**
- **Reaffirmation of the current denominational investment policies in companies that do business in Israel. (This is an issue around which there is a great deal of energy as many people would argue that the church ought not to profit from companies that make equipment that can be aggressively used against Palestinians.) It was agreed to boycott products made by Israeli companies in occupied Palestine.**
- **Reaffirmation of the current Book of Order definition of marriage. (This is also an issue around which there is a great deal of energy. The current reading states that marriage is between ‘a man and a woman.’ The proposal had been to change the wording to ‘two people.’ This matter is complicated further because some states now permit same sex marriages.)**

Some of these issues may trouble, frustrate or confuse you. Your own theology is quite clear on such matters. You are perplexed that such topics would even be discussed. Others of you may be disappointed in the votes and cannot comprehend why your theology did not prevail. Regardless of close vote totals it is good to remember that

- Being the church is messy business. Guided by Scripture it is possible for faithful Christians to reach differing conclusions.
- God is sovereign. The church is far greater than individual beliefs and votes.
- These matters will continue to be a part of our theological discussion for years to come.

While these topics generate discussion, energy and frustration, it is good to be reminded that God continues to call us to faithfulness in the communities in which you minister. Your commissioners and General Presbyter will gladly meet with Sessions or congregations on these matters if requested to do so. As you have questions you are encouraged to explore them with your pastor and Session as we are continually exploring what God is up to next.

MISSIONS CORNER:

The year is moving by quickly. Summer is not quite over, so enjoy it. I always divide Summer into four or five parts.

Part one is Memorial Day Weekend – the official beginning of Summer for me. Sarah the kids and I, friends and whoever else shows up, always go camping that weekend, weather permitting. It's always fun. We don't have to be anywhere and get to sleep in tents, enjoy the outside and eat lots of good food, most of which is cooked over a fire.

Part two of Summer is the Rocky Grove Fireman's Fair. I always enjoy it because I usually run into someone I haven't seen in a while. I have been going to the fair for as long as I can remember. Sarah and I were on our honeymoon this year, so we did not make it; but, that is the first time in quite a few years that I have not gone at least one night. Oh, did I mention they have fries? The best ones are from the Sugarcreek Civic Club - done just right with a pile of ketchup, salt and vinegar. Don't forget the hot sausage, funnel cake, cotton candy, candy apples and all the other things to eat as well.

Part three of Summer is the 4th of July. I can remember as a kid going to either Franklin or Oil City to watch the fireworks. Mom would always make a huge batch of popcorn and ice tea to take with us. We would sit outside and wait and wait and wait for it to get dark. The fireworks were loud and colorful and I always wondered how far away people could see them or hear the really loud ones.

Part four of Summer is Labor Day Weekend. When my sister had horses we would always go to the Lisbon horseshow. It was fun but the down part was school would always start

the following Tuesday (school always started after Labor Day back then). Did I mention that you could always get good things to eat at horseshows?

The other event, even though it's in September, that I consider to be part of Summer is MissionFest. You can't sleep in tents, but there are a lot of tents there with all kinds of things to buy. It's not at the fire hall but I can guarantee you will see someone you have not seen in a while in addition to people you see all the time. There are no fireworks, but there is a lot of noise and excitement. There are no horses. There is, however, lots of food, lots of friends and lots of spiritual togetherness. Come and see for yourself.

Jim Speth

August Birthdays

1	Arnie Bish	19	Chris Hartman
4	Curtis Zeller		Doris Yount
9	Zella McNany	20	Michael Bell
12	Carol Rough		Les Lepley
15	Floyd Dunlap		Brandon Miller
16	Jim Clinefelter	22	Jackson Lukers (2006)
	Makenzie Yeager (2011)	24	Chrissy (Eakin) Hanna
18	Dick Exley	26	Carly Moreland (2007)
		28	Nancy Donaldson

We extend our Christian sympathy to Pam Viele and family in the passing of Pam's husband, John Viele, on July 1, 2012.

OUR DAILY BREAD is a quarterly publication for personal and family inspirational devotions. The next issue, covering September, October and November 2012, is available in the Narthex and outside the church office. Large prints will be available later next

month for October, November & December. Feel free to take a copy and one for a friend too! If all are gone, please advise the church office.

PEANUT BUTTER ICING *from the kitchen of Doris Feather*

2 cups powdered sugar ½ cup peanut butter

¼ cup milk 1 tsp. vanilla

¼ cup butter or margarine (softened)

Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth and creamy.

Sometimes I add a little more powdered sugar to get different consistency for what I am using it on – brownies, cupcakes, sheet cake, etc. It never fails!

Some thoughts on General Assembly:

All across America, PC(USA) pastors are pondering and praying, “Lord, what would you have me say to the congregation about the 220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh?”

On the one hand, no pastor wants denominational issues to take more than a tiny fraction of anyone’s time or energy. Very few church members want that, either! At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that the PC(USA) seems to be moving away from its traditional theology and standards of Christian living at an increasingly rapid rate.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find an article written by Reverend David Oyler giving an overview of the recent General Assembly gathering. He notes that a number of items were decided by a narrow margin. I rejoice that the General Assembly voted NOT to change our Constitution’s current definition of marriage as being between ‘a man and a woman’ (a proposal to alter the wording to read ‘two persons’ was defeated, 308 voting for and 338 against). I am also astounded that a matter so clearly defined in Scripture was even brought for consideration by the General Assembly.

Part of the change we are seeing in the PC(USA) comes from a concern that the church must adapt, must remain open and approachable, as the culture changes. But we need to be mindful not to abandon essentials of the faith in the quest to be “open.” Large segments of our society now believe that almost all forms of personal expression are permissible, and that everyone can decide for themselves whether something is “good,” “right,” “moral.” This runs directly counter to the Christian claim that God alone is our Judge and that the Scriptures tell us what kind of life is pleasing to God.

It is not unusual for faithful Christians to approach an issue with different perspectives. The fact is that God has given each of us different spiritual gifts and different personalities, and we have each had different life experiences, faced different challenges. This diversity can bring great depth and richness to our life and ministry together. But it is troubling when Christians who have gathered for the purpose of discerning God’s will for the denomination, should be so deeply divided when it comes time to vote.

So, what impact do the actions at the 220th General Assembly have for Rocky Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church?

In actuality, very little will change as a direct result of this General Assembly. Christ is still the head of the Church and the Lord of all creation. The Holy Spirit continues to speak to those who will listen. RGAPC will continue to hold traditional values and a high view of Scripture. We will continue to pray for the church, the PC(USA), and God’s people all around the world.

But as David Oyler mentioned, the issues that raised such “energy” at the General Assembly in Pittsburgh will continue to be part of our denomination’s theological discussion for years to come. Session has requested that I lead a Sunday School class in the fall, covering some of the background of the changes we have seen – and are likely to see – in the PC(USA), and what options the church may have as it seeks to be faithful to Christ above all.

Question: What is a “General Assembly” ?

Answer 1: Every 2 years, each presbytery elects ministers and elders to represent the presbytery at a “General Assembly.” The General Assembly meets for about a week, during which time these elected representatives, called commissioners, worship, pray, and receive reports about mission and ministry activities in different parts of the denomination. They also consider and vote on matters of business affecting the entire denomination. Some of the decisions made at a General Assembly take effect immediately; others are implemented in the coming year. However, any change to the Constitution (Book of Confessions and Book of Order) must be approved by a majority of the presbyteries before the change can take effect.

Answer 2: Some people use the term “General Assembly” to refer to the Offices of the General Assembly in Louisville Kentucky. The OGA serves as the headquarters for the Stated Clerk (elected every two years) and his/her staff, and is the center for coordinating the mission activities of the PC(USA).

A Prayer for Children

(adapted from a prayer by Ina Hughes (Kids 4 Christ))

Father of all,

We remember that Jesus told his disciples not to hinder children from coming to him, and that he said: "Truly the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Remembering his patience, his compassion and his love, we pray for the children who put chocolate fingerprints on everything, who love to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin new pants, who eat candy before supper and who can never find their shoes in the morning.

And we also pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who have never skipped down the street in a new pair of shoes, who are afraid to be noticed, and who are born in places that we would not be caught dead in and they will be.

We pray for the children who give us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with their dog and who bury their goldfish, who hug us so tightly and who forget their lunch money, who love ghost stories, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who leave the milk out on the kitchen counter and who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those who will never get dessert, who have no favorite blanket to drag around behind them, who watch their fathers suffer, who cannot find any bread to steal, who do not have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures are on milk cartons instead of on the refrigerator, and whose monsters are real.

We pray for the children who spend all their allowance by Tuesday, who pick at their food, who shove their dirty clothes under the bed and never rinse the bathtub, who love visits from the Tooth Fairy (even after they find out who it really is), who do not like to be kissed in front of the school bus, and who squirm during worship services.

And we also pray for those children whose nightmares occur in the daytime, who will eat anything because there is often nothing to eat, who have never seen a dentist or come to Sunday School, who are not kissed by anyone, who have no clean clothes, no bathtub and no address.

We pray for those children who like to be carried and for those children who have to be carried, for those who give up and for those who never give up, for those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it, those who shrink back from hands in fear, and for those who find no hand to hold.

For all these children, we pray today, for every one is made in your image and every one is precious in your sight. Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS AT RGAPC

Youthful Spirits

Men and women with *youthful spirits* gather for food and fellowship at noon the first Wednesday of each month. The AUGUST event is on the 1ST. Join in the fun in Moorhead Hall again this month. After the luncheon prepared by Lois Pierce, we will be enjoying a game (or more) of bingo. Please let Lois know (437-3653) if you plan to attend. Watch the Sunday bulletin for information on the September 5th event.

Employee Performance Reviews -- Your Input is Requested

"The Personnel Committee will be conducting annual performance reviews of the Pastor, Church Secretary, Custodian, Organist and Assistant Organist in the near future. We

would appreciate members of the congregation providing input for these performance reviews, by August 19th. Compliments, constructive criticism, and concerns will all be helpful. These should be submitted in writing to Linda Hartman – either placed into her mailbox near the church office or mailed to her at 257 Saltlick Drive, Franklin. Please include your name so the Personnel Committee can follow up with you for clarification if needed."

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Ryan Hart, a Franklin native and currently a student at Thiel College who attends Christ United Methodist Church, is helping to organize the Swim Across America Cancer Research Fundraiser at Two Mile Run County Park on August 14, 2012. Two years ago Ryan was diagnosed with Osteosarcoma in the jaw. Today he is cancer free, and wishes to give back to all those who assisted in his recovery by reaching out to people of Faith who would like to help support the Swim Across America Fundraiser. One can visit <http://www.facebook.com/swimacrossamerica> for additional information. All donations can be made out to Swim Across America and submitted to Ryan Hart at 153 Hart Dr., Franklin or www.swimacrossamerica.org/2MileRun.

SERVANTS FOR AUGUST

Hospital Visits: Elder Linda Hartman

Deacon Margaret Wielandt

Worship Leader: Jim Speth

Ushers: Harold Bell, Sarah DeLong, Wayne Edmondson,

Brad Wetjen & Joyce Wetjen

Greeters: August 5 Edith & Karen Richards

12 Doris Feather & Grace Gibbons

19 Sam Alden & Jennifer Oakes

26 Gene & Marge Sheffer

Acolytes: August 5 COMMUNION

12 Austin Clark

19 Hanna Wielandt

26 Lillian Songer

Nursery: August 5 Joyce Dillemoth

12 Sarah Speth

19 Malinda Lukers

26 Diane Whitman

Children's Church: No Children's Church (June, July & August)

The Missions Ministry Team and Christian Education Ministry Team had a successful morning on July 21st at the Soap Box Derby. By selling hot dogs, soda pop and water, \$125.25 was made to support mission projects. CE sold donuts and coffee, netting \$38.25 after expenses.

NOTES OF THANKS

Dear RGAPC,

Thank you for paying for me to go to Seneca Hills. *Paige Winder*

Thanks for all the prayers and cards and to those who helped with the Pizza Hut Benefit. Also, the help from the Deacons is greatly appreciated.

Pam Viele

WE WILL BE RETURNING TO OUR FALL SCHEDULE ON SEPTEMBER 9TH WITH SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:30 A.M., FELLOWSHIP TIME AT 10:15 & WORSHIP AT 10:45 A.M. PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY!!!!

FROM THE SESSION

Approved Motions from the Session Meeting – July 16th:

- The minutes of the regular Session Meeting of 18 Jun 12 with three minor changes.

- The Financial Secretary’s report for the period ending 30 June 12 and the following Treasurer’s reports: the checking account summary, the budget year-to-date figures and the Financial Report for June 2012.
- The minutes of the Congregational Life and Worship Ministry Team meeting on 4 Jun 12, the Stewardship Ministry Team on 24 Jun 12, the Missions and Outreach Ministry Team meeting on 25 Jun 12, and the Christian Education Ministry Team meeting on 1 Jul 12 as well as the July 2012 Report on Administrative Activity.
- A request be sent to the Presbytery of Lake Erie to modify the “Principles and Processes For The Presbytery of Lake Erie When Churches Seek to Separate From The Presbytery” to consider church members who are physically unable to attend meetings of the congregation. These members would include those who are homebound, in nursing homes, in the military, at colleges, etc.
- With regret, Malinda Lukers’ resignation from Session and the Christian Education Ministry Team effective 1 August 12 because of her responsibilities for her family.
- A motion from the Missions and Outreach Ministry Team to have a Vendor Fair at our church on Saturday, 13 Oct 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to raise funds for mission purposes.

RGAPC Financial Information

	June 2012	Year to Date
Congregational Giving	\$ 7,711.50	\$ 48,587.09
Expenses	\$11,431.99	\$ 52,762.09
Difference	- \$ 3,720.49	- \$ 4,175.00

*Detailed financial reports for July will be available in the narthex
beginning the second Sunday of the month.*

From the Pastor’s Study:

Dear RGAPC members and friends,

With August just around the corner, many (perhaps most) of us are wondering, “Where has the summer gone?” It only takes a glance at my calendar to know part of the answer. As a family in Christ, we have rejoiced together at weddings, anniversaries, graduations and birthdays. We have felt the pain of loved ones suffering from illness, accidents and injuries. We have come alongside others in mourning for family members called home to be with our Maker, and taken comfort in the grace of God, who, through Christ, has opened the door to eternal life.

As a family in Christ, we have gathered each Sunday in worship and come together regularly for Saturday morning and mid-week prayer and fellowship. We have welcomed folks visiting from out of town, and prayed for members of our own congregation as they traveled on vacations and to family reunions. Many took part in the progressive dinner in June and the church picnic at Kamp Kiwanis a few weeks ago. We combined efforts with First Presbyterian Church, Fox Street Church of God and Grace United Methodist Church in providing a week-long, evening Vacation Bible School attended by nearly 70 children. What great fun everyone had learning about the love and faithfulness of God through “*Adventures on Promise Island.*” And what a testimony it is to the larger Body of Christ, for the community of Rocky Grove to see our four congregations working together to provide this very important ministry to children and families.

It has indeed been a busy summer – and those are only a few of the things recorded on my calendar (elsewhere in this issue, I will talk a bit about the 220th General Assembly meeting). As I think back over the last few months, what I see most clearly is the faithful hand of the Lord who created us, sustains us, saves us, and places us in church families to learn and grow and serve together in love, guided by his gracious Spirit. It is not a perfect family – what family is?? – but I count it an honor and a joy to be serving here with you at RGAPC.

With love in the Lord,