

## The Open Door

First Presbyterian Church  
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**FROM THE PASTOR** Last month I attended a conference in Kansas City looking at church in the digital age. One of the biggest points of the conversation was how the change in technology has changed the way we think about gatherings. At the second half of the last century, the TV venue dominated information flow and advertizing. Large church gatherings of the Chrystal cathedral, Joel Olsteen's church and many others, are ones that focus on one message for thousands of people. Advertisements church as "Coke is it" celebrated that one theme would reach the multitude.

But things have changed. In a time where people get information in a myriad of ways from a myriad of sources, the growing population seems to be drawn to groups and items that are more focused. Now instead of "Coke is it" the coke cola company has probably 20 different kinds of soda for people to chose from. Rather than gathering with the multitude, people seem to be searching for smaller groups where they can really connect. One of the ways the moderator of this meeting suggested we look at church is by looking at all the groups that are connected with a church body, rather than only looking at Sunday morning. If we counted the numbers of people involved in our church each week, including groups such as the Tuesday morning class, AA, GA, child's day out, Wednesday youth group, Deacons buying shoes at Wal-Mart, and Wednesday Worship we might be amazed at the involvement. The facilitator of this workshop challenged us to think of church health in terms of being aware that these small groups where people can meaningfully connect with God and with each other can be as important as the numbers in Sunday worship. An interesting thought to ponder!

Grace and Peace,

Helen



## Presbyterians in the NEWS—

- Cade Johnson, grandson of Max Martin, was pictured connecting with the ball for a RBI double in a Miami Wardogs baseball game.
- Nancy Gee was quoted in an article about Miss Nellie Dobson. Miss Nellie was one of our saints for many years in our church.
- Patricia Trolinger was honored as a woman of vision in Washington, DC on April 9 and 10 by the National Society of United States Daughters of 1812. She was Honorary National President from 1994 to 1997.



The committee voted to give \$1,000 to the Presbyterian Disaster Fund. We are especially pleased to know that our Presbyterian church is present in Japan trying to help their people recover.

The Mission Committee provided a light meal for the Community Health Clinic for those who wait a long time for their turn to see a doctor.

We have been emphasizing the 'One Great Hour of Sharing.' We collected \$1,217 above the goal of \$1,000. Thank you to all who contributed.

It has taken a long time but the Harbor is ready for the "finishing touches." There are two dorm type rooms and six rooms for families. Different groups are adopting a room to furnish and decorate. The Mission Committee voted to adopt a room. Next month we will be asking for furniture for the room. If you are thinking of getting rid of a bed or a good mattress or dresser or chest etc. please save it for us!



## Child's Day Out

It is amazing how much the children who have been coming all year have grown and changed. Some don't wear diapers anymore!!! They have learned that their mother will be back, no need to cry. And they sit at the table for snacks until they are finished. They share – most of the time.

We only charge \$5 for the morning. But since our facility is so good for this project we don't use even that much. The program has given \$700 to help defray the expenses, especially utilities.

## Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery NEWS—

The Mission Committee met April 13 in Tulsa. There was discussion on a possible future project– Stop Hunger Now. Hunger and Witness (Children at Risk) Grant monies will go to Trinity, College Hill, Broken Bow, Bristow and St. Andrew's. One Committee member will attend the Big Tent Conference in June.

Grace Goodeagle, Presbytery Commissioner

## Deacons

The Deacons are making a real effort to visit our home bound members twice a month. We sometimes take the flowers that are placed on the communion table for worship to a home-bound member. We have bought shoes for one student. We are delivering Easter Lilies to the home bound members after the service.

## Former Members

- Cathryn Davis, daughter of Dr. Curtis, called to tell us that her husband, Geronimo, died last week. We send our condolences.
- Audrey Laughlin has moved to Assisted Living nearer to her children in Broken Arrow. She lives in an apartment and is adjusting well to the new living arrangements. She still sends canceled stamps and Campbells soup labels for our projects.

## Wednesday Worship

Those of you who don't attend the Wednesday evening Fellowship and Worship are missing a rare opportunity. The food is simple but the fellowship at the meal is so fun. We have our members and youth whom Jamie picks up after school. These are neat kids who enjoy each other and relating to adults. They politely wait for the adults to get their food before they get in the line!!!! But the highlight is the Worship. Helen is so creative and she spends a lot of time preparing worship experiences that are very meaningful. To those of you who came to worship during the snow, it is much like that service in the Fellowship Hall. During Lent the worship was based on the stories of stones in the Bible. Not only did we listen to Helen's well prepared presentation, we used a stone to make the experience real. If you are missing the Wednesday night Fellowship and Worship, you are missing one of the best times in our week at the church. Please come!!!!

Jera and Brent Rendel, Job, Elia, Isaac Rendel, Nancy Gee, Cathy and Chris Rabel, Abrina Kneeland, C. B. Roberts, Bill Neill, Tom Pinson, Jamie and Frankie Gray, LaDonna Butler and Sandy Ankenman

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## Goodland Boys are Coming!!!!

We are planning a good time when the boys from Goodland Academy are in our church – May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. We are preparing dinner – thanks to Jim Hill who will cook hamburgers – for the boys and our youth. We will have activities for all of the youth in the evening. Frankie Gray and his helpers will prepare breakfast for the Goodland boys Sunday morning. We will enjoy having them in worship and we will have a light lunch with them. If you don't have other plans, please stay and eat and visit with the boys. Those who went on the bus to Goodland Academy were pleased that one of the boys we know from past visits with us was the one to give us a tour.



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**Graduation Sunday** Graduation Sunday will be May 15th during worship and after worship. Congratulations to John Gray, Carmen Rabel, Abrina Kneeland and LaShell Thomas.

## MORE ABOUT OUR CHURCH FAMILIES- Ron Whaley

Ron grew up near Knoxville, Tennessee with two brothers. His family enjoyed living and working on a small farm with a garden and cows until an Interstate Highway came through and divided the farm. He was musical and played one of the nine trombones in the High School Band. He went on to play the trombone in the band at the University of Tennessee. He majored in Industrial Arts and Music at the University. These two majors have been invaluable to his work in the theater. He can build the sets as well as direct the music. In Miami he has been using these talents in the Miami Little Theater for many years.

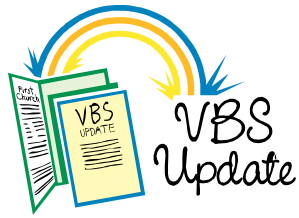
He met Mary Susan the day they were both applying for a teaching job - she in music and he in industrial arts in the Knoxville Public Schools. After they were married they were Youth Directors for a Christian Church. That entailed a 50 mile trip each Wednesday and Sunday from their home.

Ron and Mary Susan came to Miami in the 1970's. She is Director of Vocal Music at Northeastern Oklahoma A & M. He earned his Master's degree in Music from Pittsburg State University. He taught Special Education and spent thirteen years as Band Director in Picher. His band won many honors and took trips to play in interesting places like Branson and Oklahoma State in Stillwater. This was a broadening experience for students who had done no traveling.

Since the closing of the Picher schools, he is employed in the Miami High School as a teacher of Algebra and Science to students with special needs. Not only does Mary Susan teach vocal music, she is active in the Episcopal Church both locally and statewide.

Ron has spent April directing JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM-COAT for the Miami Little Theater. He has been Music Director at our church for many years. Not only does he excel in his duties in that capacity, he is willing to help with other projects at the church. He designed and led the members in building the huge lighted spectacle which looked like stain glass windows for special Christmas display.

We appreciate Ron who shares so many of his talents with us.



**Jesus' Holy Days  
Vacation Bible School  
Purim– Day 3**

The story of Purim is told in the Biblical book of Esther. The heroes of the story are Esther, a beautiful young Jewish woman living in Persia and her uncle Mordecai who has raised Esther as his own daughter. The villain of the story is Haman, an arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king. Haman decides to plot the destruction of Mordecai and his people when Mordecai refuses to bow down to him. The word Purim means “lots” and refers to the lots that Haman cast to chose the day of the massacre.

Esther has won the heart of the king and Mordecai asks her to appear in front of the king to stop the slaughter. It is a dangerous thing to do, but after fasting Esther approaches the king and foils Haman’s plans.

The celebration of Purim includes a reading of the book of Esther. It is also customary on Purim to hold carnival like celebrations. On our final night of Vacation Bible School we will hold a mini carnival where we can make masks, crowns, sandcastles and noisemakers. We will conclude VBS with the telling of the Esther story in the form of a melodrama where we can shake the noisemakers and stomp when Haman approaches, and cheer for Mordecai and swoon for Ether.

Esther is unusual in that it is the only book in the Bible that does not contain the name of God. Mordecai makes a reference to the fact the he and his people will be saved by some one else if not by Esther. Thus one important message that can be gained by the story is that God often works in ways that are not apparent, in ways that appear to be chance, coincidence or ordinary good luck.



**Session Notes from April 18th**

The session continues to work hard to keep the church worship, mission and programs strong.

**Pastor’s Report:**

Helen shared that she will be attending a Presbyterian Credo conference in June. This is a conference developed in response to a 2004 report which encouraged the Board of Pensions PCUSA to address issues related to clergy wellness and burnout. Invitations are sent to randomly selected pastors who are between 40-55 and who have been serving congregations for at least 7 years. Participants spend 8 days evaluating financial, spiritual, vocational and physical health. Helen will be in Buffalo, NY from June 6-14 to attend this conference.

Property and Maintenance: Bill continues to work with the church contractor. Their focus now is on the heating and air-conditioning. The hope is that by fixing some of the problems we could drastically reduce cost. Once this is fixed we can address the roof.

Finance: Several members generously paid their tithe at the beginning of the year so we have been blessed to start of the year strong. This month expenses did exceed income so we do need to remain attentive and on our feet.

Income-month	\$14,197.67	Income-year	\$44,399.87
Expenses-month	\$14,982.64	Expenses-year	\$37,130.48
Difference-month	\$ 784.97	Difference-year	\$ 7,269.39

**Top 3 session Goals**

- 1) Bus– looks awesome!!! Thank you Dick Seybolt for restoring and revamping the bus.
- 2) Technology– we continue to develop technology during worship and will be looking more into website this summer.
- 3) We spoke about Helen’s conference and the ways the conference had some ideas about reaching out to our members and to the community.