



Tidings

Bringing News of the
Clover Presbyterian Church

Sister Congregation of Larne First Presbyterian Church
Larne, Northern Ireland

April, 2009

Things You Need to Know:

- **Fifth Sunday Blend: Sunday, March 29th.** Come Early, Bring Food.
8:00 Lenten Breakfast
9:00 Sunday School
10:00 Worship ~ Covered Dish Lunch
- **Holy Week Activities (April 5-12):**
Spring Blood Drive ~ Tuesday, April 7, 2:30-7:00 pm
Maundy Thursday Worship and Communion ~ Thursday, April 9, 7:00 PM
Good Friday Tenebrae Worship ~ Friday, April 10, 7:00 PM
Easter Party (and egg hunt for the children) ~ Saturday, April 11, 10:00 AM
Easter Sunrise Service ~ New Beginnings Baptist Church (Old North Main Street) ~ 7:00 AM
Easter Worship Services ~ 8:45 and 11:00
- **Mark and Miriam Adams**, our Missionaries serving on the US / Mexico Border, will be here in Clover during the Easter week. On Sunday April 19 Mark will be leading in worship at both services and at 10:00 will be meeting with our youth and adult Sunday School Classes to update us on their mission work.
- The **Seekers Sunday School Class** is planning a **fall retreat** for August 28-30 at Montreat! The retreat leader is Rev. Nell Green who will be helping us learn how to "Experience God" in our lives. If you are interested in joining the Seekers, please contact Paula Clayton 222-8382 or jclayton15@carolina.rr.com or Alisa Johnson!
- The Intern is Coming! The Intern is Coming! In May we will welcome **Marty Simmons**, a third year student at Union/PSCE in Charlotte into the life and ministry of our congregation. Marty will be with us from May 1 ~ December 12 (two academic terms) doing her parish based supervised ministry. A committee of people from the church will work with her and Douglass to make sure that this is a positive and productive part of her pastoral formation.
- The **Hunting Island Church Camping Trip** will be on May 1-3, 2009. If you have made reservations, please give your \$50 deposit to Tammie Anderson or Alisa Johnson as soon as possible. Reminder: the balance is due on Sunday, April 5. If you have questions, please contact Tammie (684-5594) or Alisa (akjohnson@bellsouth.net or 631-1876).
- **The Men's Fellowship** continues to meet every Tuesday morning at 6:00 am in the Library. This group has been going strong for several years but is eager to welcome new men around the table. The conversation is lively and the coffee is fresh, so come and join in!

Things You Need To Know Continue on Page 4



Keynotes: An Evolving Entrance Exam

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." (Acts 2:38-39)

What are we going to do about all of those 'nones'? The newest results from the American Religious Identification Survey have revealed that fully 15% of the American population now identify themselves as having no religious identity whatsoever. *No religion* is the only religious group in the country that is growing. Maybe we should change New York back to New Amsterdam since we are now, apparently, the Netherlands.

Or so the religious press would have you believe. Since the publication of these findings in early March, the religion pages and church based journals have been hyperventilating over the erosion of the religious establishment. As if it were some eternal truth that Roman Catholics and Evangelicals were somehow immune from the social and cultural dislocation that has been affecting protestant denominations for two generations. No one is surprised that Methodist market share has declined from 8% to 5%, but Baptists in decline? That's news! Now it seems even the more culturally insulated religious traditions are struggling to hold on to their children and attract new adherents.

But it's those 4.7 million "nones" that really have people scratching their heads; 15% of Americans who have no religious commitment at all. This is no longer seen to be a religious landscape that is undergoing some sort of ideological restructuring. We are not trading players between teams; Presbyterians aren't losing members to Baptist or non-denominational churches. Every church is losing members to no church. "The challenge to Christianity ... does not come from other religions but from a rejection of all forms of organized religion," the report concludes.

So at least we can retire the discredited notion that mass appeal, membership gains and losses, and cultural influence are somehow related to the Truth, or to Faithfulness. Evangelical

fundamentalism did not enjoy a season of cultural success because it was more faithful to the gospel and therefore blessed and established by God. Likewise, the mainline denominations were not too liberal for American religious consciousness. Not now, not ever. Nor did we so depart from the truth of the gospel that we were forsaken by the Spirit of God. We were simply more culturally exposed to the effects of lower birth rates, increased mobility, and intermarriage between religious traditions; the real causes of this erosion in religious affinity.

It is too early to tell, really, but it is possible that all cultural success and prosperity, whether by the Roman Catholics in the 1400s, the Mainline in the 1950s or the Evangelicals in the 1990s, is the result of accommodations and compromises with the culture, not faithfulness to the gospel. It could be that this is a really popular moment for detachment from institutions and social structures - that even "none" has compromised its standards in order to be popular. (I mean, do you really think that all 15% of them have absolutely no interest in religious community, or shared expressions of gratitude, or articulating a common hope? I bet when the time comes fully half of them will have a minister of some description standing next to their open grave.)

It would be easy, in the face of this change, to define down what it means to be a Presbyterian Christian; to decide that the best way to win the loyalty of these uncommitted people is to reduce the demands that our faith imposes on us. If we lower the barriers to entry then more people will flood into our fellowship and worship. Throw open the doors and people will rush through them.

I don't think that is what the surging tide of "nones" is looking for. And I don't think that's what the trend of religious dis-affiliation is calling the church to be and do. Instead of striving for greater market share, or measuring our faithfulness



Keynotes: An Evolving Entrance Exam

by our size or influence, maybe it is time for religious people, from every shrinking tradition, to reestablish our core identity. Instead of trying to be all things to all people, this is actually an opportunity for us state clearly and graciously who we are and what we believe. A time to rewrite the entrance exam for church membership.

We are about to amend our church constitution to require all people who join a congregation, even those moving from one Presbyterian church to another, to reaffirm their faith in "Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." That is the standard for membership in a Presbyterian Church. We are required to welcome into membership any person who responds "in trust and obedience to God's grace in Jesus Christ." And we are forbidden from denying membership to anyone on the basis of "any reason not related to profession of faith." That's it, Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. We do not elaborate about the nature of Christ's Lordship, the places in which that Lordship impinges on our lives, what things that lordship might require or forbid. We define "savior" no further either. You don't have to hold to any particular understanding of God's saving act in Jesus Christ, its sufficiency, its uniqueness, or how exactly God might have accomplished our salvation in Christ. That is left entirely to your own conscience. You don't have to believe in God, or the Trinity, only Jesus.

Now, I am not advocating for some lengthy litmus test to which all of our members would be forced to subscribe. But here is my radical, and I hope provocative, proposal. What if, instead of merely requiring a profession of faith in Jesus as

Lord and savior, we asked our members, those who are not "nones" but are explicitly Presbyterian Christians, to affirm the first three ordination vows when joining the church. That would mean professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, savior *and* head of the Church; and faith in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as well; accepting the Old and New testaments as God's word; and receiving the Reformed Faith as a faithful expression of the faith of the Bible.

That doesn't seem too much to ask. In fact, a community with enough confidence in itself and knowledge of its purpose to establish those boundaries around its membership might be a more appealing place for some of those "nones" when the novelty of self-obsessed spirituality wears off.

Peace,

Sunday
March
29

April, 2009

News and Notes:

- Join us in welcoming **Nicole Lowe** to our church. Nicole comes by transfer of letter from Cherokee Avenue Baptist Church in Gaffney, SC. She is Tyler Lowe's wife. Welcome Nicole!!
- The sympathy of the congregation is extended to:
Jack Scott on the death of his father Jack.
Eric Talbert on the death of his mother Doris.

April, 2009

Things You Need to Know (con't):

- **Vacation Bible School** is planned for **June 14-17!** Please mark your calendars now for this special event ~ ~ More details to follow!
- The 2009 **Nominating Committee** is being assembled. The Sunday school classes and organizations need to select and submit their representative to the session before the April meeting (April 19) to ensure that this committee can be organized and working before June 1!
- **Bethelwoods Camp-In-A-Van** is coming to Clover Presbyterian Church on **July 27-31** so that our kids can experience the music, art, Bible, crafts, and recreation of camp right here! Parents, watch your mailbox for more information! Visitors: please contact Alisa Johnson if you would like to also receive the informational letter (akjohnson@bellsouth.net or 631-1876)!
- **Easter Egg Hunt** ~ Saturday, April 11 at 10am
- Support our **Relay For Life** team! The Relay is Saturday, April 25, in York. Join us as we fight for a cure for Cancer.
- **One Great Hour of Sharing**—our annual offering for disaster and hunger relief projects will be received on Easter Sunday, April 12 at both Services. Funds received in this offering benefit the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.
- The Red Cross will be holding a **blood drive** in the Fellowship Hall on **Tuesday, April 7** from 2:30-7:00p.m. If you would like to volunteer to help in the canteen area or set up an appointment to give blood, please contact Faith Shirley at shirleyf@usa.redcross.org or 803-448-5332. Help us provide this vital service to our community!
- The Western York County **Relay for Life** is on Saturday, April 25 beginning at 1:00 p.m. in York SC. Clover Presbyterian will once again participate in the walk. Volunteers are needed to walk. Please contact Lisbeth Carpenter, Kathy Key, Brenda Jackson or Faith Shirley for more information.



Women's Safety & Awareness Class

Saturday, April 4
9:00—11:30

Safety Seminar
Hands on Self Defense Training

To register please call Clover P.D.
803-222-9494

April, 2009

People Who Need Your Prayers:

The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; The leaders of our world and nation, the men and women in the military, our President – Barack Obama, our Governor–Mark Sanford, our Mayor–Donnie Grice, our missionaries: Jim & Jodi McGill, Mark & Miriam Adams.

For all those vulnerable to economic uncertainty:

The unemployed, the homeless, those whose health and safety depend upon the charity of others, those in the financial services industry, the construction trades, contractors and other sectors currently under pressure, public policy makers, those facing foreclosure, those who are worried about their savings and anxious about their future.

Our Known Sick:

Grant McLean, Taze Bennett, Ruby Bennett, Nona Beamguard, Mary Sifford, Nancy Ford, Gene Sifford, Ann Wright, Mary Anne Hall, Rodney McAninch, Tina McAninch, Jack Westmoreland, Jim Westmoreland, Lib Thomas and Betty Westmoreland.

Those unable to worship with us:

Mary Alice McCarter, Beth Hinshaw, Dean Miller, Ruth Ramsey & Mary Lou Sifford.

Friends and Relatives:

JoAnn Barnes – mother of Lois Talbert, Rush Smith—dad of Andy Smith, Lee Killian, Alice Fowler—aunt of Julia Smith, Steve Lunsford—brother of Mike Lunsford, Jake Pritchard—grandson of Bill & Pat King, Terry Florence—friends of Don & Donna Hartsoe, Harold Dickson, friend of Harry & Ann Hogue, Al & Mary Jauregui—grandparents of Jacqui Marquez, Mack Falls—cousin of Dick Jackson, Carrie Reese—niece of Janet Owings, Anne Futch—sister of Bear Owings, Elizabeth Barnett—mother of Tom Redmond, Helen McCain, mother of Billy McCain, Sharon Fitch, John & Madison Kane Klides, friends of Travis & Christine Newsom, Mary Eddie Doss—friend of Don & Donna Hartsoe, Paul Timms, father of Paula Clayton, Mackenzie DeCuir, Alex VanEtten, mentor student of Libby Sprouse, Earl Sprouse, uncle to Julie Preston and Scott Sprouse, Tom Warrick, father of Dawn Dawes, Caroline Hogue, grand-daughter of Harry & Ann Hogue, Dan Hartsoe—father of Don Hartsoe, Anne Fishburne, Vanessa Henkel—sister of Julie Preston and Gail Windell—friend of Tommy & Susie McLean.

Presbyterian Women

Council- Monday, April 6 at 7:00pm at the home of Kay Gordon.

Circle #1 will meet **April 13** at the church at 10am at the church.

Circle #2 will meet **April 20** at the home of Ann Goode at 7:00pm

Circle #3 will meet **April 13** at the home of Lisa Hall at 7:00pm

Flower Calendar for April

- | | |
|----|---|
| 05 | Circle #1 |
| 12 | Easter Lilies |
| 19 | In Memory of Lee Fischer given by the Owings Family. |
| 26 | In Honor of Jean Jackson on her birthday given by her children. |

April, 2009

Things You Need to Do:

- **Give!** Your time, your energy and your money to the work of Christ for which we have been gathered.
- **Join** the Relay for Life!
- Observe the holy days of lent and **Holy Week** with the congregation. Come to Worship on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday.
- Review your covenant of membership with the congregation. Consider the ways you contribute to the mission and ministry of our congregation and renew your commitment to common witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Welcome our new members and our visitors who worship with us and join us in fellowship every week.
- **Give Blood**—on April 7.
- Sign up for the **VBS Ministry Team** to make this summer's VBS the best YET! Contact Alisa Johnson, Kimberly Sanders (222-6616) or Jack Scott (831-8455) to join!
- Give to the **One Great hour of Sharing** offering on April 12. Help us extend the love and compassion of Christ to those who have suffered disaster.
- Contact the church office if you know of a **high school senior** who should be recognized during our **High School Senior Recognition Sunday** on May 31, 2009. Congrats to all our Seniors!
- Bring your children to **Junior and Cherub Choir rehearsals**, Wednesday afternoon at 4:45.
- Worship every week—here at 8:45 or 11:00; or wherever your travels take you over Spring Break. Join with Christians in shared mission and ministry, glorifying God and proclaiming the gospel.
- **Join an Adult Sunday school class** (if you are not already involved): Adult 1 (Church Parlor), The Seekers (Church Library), Ladies Bible Class (Ladies Classroom), and Men's Bible Class (Recreation Building).
- **Bring your children** to Sunday school EVERY Sunday at 10am (classes toddlers through Senior High).
- **Pray** for peace and reconciliation in the world.

Worshiping ~ Praying ~ Reading ~ Welcoming ~ Serving ~ Giving

April, 2009

Places You Need to Be:

- **Worship:** 8:45 and 11:00 every Sunday.
- **Sunday School** ~ classes available for all ages. Sunday morning 10:00 a.m.
- **Easter Sunrise Service**—April 12 @ 7:00 Am, New Beginnings Baptist Church.
- **Relay For Life**, Saturday, April 25, 1:00 PM at York Comp. High School.
- **Men's Fellowship:** Every Tuesday, 6:00 a.m. in the Library for Prayer and Fellowship.
- **Youth Group** (Grades 7-12) on Sunday evenings at 6pm. Supper will be served.
- **Presbyterian Women Circle meetings** every month.
- **Choir and Praise Team** rehearsals.

Serving the church in April

Closing - Charles Ford

Worship Leaders ~ 8:45am

05 Jennifer Johnson
12 Terry Swanner
19 Melanie Wall
26 Doug Westmoreland

Greeters

05 Jane McCall, Linda Henry
12 Marge Woods, Evelyn Pendleton
19 Adelle Edmunds, Lillian Lawrence
26 Ann Goode, Gene Bowman

Acolytes 11:00

05 Jon-Michael Brinkley
12 Thomas Key
19 Brittney Brinkley
26 Mackenzie Dawes

Worship Leaders ~ 11:00am

05 Sherer Hopkins
12 Jane McCall
19 Wes Spurrier
26 Dick Jackson

Offering

05 Don Hartsoe
12 Bob Mann
19 Jack Scott
26 Dick Jackson

Nursery Volunteers (11:00)

05 Sherer Hopkins
12 Millie Jones
19 Mary Adams
26 Linda Henry

Children's Church 11:00

3 & 4 year olds

05 Buddy & Paula Clayton
12 Carl & Mary Adams
19 Phyllis & Allison Maynard
26 Greg & Kristy Rowland

K-2nd grade

05 Paula Brinkley & Brittney Brinkley
12 John & Julie Preston
19 Marc & Dawn Dawes
26 Mark & Martha Spurrier

Sunday School

Ladies Bible Class—Ladies Classroom

05 Kay Gordon
12 Willie Westmoreland
19 Pat Lowe
26 Myrna Kosko

Men's Bible Class—Rec. Building

05 Alice Thompson
12 Dave Cyphers
19 Don Westmoreland
26 J.S. Edmunds

Adult 1 Class—Church Parlor

05 Greg Rowland
12 Kathy Key
19 Donna Hartsoe
26 Jane McCall

The Seekers Class—Church Library

05 Bruce Elliott
12 Jack Scott
19 Class member
26 Lisa Hall

Youth Suppers

05 TBA
12 TBA
19 TBA
26 TBA

APRIL

- 01 Mary Beth Shealy
Patti Scott
- 02 Brian Hall, IV.
Sophia Sprouse
Ted McCarley
- 03 Channing Thomas
Kara Mcleod
- 04 Bob Mann
Chris Stewart
- 05 Laura Johnson
- 06 Ellen Westmoreland
- 07 Annie Bowman
- 08 Adam Scott
- 09 Otis Adams
- 13 Drew Cyphers
- 15 Bartlett Shealy
- 17 Bennett Cox
- 18 Josh Pendleton
Katie Benton
- 19 Felicity Adams
Penny Campbell
- 20 Josh Wall
Larry Wall
- 21 Kathy Key
- 24 Emily Nason
- 25 Rebekah Stine
Pat King
- 26 Sarah Burrell
- 27 Jean Jackson
- 30 Roy Brinkley



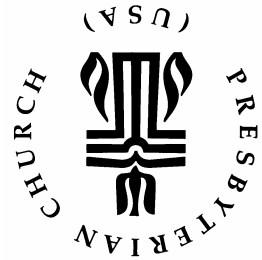
- 12 Bob & Sally Mann
- 18 Gary & Sue Love
- 19 Gary & Debbie Black
- 20 Joe & Carolyn Thomas
Ed & Faith Shirley
- 25 Mike & Lisbeth Carpenter



April 2009 at Clover Presbyterian Church

Wednesday Activities:
 4:45am Music Garden, Cherub & Jr. Choir
 5:30pm Supper
 6:00pm FW Friends, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study,
 Handbell Choir Rehearsal
 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Praise Team Rehearsal

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | | 1 3:30pm Cub Scouts Wednesday Activities | 2 5:30pm Girl Scouts 8:00pm AA | 3 8:00pm NA | 4 Women's Safety & Awareness Class |
| 5 8:00am Lenten Breakfast 8:45am Worship 10:00am Sunday School 11:00am Worship 6:00pm Youth Fellowship AA Deacon Bible Study 6:30pm Deacon Meeting | 6 7:00pm PW Council | 7 6:00am Men's Fellowship 2:30pm Blood Drive 5:30pm AA | 8 3:30pm Cub Scouts | 9 7:00pm ~ Maudy Thursday 8:00pm AA Service | 10 7:00pm ~ Good Friday Service 8:00pm NA | 11 10:00am ~ Easter Egg Hunt |
| 12 7:00am Easter Sunrise Service 8:45am Worship 10:00am Sunday School 11:00am Worship AA | 13 10:00am Circle 1 7:00pm Circle 3 | 14 6:00am Men's Fellowship 5:30pm AA | 15 3:30pm Cub Scouts | 16 5:30pm Girl Scouts 8:00pm AA | 17 8:00pm NA | 18 |
| 19 8:45am Worship 10:00am Sunday School 11:00am Worship 5:00pm Christian Ed Meeting 6:00pm Youth Fellowship AA Session Bible Study 6:30pm Session Meeting | 20 7:00pm Circle 2 | 21 6:00am Men's Fellowship 5:30pm AA | 22 3:30pm Cub Scouts | 23 8:00pm AA | 24 8:00pm NA | 25 Relay for Life |
| 26 8:45am Worship 10:00am Sunday School 11:00am Worship 6:00pm Youth Fellowship AA | 27 | 28 6:00am Men's Fellowship 5:30pm AA | 29 3:30pm Cub Scouts | 30 8:00pm AA | | |



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Clover Presbyterian Church
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More information about events and activities available online:
www.cloverpres.org