

Subj: **First Presbyterian Church News**
 Date: 1/11/2010 10:35:25 P.M. Central Standard Time
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The First Presbyterian Church News

501 N. East Street, Benton AR 72015

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The Reverend Richard "Dick" Knott, Temporary Pastor

January, 2010

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OUR NEXT STEPS



Ron Sasfai, Stewardship & Building & Grounds Committee, reports that the final budget for the church is hanging in the hallway near the sanctuary entrance. Please take the time to review it to see how your pledge dollars have been allocated. See *Notes from a Session Member* for related

Welcome to the January, 2010 issue of *The First Presbyterian Church News*, our monthly online newsletter for all our members and friends of the church.

Please contact Emily Laurel at etlaurel@aol.com or 501-778-9564 or Cary Shillcutt at cary.shillcutt@us.army.mil or 501-315-2605 if you wish to make suggestions, write articles, or contribute in any way to making sure everyone stays well-informed.

January Events and Activities

C to the Third Power (see article, *C to the Third Power*, below, for a definition) begins at 6 PM on Tuesday, January 12 with supper, followed by our committee meetings. Even if you are not now a committee member, come. More comprehensive information about each committee is in the Ministry section of the church's website (www.fpcbenton.com); meanwhile below is an overview of each committee's responsibility to help you see where you would enjoy serving (some people serve on more than one committee):

Belonging & New Members (Chairs Frank Dunn and Faith Hogan) assists new members, current members, and visitors to easier acclimate themselves to the traditions, worship activities, and programs of First Presbyterian Church;

Christian Education (Chairs Ron DuBois and Cary Shillcutt) facilitates adult education (Sunday school, Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Men/3rd Sunday Breakfast, mid-week studies); youth and children's education (Sunday school (year-round) for pre-school through 5th grade, communion class in the fall, and vacation bible school in the summer);

Communication & Strategic Planning (Chairs Emily Laurel and Cary Shillcutt) coordinates communication-related activities and strategic planning for church leaders and congregation;

Congregational Life (Chairs Kate Reecer and Elizabeth Kraus)

information.

Jimmy Fields, Interim Pastor Search Committee, reports that the committee is in the process of interviewing for our vacant interim pastor position. Please include Jimmy, Doyle Webb, and Cary Shillcutt in your prayers as they follow the guidance of Holy Spirit to find our interim pastor.

Pray also for God's guidance for our nominating committee as they fulfill their responsibilities in nominating the people who will form our pastor nominating committee (PNC).

Thank you, God.

The future is bright for us as we move forward together with renewed energy and a sense of belonging, thanks be to God.

Thank you, Everyone.

Let us praise God together for being with us and guiding our lives. Let us pray together to become ever stronger, to comfort and help each other, and to be a "prepared people" (see Disaster Preparedness for more information).

Beginning Anew

Traditionally, January is a time of reflection on the accomplishments of the past year and planning the next year. At our annual meeting on January 24 we will get our 2009 Annual Report, which we

provides nurture and fellowship for the congregation, outreach to new members, and works with the Deacons to promote the congregation's witness in the community;

Stewardship & Building & Grounds (Chairs Ron Sasfai and Tim Wright, with James Counts and Jimmy Fields) manages the finances and maintains the property of First Presbyterian Church-Benton. Receiving and disbursing treasurers, budgetary matters, and planning and administration fall under the purview of this committee; and

Worship & Music (Chair Doyle Webb) oversees the worship activities of the church and provides with supervision of pastor a proper worship environment and experience for the congregation.

Thursday, January 14, at noon, we will have our **Thursday Potluck Fellowship & Luncheon**. The special treat this month is a barbershop quartet, The Joyful Four, to sing for us. Plan now to join us for a joyful time--pot luck soup is on the menu.

Wednesday, January 20 marks an important occasion for all of us. Everyone is invited to a community-wide event, **Preparing Yourself & Your Family for Disasters**, which is being hosted by First Presbyterian. See article, *Disaster Preparedness*, below, for more information.

On Sunday, January 24, we will have our **annual congregational meeting**. Important things are happening in our church, and we want everyone to join us for this event in this New Year, which is also a time of New Beginnings. Besides getting our 2009 Annual Report, you will also hear about what is coming up in 2010 as we seek to walk in a closer relationship with God. So, let us welcome a new beginning in which we as individuals can join together to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ to all.

Join us on Wednesday, January 27, at 6 PM for our **annual chili cook-off**. We have even more competition this year, with new teams planning to offer their delicious renditions of chili, a wintertime favorite for many (Lisa Hester was our grand winner last year). We hope you will join us for this fun evening of fellowship and good food.

To view the complete calendar of activities for the church online, go to the FPC-Benton website (www.fpcbenton.com).

Young People at First Presbyterian

On January 24 from 2 - 4 PM the PYF (Presbyterian Youth Fellowship) and PKC (Presbyterian Kids Club) will join together to go **ice skating** (cost TBA).

The Chili Cook-off on Wednesday, January 27, at 6 PM is a **fundraiser for PYF**. Please make a special effort to attend to show your support for our youth. You will have a great time and a great variety of recipes for this time-tested favorite food.

On January 31 the PYF will participate with several other area churches at a **workday** organized by Westover Hills Presbyterian in Little Rock (time and place TBA).

believe will reflect the many ways in which we are serving our church family and our community.

Like other churches everywhere, we seek to provide comfort and hope for everyone in our church family. Meanwhile, for us the coming months are a critical time--this year we will examine ourselves individually and as a church family while we go about the business of discerning the future direction we choose for our church family to take.

Once we have our interim pastor on board to shepherd us, we will be asked to consider and pray about our individual and collective future, which will require reviewing where we come from, where we are now, and where we wish to be.

We will decide on our collective commitment and how we will express that commitment through our individual actions.

Let's begin now with this prayer: ***God, we thank you for the thoughts and words that challenge us to think deeply about our faith and love for you, how we live it in our hearts, and how we express it in the world. Embolden and inspire us to be a new church for a new world.***

Contact Maruka Reecer, our youth director, for additional information and to volunteer your help at any of these events at 501-317-5072 or mreecer@gmail.com.

Disaster Preparedness

We are planning a special event on **Disaster Preparedness** for Wednesday, January 20. Supper will be served at 6 PM for everyone free of charge (pop top canned food donations welcomed) and at 6:30 PM Cheryl Schmidt, RN, Ph.D., will speak on **preparing yourself and your family for disasters**. Dr. Schmidt, a Benton resident, is an educator who teaches at UAMS, a long-time nursing professional, and Red Cross volunteer who travels around the country teaching disaster preparedness.

Come for a lively, fast moving, and action-packed evening and explore many areas to consider:

- What to do when--not if--disaster strikes to protect yourself and your family;
- Learning how to create emergency supply kits for home, work & car;
- Planning for pets and other animals in disaster situations;
- Being prepared--information for families, schools & businesses;
- Many chances for great door prizes;
- Helpful free advice--offered by people from community, civic & charitable organizations;
- Free fire extinguisher checkups (bring yours);
- Volunteer opportunities---doing the greatest good for the greatest number.

This subject may sound depressing and not-so-fun, but you can rest assured an evening is planned that is chock full of interesting and useful information, a delicious supper, door prizes, display tables with lots of information for you, and knowledgeable people to answer your questions.

Be sure to tell your friends and neighbors about this mission activity as it is meant for everyone, not just the people in our congregation. If you know people from other churches that might be contacted to get the word out about this exciting event, let Emily Laurel know. Flyers are available for you to share with people throughout the community. Please help us and the community by spreading the word about this important event and by your attendance. You'll be glad you did!

Come, together let's prepare for a safer future for everyone!

C to the Third Power

A special thanks to those who made their way to church for our December **C to the Third Power (Christ, Committees & Chow)** meeting in spite of the cold weather, dark skies, and busy Christmas-time schedules. This month we will have our meeting on Tuesday, January 12. The Communication & Strategic

Reminder: The Reverend Dick Knott is providing pastoral care for our church family. If you need assistance with any pastoral concern, please contact Rev. Dick at home at 501-778-4366 or at 501-317-8448 (cell). You may also contact Marcia Snyder, head of the Board of Deacons, for assistance at 501-837-6211. In addition, you can contact any member of the session or call the church office at 315-7737 Monday-Wednesday from 9 AM - 1 PM (office is closed on Thursdays and Fridays).

Quick Links...

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[Presbyterian Church](#)
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Planning Committee will be providing supper at 6 PM for your enjoyment and convenience; we will go over the calendar of events coming up and then split into committee meetings. Your input and participation are needed so that our worship experience and church community life continue to reflect what everyone has come to expect of First Presbyterian.

Now, in the New Year of 2010, is the perfect time to come and participate with renewed energy and that special sense of belonging that comes from working together in service for Christ. Your session and committee chairs thank you for all you do and would like to encourage you to remember that: we praise God together for being with us; working together we are stronger; praying together we comfort and help each other. Responding to God's call together brings into being a "prepared people" like Noah and the Ark.

Notes from a Session Member

The annual stewardship campaign is now complete, and a special thank you goes to Ron Sasfai, who chaired the campaign this year. In the recent past we have had approximately 63 pledging units (households who offer their pledge or promise to contribute, which is how we build our annual church budget). For the year 2008 there were 58 pledging units; and, as of December 15, we had 53 pledging units for the year 2010.

At a special called meeting of session in December we accepted the recommendation of the board of directors of our **Kids Day Out** program to suspend operations temporarily to give the local economy a chance to rebound. We expect to restart our program next fall if the economic situation improves to the extent needed (at least 10 full-time students). Please include this mission activity in your prayers. We session members wish to express our appreciation to the Kids Day Out staff and its director, Lisa Hester, and to the members of the board of directors for their dedication and hard work.

Financial Corner

At the December stated session meeting the church's financial situation was reported to be as follows (figures are as of November 20, 2009):

Operating Funds	
Revenues	\$ 177,567
Expenditures	<u>174,791</u>
Over/(Under)	2,776
Capital Funds	
Revenues	36,384
Expenditures	15,095
Debt Reduction	<u>18,000</u>
Over/(Under)	\$ 3,289

Kudos to James Counts and Jimmy Fields for their many hours of work on behalf of the church. Bringing clarity to a complicated balance sheet really helps those of us who are not so savvy about

financial matters.

Thank you for taking the time to read *The First Presbyterian Church News*. We hope you are finding it useful and interesting.

Please contact Emily at etlaurel@aol.com or 502-778-9564 or Cary Shillcutt at cary.shillcutt@us.army.mil or 501-315-2605 with your comments, ideas, topic suggestions, and offers to volunteer.

Until next month,

Sincerely,

Emily Laurel & Cary Shillcutt
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