The Epistle

ST. PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
August, 2013

Volume 13, Number 8

FROM THE PASTOR

The question of miracles came up in our June “Ask the Pastor” session. Karl Haffner, of College Place, WA tells of a situation which, even though its outcome is understandable and explainable, is no less a “miracle” in every way. Consider:

Dr. Frederic Loomis faced the most difficult decision a physician could ever make—whether to allow a deformed baby to live or die. He had only seconds to decide. Dr. Loomis had delivered hundreds of babies, but this one was different. The infant lay in a breech position, promising at best a difficult and dangerous birth. One of its feet stretched only to the knee of the other leg. Furthermore, it was missing a thigh. The mother, a frail person visiting the sterile delivery room for her first time, was not aware of the grossly deformed child struggling to survive.

Dr. Loomis closed his eyes; at his fingertips squirmed a pitiful creature yet unborn. Wouldn’t the most loving thing be to detain the birth long enough to cause the child to be stillborn? He agonized within himself. Will this kid not be considered a freak, a twisted burden to its delicate mother? How can I justify playing a part in such a cruel drama? Surely no one will ever know if I spare this family from inevitable pain.

The doctor, through the baby’s cord, felt its heartbeat—dancing in rhythm to his own wildly racing heart. As Dr. Loomis continued to prevent the birth, he felt the normal foot pressing for passage into the world. Suddenly, he could no longer justify "playing God." Instead, he would trust God to care for this child against what seemed to be impossible odds. Dr. Loomis delivered the infant into the world, which, he sensed, would be very unkind.

In the years that followed. Dr. Loomis often second-guessed his decision. He watched the anguish of the family as desperate parents sought in vain to find some correction for their child’s deformity. Even after they moved away Dr. Loomis continued to lament the burden that he had saddled upon the family. The heartache, he often said to himself, was his fault.

In time, however, Dr. Loomis would find peace. It came at an unexpected time and place—the hospital Christmas party. Typically, it was during the holiday season when his pain seemed most severe. He could not shake the image of that unfortunate child from his mind. While the world celebrated the greatest birth ever known, Dr. Loomis obsessed over the saddest birth he had ever known.

At this particular party, the most heavenly music filled the room. The sadness seemed to dissipate as the rich tones of "Silent Night" washed Dr. Loomis’ anguished spirit. Following the (continued on page 2)
concert, a woman approached him. "Doctor," she said excitedly. "You saw her."

Dr. Loomis studied the woman’s face, wanting to recognize her but unable to recall the memory.

"I’m sorry. I should know you, but you may need to help me."

"Don’t you remember the little girl with only one good leg, 17 years ago?"

Remember! . . . it was the one thing in his life that he couldn’t forget! In disbelief, he listened to her story.

"That baby was my daughter, doctor. And I saw you watching her play the harp tonight! She has an artificial leg. She’s doing well." At her Mom’s bidding, the lovely harpist walked toward them. With soppy eyes, Dr. Loomis enveloped the girl in his arms.

"Please" he said in a tightening voice, "please play Silent Night’ for me one time." The young lady returned to her harp and played his request with poise and perfection. As she played, Dr. Loomis reflected on the incredible gift of life. He thought about the sanctity in every person.

And he exhaled 17 years of questions and wondering whether or not it was wise to grant a baby its life.

To God be the Glory! See you in church.

Jay

AUGUST HYMN OF THE MONTH - #485, “To God Be the Glory”
Fanny Crosby, one of the most prolific writers of gospel songs, authored this text in 1875, and it was set to music that same year by William H. Doane, who wrote over 2,300 hymns, songs and cantatas. But this particular hymn was all but forgotten until Cliff Barrows was gathering materials for the Billy Graham Greater London Crusade in 1954. Someone suggested this hymn. It became a favorite of the crusade and was reintroduced to the United States later that same year in the Nashville Crusade held at Vanderbilt University. It is an uplifting tribute to our God, who has done “great things.”

In June we collected 210 pounds of food. The August food cart item is oatmeal. Keep up the great work!
Sermon topics                              Scripture Readers
August 4                                  Margaret Tewes
                                               Reading: Hosea 11:1-11
August 11                                 Jim Tewes
                                               Reading: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20
August 18                                 Jay on vacation
                                               The Rev. Jean Rodenbough preaching
August 25                                 Phyllis Watkins
                                               Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

IN HIS SERVICE

AUGUST USHERS                              AUGUST COMMUNION SERVERS
Eb Hancock                                  Sunday, August 4 – Eb Hancock
Diane Hancock
Jamie Metzler
Sonia Metzler

ANSWER TO JULY’S BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUESTION

Which apostle, who was described as “full of grace and power, and doing great wonders and signs among the people”, was stoned to death?  Stephen, one of seven leaders chosen to supervise food distribution to the needy in the early church, was confronted by several antagonistic groups in the temple. After trying to defend himself on false charges, he was stoned to death while praying for the forgiveness of his accusers. (see Acts 6:6-7:60).
Birthdays This Month
August  1 – Tony Jones
       1 – Donna Samsel
       23 – Gayle Lancaster
       28 – Lane Bauserman
       30 – Bobby Coble

Anniversaries
August  21 – Doug and Bronda Coleman

“You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by seeing an imperfect person perfectly”
-Sam Keen

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Solomon judged wisely over the rightful mother of a child, but how did he determine who the child belonged to?

PRAYER CONCERNS: Luke Finison, Barbara Carter, Marjorie and Jack Herndon, Andy and Emily Bristow, Lucy Smith, Aiden and Jeanetta French, Bob Berthold, the families of Myrna Stell and Chris Westmoreland, Katie Williams, Margaret Simmons, Georgia Giberson, Wendy Woods, Jim Farley, Reuben and Shirley Mercer, Betty Lawson, John Patzsch, Ron Ervin, Dale and Nita Holder, John Perkins, Edith Taylor, Jane Christopher, Gary Houglan, Roger Coleman, Mark Griffin, Luke Neal, Carl Hollman, Kevin Tewes, Terri Battle, Joyce Myer, Zachary Reavis, Joe Herndon, and our own family members in the military: James Lochbaum, Andy Bristow II, Shane Finison, Brian Fountain, Rob Salka, Brandy Zehr, and all who serve in our armed forces.

* * * OUR JULY RECORD * * *

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ADULT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
Mark your calendars now and plan to be with us for a very enlightening Adult Vacation Bible School. The dates are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 12, 13 and 14, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. As in past years we will have guest speakers from other faith groups to share with us about their traditions, beliefs and practices: Monday: Fr. Christopher Foley of Holy Cross Orthodox Church (Orthodox Church in America); Tuesday: Jay and Laura Ebert of the Baha’i Fellowship of Greensboro; Wednesday: Aaron and Ruth Martin of the Mennonite faith. It will be interesting to learn about these different faith traditions. As always, there will be a question-and-answer period after each presentation. Don’t miss these opportunities!

THANK YOU
Roger and I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, thoughts and cards during his illness and hospitalizations. He is receiving therapy three times a week at home and would love continued prayers. He misses everyone and hopes to be back with you soon.

- Barbara Coleman

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We are grateful for the many cards and calls from our church family during our recent period of confinement. Your love and concern mean a great deal to us.

- Jeanetta French

* * * *

Many thanks to St. Paul members for the Birthday cards with warm wishes. Thanks for being your Church Organist. You are a blessing to me. Love and prayers.

- Michael Smith

CIRCLES: The Peace/Love Circle will be going out to breakfast at Tex & Shirley’s Tuesday, August 6 at 9:45am. That same evening, the Charity Circle will meet at OCharley’s at 5:30pm for dinner.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN COORDINATING TEAM will meet Sunday, August 25 immediately after church.
GAD-A-BOUT NEWS

In June, 12 Gad-A-Bouts left St. Paul, traveling by van and auto in route to Abingdon, VA for our second annual overnight trip. We had reservations at the historic Barter Theater for an evening performance of Southern Fried Funeral, a comedy new to all of us. Louise Coble had made the arrangements for a package deal for play tickets and overnight lodging. Earney and Jan Walker had made arrangements for a rental van and had even packed us some snacks for the road, knowing how this crowd likes to eat.

With our prior luggage handler and chauffeur John Miller behind the wheel, we had no worries. Of course when our van decided twice that it was too tired or ornery to reverse, it gave our driver a little cause for concern. As a pro, he handled the distraction without inconveniencing the rest of us. Thank you, John. We also appreciated that you didn't find it necessary to have a close encounter with a deer or any other wildlife on this trip.

After a visit downtown to pick up our tickets and look around a little, then a rest at the motel, we left for a wonderful dinner. After dinner we were dropped off right at the theater, where we had great downstairs center orchestra seats. As we had been promised, the laughs were continuous throughout the performance, although a couple of our attendees did have a little trouble hearing some of the dialogue.

Following a good night's sleep for most of us and breakfast at the motel, we loaded up and headed back to Greensboro, stopping only for a couple of short breaks and a cafeteria lunch. Everyone enjoyed the fun and fellowship, and several asked before we even got back to Greensboro, "Where are we going next?"

The above question has been answered. The Gad-A-Bouts will be going to the Fruitcake Factory in Bear Creek on Tuesday, August 27!

The St. Paul Food Bank, made possible by the generous donation of one of our church families, is now cooperating with Greensboro Urban Ministry to provide food to some of their clients on a limited basis. Thanks to Janice Woods for coordinating and overseeing this effort.

REMINDER TO THOSE IN THE WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY GROUP: Please turn in your questionnaires to Jay as soon as possible.