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SUMMER 2009

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

It is impossible for me to express adequately my thanks for 30 years of ministering among you and with you. You have given me the incredible privilege of sharing your pain and celebrating your joys, and you have welcomed me into both your hearts and your homes as I have tried to serve Christ as your Pastor. Together we have challenged one another with the Gospel as we have sought to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ by seeking to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and work for justice in our community and in the world. Together we have birthed and raised our children, stood by the graves of our loved ones and wept, and been “church family” in more ways than any of us could count. We have worshiped, worked, prayed, and played together. Thank you for allowing me to share in your individual lives as well as the life of the congregation; I have been truly blessed by the relationships we have enjoyed.

June will offer us opportunities to celebrate our ministry together, express our love and appreciation for one another, and then say our good-byes as we each begin to prepare to welcome whatever God has in store for us. It will then be time for all of us to move on ... me to move on to retirement with Paul, and you to move on to a point where you will be able to welcome a new Pastor to know, to love, and with whom you can join in ministry. As has been the case throughout our time together, God's love will be steadfast through it all and so we can each embrace the future with confidence. Let us give thanks for all that has been, as well as for all that will be!

In gratitude to God and to each of you,

Clara D. Thompson
Pastor

GRADUATES TO BE HONORED

on June 7

On Sunday morning, June 7, our church family will be pleased to honor our church's youth who are graduating from area high schools. Graduating from Oregon High School this year are Neil Belanus, Michael Harring, Eloise Heydenrych, Riley Holthaus, Rebekah Krenz, Patrick Mielke, and John Thompson. R.J. Mastny will be graduating from Stoughton High School. And Erica Turrell will be graduating from Westfield High School. We wish each of these young adults God's blessings for their future and we share in their pride as they graduate in June. Please see separate articles in this month's Newsletter to learn more about some of our outstanding graduates.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL

We're getting so excited! On Wednesday, June 24, the children will be catching bugs (the *real* kind ... not the sick kind!), painting, singing, hiking, learning, growing, eating, exploring, and generally having a wonderful time as we discover "God's Backyard and Bugs" at the site of our future church home ... 5271 W. Netherwood Road. Our Scripture this year is from Genesis, Chapter 1.

If you have not yet signed up your child(ren) for this year's Vacation Church School (3 year olds and out of diapers by June 1, through this year's 5th graders), please call the church office ASAP at 835-3082 so that we have enough supplies.

SUMMER CHOIR... will be singing on June 28, July 26, and August 30. If you would like to participate, arrive at church at 8:45 for rehearsal. All are welcome to sing.

SUNDAY MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Come to church early, or stay after worship, for a cup of coffee/juice and a treat! This time of church family fellowship has become quite popular with young and not-so-young alike ... if you haven't participated, give it a try!

CELEBRATION FOR CLARA –

JUNE 28, 2009!

Sunday, June 28, 2009 will be Clara's last Sunday at First Presbyterian Church. Please come for worship at 9:30 AM and then join us at noon at Goodland Park for a Celebration in honor of Clara's 30 years as our Pastor. We're going to have a big Pig Roast! Beverages, buns, and place settings will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass, anything that will complement a Pig Roast. Also bring your outdoor games (badminton, softball, etc.) to share. The next few months will be a time of transition for all of us but before we begin that transition, we want to celebrate Clara and all the gifts we have received from her. We hope you will join us to give Clara and Paul a big sendoff as they become retirees.

A memory book will be created for Clara. If you have a special photograph of Clara or wish to write her a short note, please send it to the church office by June 15 for inclusion in the scrapbook.

We also plan to honor Clara's 30 years as our Pastor when we build our new church home on Netherwood Road, perhaps with a bench, a tree, a garden stone, or other appropriate tribute. If you wish to contribute, please direct your gift to the church office and indicate "Clara" in the memo.

CONFIRMATION CLASS WELCOMED!

The Session is pleased to announce that the following high school students were confirmed in our church on May 10, 2009: Ryan Arndt, Luke Belanus, Heather Edgren, Melissa Eyers, Sawyer Holthaus, Haley Hyames, Mariah Isola, David Johnson, Brandon Jones, Patrick Krenz, Sam Pavel, Natalie Wallace, and Shannon Wallace. Each of these youths worked hard toward their confirmation, and we welcome them into the full membership of the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon, Wisconsin!!

CONCERT ON THE SQUARE

Wednesday, July 15

The Fellowship Committee is sponsoring an all-church outing to the Concert on the Square on Wednesday evening, July 15. Everyone is invited and welcome to an evening of food, socializing, and music on Madison's Capitol Square!

Concerts on the Square is one of Madison's largest outdoor concerts, drawing more than 120,000 people annually. Concertgoers come early and pack the Capitol lawn, turning it into a sea of blankets. Balloons and picnic baskets line the square. Caterers fire up their grills and the aroma of food fills the air. For six Wednesdays each summer, this has become a Madison tradition. Join us for one of Madison's finest outdoor celebrations.

The 2009 summer season marks the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's 26th anniversary, and to celebrate and honor this occasion, Maestro Andrew Sewell has created a unique season of performances. The July 15 concert is entitled "Movie Blockbusters" and features Guest Conductor Richard Hynson and Guest Artist Suzanne Beia on the violin. It is sure to be a memorable concert filled with great music, great food (bring your own or purchase it on site), and great friends.

Bring your picnic blanket (labeled with your name on it!) to church by Sunday, July 12 (put it under the green flannel "Announcement board" in the church foyer) and we'll place it on the east side of the Capitol lawn for you, reserving your spot. Check the Sunday morning church bulletins for further information, especially for the exact location of our seating area!

This is a great family event, so be sure to bring your children and grandchildren!

PICK IT UP; PUT IT BACK

Just like at home ... if you move something at church from one room to another, please remember to return it to where you found it when you are finished using it. This will make it much easier to keep track of the church's belongings.

Thanks!

WISCONSIN STATE PARK MISSION PROJECT. SAVE THE DATE - JULY 18.

Mission Committee is working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to organize a mission trip to Bluemound State Park, near Barneveld for a day of fun-filled volunteering. We will meet at the park mid-morning, work a little, eat a little and then work a little more!! We will help with projects such as removing invasive species, clearing hiking trails, hauling brush, raking aquatic weeds, and other chores. There will be projects for everyone from infants to seniors. Lunch will be provided, but all are encouraged to bring picnic-appropriate snacks. There will be lemonade and water available. There will also be time to play in the park's pool. We would like to get an approximate head count so either sign up at church (when the sign-up sheet is available) or contact Tom Niebauer, 608-835-3724.

MONTREAT BOUND!

Lindsay Arndt, Ryan Arndt, Luke Belanus, Neil Belanus, Heather Edgren, Melissa Eyers, Haley Hyames, Mariah Isola, David Johnson, Brandon Jones, Rebekah Krenz, Grace Ledin, Katie McGuigan, Eva Meyer, Patrick Mielke, Sam Pavel, and Amanda Quam will be heading to the Presbyterian Youth Conference at Montreat, North Carolina along with chaperones Ted Belanus, Tom Mielke, and Jen Williams, from August 1-8. In addition to the \$425.00 that each of the individuals going contributes, the youth have also been busy with a lot of fund raising. The group wishes to express their sincere appreciation to the church family for all of the support given as the group has been busy raising money to help defray expenses. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you one and all!

MONTREAT SUNDAY – August 16!

Come share the excitement! Share the faith! Share the enthusiasm! The youth and adults who participate in the Presbyterian Youth Conference at Montreat, North Carolina in August will lead in worship on Sunday, August 16 at 9:30 AM. This is always a wonderful service as the youth share the Montreat experience with the congregation. It's definitely a Sunday you won't want to miss!

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

Many people have signed up on our "May is Volunteer Month" bulletin board to help with ushering, coffee fellowship, summer liturgist, communion stewards, childcare, and Sunday School teachers/helpers for next year. Wow! Thank you very much! If you have not yet had a chance to sign-up, please call the church office at 835-3082 on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday mornings. Karen Detra would be happy to tell you which dates and jobs are still open.

FINANCIAL UPDATE –

April 30, 2009

GENERAL FUND

Amount pledged year to date:	\$44,787.00
Pledges received year to date:	\$45,840.00
Per Capita bill:	\$6,215.75
Received to date:	\$2,507.50

BUILDING APPEAL

Amount committed:	\$809,252.00
Pledges received to date:	\$597,588.79

Thank you for your financial gifts to the First Presbyterian Church!

BUILDING TO REACH OUT

Is your Building To Reach Out financial commitment for our new church building current and up to date? We are 2/3 of the way through our three year campaign, and it would be most helpful if everyone could try to keep current with their commitments. Thanks so much!



NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

We are still in need of volunteers to help in the nursery over the summer and will be looking for volunteers this fall as well. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Renee Martell at mikeandrenee@charter.net or at 835-8557.

STROMQUISTS TO CELEBRATE 50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Ralph and Martha Stromquist will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Sunday, August 9, 2009. They are having an open house in the afternoon, beginning at 1:00 PM, at their home at 2132 Sand Hill Road, Oregon. All of their Oregon and First Presbyterian Church friends are invited to come and join in the celebration. No gifts, please, other than your presence.

HOSPITAL

Joy Bernholdt, Jim Overton, and Carol Robert have been in the hospital recently. The church family is asked to keep them in its prayers.

MEMORIALS RECEIVED

Generous gifts to the church's Memorial Fund have been received in loving memory of Harriet Schneider. Memorial gifts are a wonderful and lasting way to remember a loved one. Thank you so much!

SYMPATHY

The prayers and sympathy of the congregation are offered to the following people who have lost loved ones in recent weeks:

Jim, Nancy, and Emily Wallace, on the death of Jim and Nancy's granddaughter and Emily's niece.

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR NEWSLETTER ON E-MAIL?

If you would prefer to receive your Church Newsletter via e-mail, the church office would be glad to provide you with that service! E-mail Karen Detra (Office Manager) at karenfpc@verizon.net and let her know.

ESPKN - (EXTRA SPECIAL PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN NEWS)

It's hard to believe another year of Sunday School is over. We had loads of fun on our last few Sundays together. Our favorite project was making special wrapping paper for the plants given to teachers and our moms. We all had our hands painted and we put lots of our hand prints on the paper. We got creative putting different colors on our fingers. It was a blast but for some reason our teacher looked nervous seeing us run around with painted hands?!?!?

We sang in worship on Mother's Day. It was one of our favorite songs because we get to dance and we actually got to dance right out of the sanctuary! Our summer plans include vacations to Florida, a cabin up north, and other places we just couldn't remember. We can't wait to go swimming, go to summer school and Vacation Church School!!

There will also be many changes over the summer. Teeth are falling out and new ones coming in so fast our teacher can't even keep track. Some of us will be getting ready for 1st grade and some getting ready for kindergarten. We hope to see you all at worship during the summer. We are always happy to see our church family – that will never change!

POT LUCK FLOWER POT

If you have an "extra" flowering bedding plant or vegetable plant that you have no room for and would like to plant it in our wooden planters at church, that would be great. We will call it our POT LUCK FLOWER POT this year and see what shows up. Plant it yourself and we will keep it fed and watered all summer. The northern most box gets the sun loving plants and the southern most box gets the shade loving plants. This will be fun to watch.

THANK YOU, NURSERY VOLUNTEERS!!!

Heart-felt thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the nursery run smoothly this year. Attendance was up, with most weeks averaging 10-15 children, so they had their work cut out for them! A big thank you to all our regularly scheduled volunteers including Lindsay Arndt, Jessica Barmack, Judy Belanus and family, Lisa and Craig Eyers, Leanne and Mike Hake, Eloise Heydenrych, Haley Hyames and family, Mariah Isola, Bob Johnston, Tasha Kirch, Renee Martell, Mike Fahey, Mark and Wendy McNall, Eva Meyer, and Jen and Scot Williams. Thanks also to those of you who filled in when needed including Char Hanson, Wendy Goist Jones, Rebekah Krenz, and any other helpers who willingly stepped forward to fill in on short notice. We also had several junior helpers who played with the children and assisted the volunteers, so thank you to them as well.

NEW ADDRESSES

Chris Niebauer
208 Water Street
Evansville, WI 53536

Kate Mielke
4630 E. Catawba Woods Dr
Port Clinton, Ohio 43452

UPDATE FROM SESSION

The following update was given by Jo Gregory in morning worship on May 3, 2009.

When people talk about Clara's retirement, the questions I hear most are "What do we do next?" and "When will we get a new pastor?" I do have the answer to the first question but no one knows when we will get a new pastor. However, I can assure you that because we are Presbyterians, it will not be any time soon. I've been a Presbyterian most of my life and while I may make facetious comments about the Presbyterian Church, I also know the Presbyterian Church does have plans and procedures, even rules and regulations, for almost every situation, and they do take time. They certainly do have procedures for

churches to follow when a pastor leaves and that is very helpful, and I am most grateful.

Ken Meunier, Interim Associate Executive Presbyter (head man in the Presbytery) met with our Session on April 16 to explain the various procedures in obtaining a new pastor and outlined the options open to us. He also assured us that a member of the Presbytery Committee on Ministry would be appointed to assist us.

Let us start with where we want to end up, and work our way back. We want to end up with a new, permanent, Called and Installed Pastor to succeed Clara as “our Pastor.” Prior to that time we will have an Interim Pastor, someone who has been specially trained to lead us as a congregation during the transition time between Clara’s ministry of 30 years and a new, permanent pastor.

In addition to normal pastoral duties, Interim Pastors also understand the dynamics of congregations in transition, including feelings of grief, loss and, sometimes, relief or anger. He or she will also help the Session provide for continuity of essential programs and may assist the Session in assessing needs for changes in programs and ministries of the congregation. It is while we have an Interim Pastor that the congregation will elect a Pastor Nominating Committee (frequently referred to as the “call committee” or the “search committee”) to review applications and interview and recommend a candidate for a permanent “Called and Installed” Pastor. It is important to understand that the Interim Pastor cannot become the next permanent “Called and Installed” Pastor.

Finding an appropriate Interim Pastor for our congregation will take a little time, so prior to that we will have what our Presbytery calls a “Bridge Pastor”, a short term temporary pastor who will provide consistency in the pulpit each week while we look for the Interim Pastor. But, finding a Bridge Pastor doesn’t happen overnight either, so during the summer, after Clara’s retirement at the end of June, we will have Supply Pastors, ordained Presbyterian ministers who will preach and lead in worship. As chair of the Worship

Committee it was my job to obtain these supply pastors and I am very happy to tell you that they are all lined up and that you will recognize them as they have all been here before.

So, what’s been done so far? As I mentioned, Supply Pastors have already been obtained to fill the pulpit this summer. The Session has already appointed a committee to select a Bridge Pastor and will also appoint another committee to select the Interim Pastor. The Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry has appointed the Rev. Woody Carey to serve as our Moderator and Woody has also agreed to handle all pastoral emergencies during the summer. The Rev. Sandy Nuernberg has been appointed to serve as our Committee on Ministry representative, and she will be working with us throughout the entire process until we, as a congregation, elect our next permanent “Called and Installed” Pastor. A lot has been done already and we’re on our way!

If all of this seems time consuming and cumbersome, it is. However, there are good reasons for all of this. The Presbyterian Church recommends that there be a sufficient amount of time between the retirement, especially of a long-term pastor, and the selection of a new permanent pastor. This gives the congregation time to grieve and adjust to the resignation and to prepare to welcome a new pastor. In fact, Ken Meunier recommended a long period between Clara’s retirement and the selection of a new permanent pastor as he feels this will be in the best interests of the congregation as well as the new pastor.

One other thing I should mention: There WILL be an opportunity to celebrate Clara’s 30 years of ministry with us. Mark your calendars for Sunday afternoon, June 28, and watch your mailbox for more information.

In the meantime, I ask for your prayers and support for the Session in this difficult time and for the committees they appoint to do this important work. Thank you.

MORE GRADUATES...

Riley Holthaus – Jeff, Riley and I wish to express a heartfelt thank you to our church family for the time, love and support it has given to the youth of First Presbyterian Church. It is because of all of you that God's love shines in each of our high school graduates and we know they will become responsible and loving adults. Riley is excited to start a new chapter in his life! September 2009 will find him heading to UW Oshkosh. A major course of study has not been chosen as Riley wants to test his talents at the college level and see where his skills lead him. Oregon High School's supportive environment has contributed to Riley's success in the classroom and in a variety of extracurricular activities. He has been on honor roll for many semesters and has been a Link Crew (students helping students succeed) Leader for two years. Riley has played four years of football, three years of basketball, two years of baseball and two years of track, earning Varsity letters in football and basketball. Riley's true passion in drumming. He has performed in a "Battle of the Bands!" competition and has enjoyed performing as half-time entertainment at Oregon Girls Basketball games and as a solo and group act during performing arts week held annually at the high school. Riley's unique and creative spirit is seen in his beautiful drawings and in the lyrics of the many songs and poems he has written.

Nadine Carole Johnson Krenz will be graduating on May 16, 2009 from Madison Area Technical College, receiving an Associate Degree in Applied Science, specializing in Respiratory Therapy. She is presently busy preparing to take both the Certified and Registered Respiratory Therapist exams and sending out applications, hoping to get a job.

Rebekah Nadine Krenz will be graduating on June 14, 2009 from Oregon High School. She is planning on attending Edgewood College in the fall, majoring in social work. Rebekah has been very active in her school, church and community during her high school years. School activities include: National Honor Society, Student

Council President, Mock Trial, Model United Nations, Link Crew, Imagine, Orchestra, Soccer and Prom Court. As a member of First Presbyterian Church, she has served on Worship Committee, attended the annual Presbyterian Youth Conference in Montreat, NC, and was our church's first Youth Deacon. She has volunteered in our community by helping with Safety Camp, National Safe Night Out, Habitat for Humanity, ringing bells for the Salvation Army and helping organize/work her neighborhood 4th of July parade/picnic each summer. Rebekah is a caring, thoughtful, responsible and intelligent young woman and her family is very proud of her.

Whether it's playing rhythm guitar and keyboard in the Green County Border Patrol rock band, entertaining his lunch table with Snapple facts, dressing up as OHS' computer science teacher for Halloween, acting as lead attorney for his Mock Trial team, or running the tech booth at the Performing Arts Center, *John Thompson* brings a certain flair to everything he does. Having been inducted into both National Honor Society and the International Thespian Society, and having burned up the tennis courts for four years, John credits all of his accomplishments to a constant supply of Frosted Mini Wheats and Mom's homemade cookies. While he is quick to point out that violinists are a dime a dozen and that those who play the viola are the true musicians, he also makes music in the garage with a saw and a sander as he builds a wood strip kayak. After graduation from Oregon High School, John will spend a month volunteering on a conservation crew in Glacier National Park as part of the Student Conservation Association, and will then attend Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH where he intends to study environmental sciences. John would like to express his sincere thanks to First Presbyterian Church for giving him such wonderful opportunities to grow in his faith (Montreat rocks!) and to develop his own leadership style both on the Session and as Chair of the Mission Committee. "Thanks for everything."

Erica Turrell, who is the granddaughter of Ralph and Martha

Stromquist, is graduating from Westfield High School on June 7. She has been very busy the last four years participating in many activities. She played the saxophone in the band and jazz band, sang in two choirs, had parts in two musicals and was a member of the dance team. She was a cheerleader for two years and was in the color guard, art club, forensics and played softball for one year. Starting next fall, Erica plans to attend MATC, majoring in fashion design. Erica is having a graduation party on Saturday afternoon, June 6, 2009 at the Stromquist home, 2132 Sand Hill Road, Oregon. All of her First Presbyterian Church friends are invited to attend.

FOOD PANTRY

The Oregon/Brooklyn Food Pantry is again looking toward its church sponsors to tide us over with food during the summer, when there are no other drives. We are so grateful for your continued support, especially as the number of people in need has grown: we average around 400 clients each month, in at least 125 families. Below are the foods you are asked to collect for each of the summer months.

June	Canned Fruits
July	Cereal
August	Peanut Butter, canned or boxed meals
September	Canned vegetables