



# Presbyterian Link



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

August draws to a close and so does my first year as Interim Pastor here at Altavista Presbyterian. I don't need to remind the members of how much fun I am having as your pastor. It probably shows when we are singing hymns in worship, or when we are gathering for a Koinonia Meal. Two things I love to do: sing and eat. I also love to preach and to teach. I love to do these two things because they are opportunities to get inside a biblical text and explore all of the riches that God has placed for us there. It is one thing to read a text and enjoy the obvious meaning which that text brings to us. But it is an entirely different thing to tear a text apart, look at its hidden meanings and then to apply that new understanding to how we live our lives. The best preachers are those who have the ability to make a text come alive and have meaning for our most personal needs.

So, I want to challenge each and every one of you to become a student of The Bible. We don't have a lot of textbooks to study like someone preparing to become a doctor or a history professor. As Christians we only have one text and it always has seemed strange to me that many believers cannot find their way in the Bible. If I told you to turn to the Song of Solomon, many

of you would have to stop and think, then turn to the index to find out that Song of Solomon is the next book after Ecclesiastes. There is so much more to scripture than knowing the books of the bible in correct order. The bible is a wondrous book of history and politics. It is filled with extremely beautiful poetry. There are words of wisdom by which we all can live. And the biography of not only Jesus, but all the major characters in our religious tradition is excellent reading.

Every Christian should become a Bible Scholar - more than a Bible scholar. We should become a Bible nerd. Some of us know more about how to maximize our computers than we know how to maximize our Biblical understanding. So, if my journey among you as Interim Pastor has any lasting effect, let it be in the encouragement of good Biblical study. Read the Bible; Study the Bible; Apply the Bible; Digest the Bible and enjoy the Bible. I believe that is why God inspired the writers to write and the Church Fathers to collect it into one book.

Who knows, if you took the scriptures seriously, read them regularly, studied the hidden meanings and found ways to apply them to life, you might even try preaching. Now, there's a novel idea. A Church with one pastor and six, eight, ten, twenty preachers.

Thanks for letting me ramble! Bob

## REMINDERS FOR SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 1~ Men's Luncheon
- Sept. 6~ Children's Church resumes
- Sept. 7~ Labor Day~ Church office closed
- Sept. 12~ Workday
- Sept. 13~ Mission Workers Sunday ~ Koinonia Lunch ~ Pictures for Directory
- Sept 13~ Youth Group and Adult Study Group begin
- Sept. 13 Sept. 20~ Stated Session Meeting

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## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS AUGUST 16, 2009 MEETING

### Altavista Presbyterian Church

- Decided that we would participate in gleaning for the Society of St. Andrews rather than traveling back to the volunteer farm at Woodstock to harvest vegetables.
- Decided to invite Dr. Robert Herron, a representative from Bread for the World, to preach for us October 18, 2009.
- Made the following decision regarding disposition of unused Communion elements: "Elements left over from the sacrament of Communion will be saved as needed for home Communion and/or distributed to members of the congregation to eat or share with others."
- Decided to hold the children's Christmas program during Worship on December 13, 2009, followed by a Koinonia lunch.
- Decided to hold a Christmas Eve service at 6:00 pm.
- Decided to establish the size of the PNC as five to seven active members.
- Reviewed the July, 2009 Financial Report.
- Approve an additional Choir music expenditure this church year of approximately \$500.
- Approved minutes of the July 19, 2009 Stated meeting, the July 26, 2009 Congregational meeting, and the August 9, 2009 Called meeting as presented.

### FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

	July 2009	YTD
<b>Pledges</b>	\$14,082.00	\$75,702.00
<b>Non-Pledges</b>	\$746.00	\$6,322.00
<b>Plate Offering</b>	\$196.39	\$2,340.39
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$9,542.42	\$74,983.71

*A Note of thanks from the Strebels ~*

*Thanks to our church for all the visits, food, cards, emails and other expressions of sympathy shown to our family during the recent death of my father. We feel so fortunate to have such a wonderful, loving church family.*

*Love, Jane*

***Operation Christmas Child  
Volunteer Opportunity***

Ministry Beyond the Congregation is excited to announce that we have been able to secure a spot for a group of up to 8 adults to help out in the Operation Christmas Child Distribution Center in Charlotte, NC, this year. Our work time is Friday, November 27 from 2 - 6 p.m. We will plan to leave the church at around 9:30 a.m. that morning to allow time for a quick lunch before we start to work.

We are excited to participate in another aspect of this wonderful ministry and hope you will join us. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the church office. If you have questions, please contact Barbie Andrews at (434) 369-8521

***Marriage Enrichment Retreat Planned***

On November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Altavista Presbyterian Church will hold a marriage enrichment retreat. Bob and Elaine Button, trained by The Association of Couples in Marriage Enrichment (ACME) as workshop leaders, will be leading the retreat. The event will take place at the 4-H Retreat Center on Smith Mountain Lake. It will begin with supper at 6:30 and include breakfast and lunch on Saturday. There will be four working sessions and the emphasis will be on communication skills and conflict resolution. The hotel accommodations will allow each couple to have their own space and during free time there are walking trails and waterfront to encourage couple communications. The final session will conclude at 3:00pm with a short worship service.

The cost for accommodations and meals will be approximately \$110 per couple. So, all you couples, mark your calendar. Forget about the football game. Leave your kids with grandparents. Plan now to be present for this workshop

***First Communion Classes begin September 13<sup>th</sup>.***

Following past tradition, the Session has approved a training class for young children who are not yet confirmed members of the congregation, but feel like they are old enough to partake of The Lord's Supper. Letters have gone out to all families with young children inviting them to participate in this vital program. It will begin at 9am with breakfast for all members of the family here at the Church on September 13<sup>th</sup> and continue through the first Sunday in October, World Wide Communion Sunday. These children will be recognized during that worship service. If you have a child who has not been through this training, and you would like them to be included, please contact the Church Office. We think we identified everyone, but we may have missed someone, so do not hesitate to call us.

**Adult Study Group Formed.**

The Christian Education Committee is offering another opportunity for you to join with other members of the congregation in regular study. On the second and fourth Sundays of every month we will have a one hour study based on a contemporary book. Our first book is *The Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins we Tolerate*, by Jerry Bridges.

We will begin on September 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm and should be finished by 7:00pm. Rev. Button will lead the discussion in September and other class members will lead the discussion in subsequent months. The book comes with a study guide and **each couple will need a book and two study guides. Please sign up on the bulletin board and pick up your copies of the book and study guide in the Church office.** Cost of the books is about \$30.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEARCH FOR A NEW PASTOR

Several members of the congregation have asked for a progress report on the search for a new pastor for Altavista Presbyterian Church. So I will attempt to give everyone a very simple update.

For the past nine months we have been working on our Mission Study. This has been a time of looking at who we are and asking the Holy Spirit to lead us into the future. The Mission Study was approved by the congregation in July, and the Commission on Ministry of The Presbytery of The Peaks has given its approval for us to elect a PNC.

The Standing Nominating Committee which was elected last Sunday will solicit suggestions from among the members and will bring to the congregation a slate of nominees to serve on the PNC. At a congregational meeting sometime during the next few weeks, the congregation will receive that slate of nominees and elect a PNC. It is this PNC that will do the search for a new pastor.

The PNC will meet with representatives of the Presbytery for some training. After this training and the completion of all the Church Information Forms, the PNC will begin the process of reviewing Minister Information Forms. The work of the PNC is done in secret. For many reasons it is not expedient to divulge the names of possible candidates.

Suppose word gets back to a minister's present congregation that their pastor is actively talking with the PNC at Altavista Presbyterian. This could cause tremendous problems in that pastor's present situation. So, it is best that the work that the PNC does be kept in confidence.

Many folks want to know a time line. How long are we talking about? It is almost impossible to put a time frame on the search process. It is extremely important that the PNC be given all the time it needs to diligently seek God's leading in the process. This calls for a lot of faith and patience on the part of the congregation. So, my suggestion is that from the moment the PNC is elected, every member of this congregation include the PNC in their daily prayer list. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead the PNC to the very person whom God has already chosen to become the next pastor of this congregation. Pray that the members will be patient and supportive as the PNC goes about its work.

### Social Hour

Ministry Within the Congregation is pleased to announce the beginning of a brief social hour immediately following Worship each Sunday beginning in September. Please sign up to help provide light refreshments.



*Next Committee Meeting Night*

*September 1 7 pm*



### Directory

#### Photos

Ministry Within the Congregation is planning to update the APC directory of members and friends by the end of the year. New photos can be taken on **September 13** during the Koinonia luncheon. A date will also be selected in October for those who are unable to attend the luncheon.

**Watch the bulletin for the date.**

### Men's Luncheon

#### Main Street Emporium

**Tuesday**

**Sept 1 11:45**



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR****SEPTEMBER 2009****SEPTEMBER 1 TUESDAY**

- 10 am Circle meets in the Parlor
- 11:45 Men's Luncheon @ Main Street Emporium
- 7 pm Committee Meeting Night

**SEPTEMBER 2 WEDNESDAY**

- 9:30 am Prayer Fellowship~Pastor's Study
- 11:00~12:30 Second Helping Lunch
- 6 pm Choir Practice

**SEPTEMBER 6 SUNDAY**

- 9 am Sunday School for Adults
- 10 am Worship/ Communion/  
Children's Church resumes
- Canned Food Sunday
- 2 Cents-A-Meal Offering

**SEPTEMBER 7 MONDAY**

- Labor Day~ Church office closed

**SEPTEMBER 8 TUESDAY**

- 7 pm Circle II meets in the Parlor

**SEPTEMBER 9 WEDNESDAY**

- 9:30 am Prayer Fellowship - Pastor's Study
- 11 - 12:30 Second Helping Lunch
- 6 pm Choir Practice

**SEPTEMBER 12 SATURDAY**

- 8 am - Noon Maintenance Workday
- Sign-up on bulletin board

**SEPTEMBER 13 MISSION WORKERS SUNDAY**

- 9 am Sunday School for Adults
- Communion class for young children & parents
- 10 am Worship/Children's Church
- Koinonia lunch immediately following worship/Directory photos will be taken
- 5 p.m. Youth Group Meeting begins
- 6 p.m. Adult Study Group begins

**SEPTEMBER 16 WEDNESDAY**

- 9:30 am Prayer Fellowship~Pastor's Study
- 11:00~12:30 Second Helping Lunch
- 6 pm Choir Practice

**SEPTEMBER 20 SUNDAY**

- 9 am Sunday School for Adults
- Communion class for young children & parents
- 10 am Worship/Children's Church
- Session Meeting immediately following Worship
- 5 p.m. Youth Group Meeting

**SEPTEMBER 23 WEDNESDAY**

- 9:30 am Prayer Fellowship - Pastor's Study
- 11 - 12:30 Second Helping Lunch
- 6 pm Choir Practice

**SEPTEMBER 27 SUNDAY**

- 9 am Sunday School for Adults
- 10 am Worship/Children's Church
- 5 p.m. Youth Group Meeting
- 6 p.m. Adult Study Group



**ALTAVISTA PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

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Website: [www.altapres.org](http://www.altapres.org)  
*Return service requested*

**PRESBYTERIAN LINK**

**September 2009**

***BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES***

- |                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Sarah Craig      | 1 Al & Jeannie Smith    |
| 2 Vika Henderson   | 4 Dennis & Linda Janiak |
| 4 Keegan deBernard | 4 John & Denise Tucker  |
| 4 John Roark, IV   |                         |
| 15 Hannah Alley    |                         |
| 15 Karen Blaesing  |                         |
| 15 Ella Hawkins    |                         |
| 17 Alma Rountrey   |                         |
| 20 Ja Martin       |                         |
| 20 Les Woodie      |                         |
| 23 Dabney Hanson   |                         |
| 25 John Larkin     |                         |



**LINK STAFF**

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*Editor*

Ministry Within the  
Congregation Committee

*Previous Links can be found on the  
website  
[www.altapres.org](http://www.altapres.org)*