

THE PRESBY PRESS



A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR –

The **Thinking Ahead** workshop offered by this congregation to our community in January was a profound and significant gift. Lee Oelberg and her team are to be commended. I hope this type of community interest seminar can be offered again, and often. There are so many challenges that impact our lives. Our faith offers wisdom and resources for meeting those challenges. Sharing that faith with our community is an act both of faithful discipleship and evangelism – sharing the “good news.”

The January workshop opened up discussion about how Christians mark the passage from God’s gift of earthly life to life eternal. Christian practices have varied over time, and we may be in another time of transition even now. I was pleased that Beryl Lowry’s nephew Jim was able to share in her funeral service here in Seneca. I enjoyed the conversation I had with him about changing philosophies. He commented that during his seminary years, Presbyterian worship at the time of death focused on our faith in God almost to the exclusion of any mention of the person we were remembering. References to that life could be made in the pastoral prayer, Jim said, but all else was to be “pure theology.” In defense of the practice, it was meant to counter an over-focus on the person and the subtle implication that our salvation is dependent on our accomplishments in this life rather than the grace of God.

While I do appreciate our heritage as theologically-sound Presbyterians, I also appreciate a movement toward finding balance. In baptism, we are given a unique name and each occasion of death honors a unique life. That life was lived in a physical body that was “washed” in baptism, lovingly cared for in life, and is to be honored in death. Keeping in mind we are first and foremost children of God, remembrances of that life are appropriate at the time of death. So, too, is the presence of a physical body, if it is the desire of the family.

Finding the proper balance is always a challenge and dependent on each unique situation at the time of death. It is an important conversation to have within families now, and then between families and their pastor as a memorial or funeral service is planned. Care must be taken not to move too far to the extreme. A memorial service can be personal without being personalized. The primary focus is always on God – a God who does call us each by name.

So much information was shared during our time together in January – along with many forms! I have included a copy of one very important form from that day in this Presby Press. Knowing someone’s wishes about a memorial or funeral service – including preferences for music and scripture – can ease a family’s burden immensely at the time of death. A ministry of this congregation can be keeping a copy of this completed form in our records. I invite all of you to consider doing this as a family. Perhaps this can be another lingering benefit of our **Thinking Ahead** gift to this community. (Please see form on pages 12 and 13.)

Blessings to all of you --- Nancy

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome you to this service of worship and congregation. We are glad you are here today and hope you will return often. Please let us know if we can serve you in any way. We also extend an invitation to unite with this church. The Session is available to meet on any Sunday to receive new members. Please do not hesitate to let us know of your interest.

SENECA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OFFICERS

SESSION

Moderator: Nancy M. Morris
Clerk of Session: Melissa Krabbe

Administration
Gary Owens, Moderator

Christian Education
Ed Krech, Moderator

Finance
Bob Norton, Moderator
Don Lesley
Bob White

Outreach Development
Sally Owen, Moderator

Worship
Peggy Fouts, Moderator
Kelly Holleman
Sam Holleman

Building & Grounds
Dick Kassler, Moderator

Fellowship
Anna Kennedy, Moderator

Mission and Community Care
Booty Catlin, Moderator
Ed Krech

Stewardship
Don Lesley, Moderator
Rob Krabbe

DEACONS

Ann Castle, Moderator
Cindi Lesley, Secretary

Barbara Barron, Tom Carroll, Betty DuBose, Mike Harper, Chris Hudgins, Judy Kellner, Tristan Krabbe, Joan Krech, Carolyn Maddox, Larry Marett, Diana Owens, Joan Riley, Ann Smith, and Don Warmuth.

TRUSTEES

Class of 2011
Jerry Crabtree

Class of 2012
Jerry Fouts

Class of 2013
Lyn Norton



Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, March 20th

The Session has called for the Annual Congregational meeting to take place on Sunday, March 20th, immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. The purpose of this meeting is a "State of the Church Report," which will come through written as well as verbal reports. This will include, but not be limited to, a financial report and the 2011 budget. A portion of the meeting will also serve as an Open Forum, a time for members and visitors to ask any and all questions or make comments about the church. No actions will be present for congregational vote. All members are encouraged to attend and regular attendees along with visitors are warmly welcomed. Feel free to bring your own bag lunch or snacks to eat while we meet.

Thursday Night at the Movies

Join us on the fourth Thursday of each month as we explore Christian themes in popular movies. Our next gathering will be March 24th at 6:30 p.m. and the feature will be *Babette's Feast*, an amazing story with a hidden twist that is full of rich images and profound meaning. This one is in Danish, so we'll read the sub-titles together.

Our "Pastors' Hall movie club" is open to anyone who wishes to join us at any time. Many people bring lawn chairs to help make the watching more enjoyable, along with their own suppers. Popcorn is always provided. We watch, then share reflections together. Feel free to suggest movies you think the group would enjoy because watching them has left a lasting impact on you.



Ash Wednesday Service Wednesday, March 9th at 6:30 p.m.

The powerful service of ashes and repentance that is traditional for Ash Wednesday will begin our 2011 Lenten season. With the ecumenical community services on Wednesdays at noon (see the schedule in this newsletter) and the Holy Week evening services shared by the Oconee County Presbyterian Churches (that schedule will appear in the April Presby Press), there will be ample opportunity for worship as we journey together toward Easter. Our Ash Wednesday service is special because it will be just for our SPC family of faith. Join us for a time of scripture, prayer, reflection, song and the imposition of ashes that mark us as God's broken and redeemed children in a broken and redeemed world.



A Thank You Note from the Board of the OCONEE PRESBYTERIAN SERVICE FUND

Thank you to everyone who so generously donated to meet the matching gift of \$10,000 offered in October of 2010, and especially to the generous donor who offered the gift. You not only met the challenge, but went above and beyond!

Because of your generosity, the following events occurred in the Chapter House during the end of 2010:

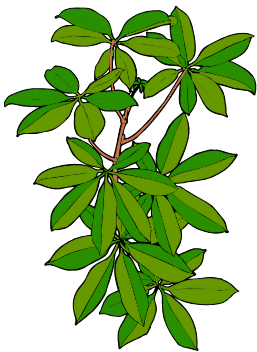
- 148 families were assisted with \$17,316.25 towards their electrical bills
- 39 families were assisted with \$4,347.75 towards rent
- 37 families were assisted with \$1,995.00 towards propane for heat
- 26 families were assisted with \$1,450 for food to subsidize their food pantry allotments
- 3 people were paid \$150 for their GED fees
- 1 person was helped with \$60 to have a diseased tooth pulled

Most of the electrical bill assistance prevented shut-off, and most of the rent prevented eviction. What a wonderful gift this was for the needy in Oconee County! Seneca Presbyterian Church surely exhibits the spirit of God working in community. God bless you!

Call for Liturgists

Is this your special calling? It requires very little time, it is a valuable service, and training is available. The schedule for the remainder of the year will be assembled shortly. If you are interested in serving in this manner, for more information or to sign up, please contact Helen Kelly ((864) 650-0342 or helenhkelly@yahoo.com) before March 10th.

Attention Plant Enthusiasts



Join other members of our church in rooting, growing and sharing some of your favorite houseplants. The plan is to display all the donated plants (either new specimens from rooted cuttings or full grown plants) for DONATIONS to benefit and support our own Oconee Presbyterian Service Fund.

We will concentrate on houseplants since other plants either take longer to root or the timing for cuttings is not good (i.e. azaleas, camellias, etc). We will plan on a late March or early April sale date.

Wednesday Ecumenical Lenten Services

We will again be joining the other churches in our area for the Lenten series of Wednesday Noon Lunch and Worship. We encourage you to participate. They will begin at 12:00 noon with worship and lunch and are designed to be short to allow people who work to come. As you will see, we will be hosting April 6th and the Rev. Carol Phillip-Marshall will be preaching.

Date	Host Church	Preacher
March 9	Seneca Baptist	Rev. Redonia Thomas – New Harmony Meth.
March 16	St. Paul the Apostle	Dr. Nancy Morris – Seneca Presbyterian
March 23	Trinity Baptist	Rev. Gregory West – St. Paul the Apostle
March 30	Ascension Episcopal	Dr. Von Reynolds – Seneca Baptist
April 6	Seneca Presbyterian	Rev. Carol Philip-Marshall, Ascen. Episcopal
April 13	Ebenezer Baptist	Dr. Steve Morgan – St. Mark UMC
April 20	St. Mark UMC	Dr. Ryan Wilson – Trinity Baptist

Our offering will go toward Our Daily Rest Homeless Shelter.

Presbyterian Holy Week Services



We will again join in the Holy Week evening services with our sister Presbyterian churches. That full schedule will be in next month's newsletter but we know we will host the Palm Sunday service on Sunday evening. More will be in next month's newsletter.



Church Yard Sale

Saturday, May 28th

Rough Room downstairs in Pastors' Hall

Start cleaning out your closets and storage rooms and collecting donations for the yard sale. Please take items donated to the Rough Room.

Presbyterian Women

By: Helen Kelly

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? WOW! Have we been busy! We took a little rest during Christmas, due to all of the other activity going on, but we have made up for it since.

NEW MEMBER RECEPTION: Margot Holmquist stepped up to the plate and organized a simply magnificent reception to welcome our new members who joined Seneca Presbyterian Church since the beginning 2010. Presbyterian Women provided refreshments, and they were not only scrumptious, but also delightful to look at. The table was a work of art. Thank you, ladies, for always providing exactly what we need for whatever event that we host.



LENT: Time to celebrate the Lenten Season. The Lenten Book Study will feature "The Prodigal God", by Timothy Keller. This will be held every Tuesday during Lent (March 15th – April 19th) from 11:00 'til noon. Books are \$5/person. Ann Warmuth is leading the study.

Presbyterian Women will host the Lenten Luncheon on April 6th. Carolyn Maddox will chair this.

BIRTHDAY: Our Birthday Celebration will be held in May, but we are working on it now. My greatest disappointment is that only two names of women who served this church has been presented to be honored and thanked for having paved the way for us to have this wonderful Seneca Presbyterian Church. I am quite confident that there are more. Please submit names. Those of you whose families have worked in this church for years should certainly be submitting names of mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, etc. Hurry! Time's a wastin'.

RETREAT: The Women's Retreat is right around the corner. Since last year, we have all been looking forward to this special time again. So, on March 18th – 19th, we will once again enjoy camaraderie and fellowship while learning about our Savior. Does it get any better?

Presbyterian Women's Annual Lenten Book Study

Our Annual Lenten Book Study series will begin on Tuesday, March 15th, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the church library. We will meet weekly on Tuesdays through April 19th. The book this year is Timothy Keller's "The Prodigal God". From the book's cover: "Keller uncovers the essential message of Jesus locked inside his most familiar parable. Within that parable, Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the moralistic. This book will challenge both the devout and the skeptics to see Christianity in a whole new way." We will have books available so you can read the first chapter before March 15th. There will be a sign-up sheet on the table across from the church office. Please sign up by March 4th. Ann Warmuth will be the facilitator.

March Circle Meetings

CIRCLE ONE

Date: Monday, March 7th in the Sara Davis Stribling Classroom at 2:45 p.m. Circle chair is Ann Smith: (647-2088). Please bring apple juice for Collins Home and Family Ministries.

CIRCLE TWO

Date: Tuesday, March 1st; Circle 2 will meet in the Sara Davis Stribling Classroom at 10:00 a.m. We will collect our spring Thornwell Offering. Circle co-chairs are Helen Lewis (654-7314) and Flo Sheron (882-2280).

CIRCLE SIX

Date: Tuesday, March 1st at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Cindi Lesley. Lucy Murr will lead us in the study of Lesson 5. Please bring peanut butter for the Golden Corners Food Pantry. Newcomers are welcome. Any questions, call Jane Thomas (882-1202).

Prospective members/guests are welcome at all three.

Opportunities for Study

Three opportunities for study:

- The **Bible & Brown Bag Study Group** meets each Thursday at 12:00 noon in the Sara Davis Stribling classroom. They are studying Matthew's Gospel. The conversation is being facilitated by Nancy Morris with the input of everyone. Bring your lunch with you if you wish. All are welcome.
 - The **Wednesday Evening Adult Study Group** meets each Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. in the Men's Bible classroom. Don Warmuth is facilitating a study of the book *What's So Amazing about Grace?* by Philip Yancey.
 - The **Tuesday Lenten Book Study** will meet each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. in the library from March 15th to April 19th. Ann Warmuth is facilitating a study of T. Keller's "The Prodigal God". Contact Ann for the book.
-

Parents' Night Out

March 11th from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Parents' Night Out is the second Friday of each month from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. We are looking for more volunteers. It only amounts to 3 ½ hours out of one day, once a month. Please consider offering your time and talents to this very important mission that our church has chosen to provide for the community. For more information, contact the church office.

March Birthdays

01 -----	Rich Gerner	15-----	Bob Sullivan
01 -----	Tyler Hardy	16-----	Phyllis May
01 -----	Janey Turner	18-----	Don Clayton
03 -----	Beverly Crabtree	19-----	Elaine McPhail
03 -----	Lou Schuman	21-----	Meredith Arrington
04 -----	Diane Hardy	21-----	Ann Josey
04 -----	Lynn Harwell	22-----	Don Lesley
04 -----	Mackie Wilmer	23-----	Dick Bringardner
05 -----	Anna Kennedy	23-----	Christi Owen Brown
05 -----	Lyn Norton	24-----	Don Aschom
06 -----	Tess Krabbe Cannon	24-----	Tabitha Krabbe
07 -----	Mimi Hunt	24-----	Tracy Smith
07 -----	Cindi Lesley	26-----	Nancy Land
09 -----	Chris Gerner	26-----	Rodger Low
09 -----	Emily Clark Holleman	28-----	Gary Owens
10 -----	Robert Moffat	29-----	Linda Akroyd
12 -----	Dorothy Jones	31-----	Jerry Crabtree
12 -----	Bill Wilmer	31-----	Helen Kelly



March Anniversaries

03 -----	Jim & Sandy Olsen	20-----	Gary & Diana Owens
06 -----	John & Ann Merritt	22-----	Larry & Barbara Kolze
09 -----	Tom & Jean Carroll	24-----	Al & Lois Smeaton
18 -----	Joey & Robin Smith		

Committee Meetings

- † **Building & Grounds Committee** will meet on Tuesday, March 8th, at 10:00 a.m.
- † **Christian Education Committee** will meet on Tuesday, March 8th, at 4:00 p.m.
- † **Deacons** will meet on Monday, March 7th, at 5:00 p.m.
- † **Finance Committee** will meet on Monday, March 21st, at 4:00 p.m.
- † **Knitting Bee** will meet on Friday, March 11th, at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapter House; bring a sandwich.
- † **Odyssey Steering Committee** will meet on Tuesday, March 8th, at 4:00 p.m.
- † **Presbyterian Women's Council** will meet on Tuesday, March 8th, at 2:00 p.m.
- † **Session** will meet on Monday, March 28th, at 6:30 p.m.
- † **Stewardship Committee** will meet on Monday, March 14th, at 4:30 p.m.
- † **Worship Committee** will meet on Monday, March 14th, at 4:30 p.m.

Grateful Thanks for the Bibles

To the Seneca Presbyterian Church congregational members who donated Bibles for my Mission Project:



In 2nd Timothy, Paul says “...*all Scripture is God-breathed*”. Reading the Word is the best and most concrete way that any human can witness God Himself.

So I thank you from the deepest part of my heart for your offerings and am humbled by your abundant response. That response reminds me of God’s universal presence and reassures me of the continual expansion of His kingdom. I am completely positive that God told me to ask for the Bibles as a Christmas gift, but he left as a surprise the joy that your gifts have already brought me and will bring to unknown others.

Although neither you nor I may ever see the impact that these Bibles will have upon their recipients, I take comfort in the knowledge that God’s will shall be done through them. With your gifts, you have enabled the greatest gifts –salvation and eternal joy – for those who have yet to hear.

I invite you to be in prayer with me relative to the use of your gifts; please e-mail me with any thoughts or suggestions. I would be so pleased to hear from any of you.

Thank you again.

Quinn A. Holmquist
Quinn@carolina.rr.com

Rosa Clark and Chick-Fil-A

On Friday March 11th, Chick-Fil-A is hosting a Spirit Day fundraiser for the Rosa Clark Medical Clinic, a free medical clinic for the qualified uninsured and indigent in Oconee County.

During the entire day, from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., a portion of the receipts will be donated to Rosa Clark. When you place your order, inside or in your car, you must tell the associate that you are eating at Chick-Fil-A in support of Rosa Clark.

Our church and our members have been staunch supporters of the Clinic for many years. This is a great opportunity to have a very, very good meal and contribute to this worthwhile cause at the same time.

Depending on how many in Oconee participate in this event, we could possibly receive as much as 20% of the cost of each meal. This would be a huge blessing for the Clinic.

This is a special invitation to join us for any meal on March the 11th.

Christian sympathy is extended to the family of

Dr. James Pruitt who died on February 8th

and

Ann Bandy who died on February 12th

Flower Calendar

March 6 – Communion

March 13 – The flowers in the sanctuary are given by Tom and Jean Carroll in memory of both their parents and brothers.

March 20 – The flowers in the sanctuary are given by Gary and Diana Owens, in honor of their 40th wedding anniversary.

March 27 – The flowers in the sanctuary are given by Calvin & Jean Reinking in honor of their daughter, Laura Davis on her birthday.

Proposed Odyssey Payment/Reservation Procedure

Odyssey is planning several upcoming events that require advance purchase of tickets. In order for Odyssey committee members not to have to 'shell out' their own money, we would like to implement a procedure to have pre-paid expenses collected from participants prior to an event. We are proposing (and trying out for the Centre Stage event) that when an event is published on the Odyssey bulletin board, both the fee and cut-off date will be posted and event-specific payment/reservation envelopes will be available. Payments in the payment/reservation envelopes may be put in the collection plate on Sunday or delivered to the SPC church office by the cut-off date. If someone signs up but does not pay by the cut-off date, their reservation may be cancelled. In the unlikely event that participation is not sufficient to have an event, Odyssey may have to cancel the event. Should this happen, all payments will be refunded. **It should be noted that this process only covers fees for pre-paid expenses, such as tickets or admission fees.**

Memorials

Evangeline Caswell: Frank & Janice Becker, Ronnie & Elizabeth Hyatt, John & Ann Merritt, Kem & Lee Oelberg, and Jerry & Beverly Crabtree

Beryl Lowry: Robert Moffat, Ruth Davidson, Jeanne Dost, Jack & Betty Kinback, Steve & Amy Bolt, Kem & Lee Oelberg, Jerry & Beverly Crabtree, Pat Senn, Norma Malmgren, Garland & Margaret Smith, and Bill & Jackie Chesnutt

Odyssey News

On Thursday, February 17, seven “Odysseyers” met at the church and carpoled to Anderson to see the wonderful art on exhibition at the **Anderson Arts Center**. We weren’t disappointed as our own Warren Carpenter presented new and beautiful wood carved pieces as well as other artists’ works of equal beauty and amazement. After we oohed and aahed at the art show, we went to McGee’s Irish Pub for a fabulous lunch. Everyone had a wonderful Irish entrée and shared lunch chatter about the past patron women of SPC. We arrived back in Seneca at about 2:30 and declared the day a great success.

The **Odyssey Committee** has completed its roster of members!!!! This is a very stellar group with lots of ideas for new and better as well continued entertaining, educational and enjoyable events for our church and community. Please note each of the members and seek them out to find out what’s going on, to give them an idea for an event, or simply to thank them for their hard work. The Committee is comprised of: Judy White-Co-chairperson, Lin Akroyd-Co-Chairperson, Gordon Lewis-Secretary, Helen Lewis-Games Day Coordinator, Barbara Barron, Gary Castle, Joan Erdman, Jill Marett, Larry Marett and Dian Yanessa.

Odyssey Game Day – Odyssey Game Day continues to meet on the second Friday of each month. Come and join us on Friday, March 11th, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. We will meet in the Forus Room, downstairs in Fellowship Hall. We play a variety of games. Popcorn and drinks provided. If you have questions please call Helen Lewis at 654-7314.

Odyssey is going to The Centre Stage in Greenville on, Sunday, April 3rd to enjoy the play “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. This is a musical comedy with book by Jeffrey Lane and music and lyrics by David Yazbe that is based on the popular 1998 film by the same title. This musical centers on two fraudsters living on the French Riviera. One cultivated and suave, the other a small-time American thief, both are in the business of conning rich women into giving them money and the town is big enough for only one of them to stay. This matinee is sure to provide great entertainment and we look forward to our first Odyssey outing to this venue as well. As we need to get tickets quickly before it sells out, please sign up and submit your check at the Odyssey bulletin board as soon as possible. We’ll leave from church and then have supper afterward for those who are interested. Tickets are \$30 pp.

Planned events for Odyssey for the remainder of the year:

Sunday, May 1 st	Foothills Chorale – Those Wondrous Mystical Isles – Southern Wesleyan University, Central – 3:00 p.m. performance \$15 pp
June (TBA)	Possible chartered bus trip to Billy Graham Museum and Montreat
Sunday, July 3 rd	Celebrate America Picnic in coordination with Fellowship
Thursday, July 28 th	Painter of Gullah Women at the Greenville Art Museum and Upcountry History Museum
September (TBA)	Possible Zip Line trip
Tuesday, Oct. 11 th	Harvest Moon Celebration – Details forthcoming
Tues. or Wed.	
Nov. 29 th or 30 th	Grove Park Inn, Asheville, Gingerbread Competition –Possible chartered bus

Planning For a Funeral or Memorial Service Seneca Presbyterian Church

The following expresses my wishes for funeral or memorial arrangements upon my death.

Name _____ Date of This Form _____

Address _____

I. PRE-ARRANGEMENTS

A. Disposition of my body

1. _____ Donate my body to a medical School. Arrangements with: _____

2. _____ Cremation. Name any specifics for disposition of ashes. _____

3. _____ Burial Desired
 - a. What city? _____ State _____
 - b. What cemetery? _____
 - c. What type of casket or container? _____
 - d. If not required by cemetery or law, is a vault desired? _____ Yes _____ No
 - e. What type of grave marker? _____
Inscription? _____

B. If a Funeral Home is Needed or Desired:

1. Name of Funeral Home/Society _____
2. Address: _____ City _____ State _____
3. Phone (_____) _____
4. Have pre-arrangements been made with them? _____ No _____ Yes – If so, when? _____

C. Desire Concerning Flowers

1. Flowers welcomed
2. Instead of flowers, give gifts to: _____
3. Flowers or gifts O.K. – up to giver.

II. FUNERAL PROCEDURES

1. Visitation? _____ Not Desired _____ Desired (Where? _____)
2. Location of Service:
 - a. Church _____
 - b. Funeral Home _____
 - c. Graveside _____
 - d. Other _____
3. Preferred Type of Service
 - a. _____ Funeral Service (Service with casket followed by burial service at graveside)
 - b. _____ Memorial Service (Service by itself; not connected to burial or disposition of ashes).
_____ Burial or disposition private for family. (Before or after memorial? _____)
_____ Burial/disposition open. (Before or after memorial service? _____)
 - c. Other? _____

(Over)

THE FUNERAL SERVICE ITSELF

When listing preferences below please keep in mind the following:

- The teachings of our faith and how that should impact the service.
- The guidelines or policies of the session and/or church.
- Final considerations should always be in consultation with the officiating clergy person.

1. Will the casket be present? _____ Yes _____ No

(Note some churches policies stipulate the casket will be closed in the sanctuary)

2. If there is a casket, what shall be on it? _____ Floral Spray _____ Funeral Pall

_____ Flag _____ Other _____

3. Are there any special musicians requested, if they are available? (choir, organist, soloist, instrumentalist, etc.) _____

4. Any special musical requests for pre-service music or postlude?

5. Any special music during the service? (Remember, this is a worship service)

6. Specific hymns you would like the congregation to sing?

7. Any specific Scripture you prefer?

8. Any Responsive Readings or other special readings? _____ No

_____ Yes _____

9. Any Special Remarks you would like made? _____

10. Do you have preferences as to who participates in the service? _____ No

_____ Yes _____

11. Any other factors you want considered in planning this service?

Name (Printed): _____

Name (Signed): _____ Date _____

Bible Chat

This is one in a series of Bruce Woods' "Bible Chat" articles for the newsletters. This is Bruce's way of offering some of his knowledge, training (to be a lay pastor), and perspectives with the congregation and friends. We thank Bruce for his contributions. While the articles will be reviewed, please note the views and content are not necessarily those of the Session, pastor or this congregation. Feel free to contact Bruce for any comments or questions.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 {NIV}

Does this make any sense to you? Does this Biblical claim match your life experiences and what you may have seen in the lives of others? How, for instance, can we see the 'hand of God' in the terrible tragedy of a child killed by a drunk driver? Where is God when a young girl gets a brain tumor? Where's God's grace when a depressed college student commits suicide? How can God stand by and watch Christians be tortured or killed because of their faith? These are difficult questions for us but the people in the 1st century AD had similar questions which were also difficult to reconcile.

We need to understand two things about this claim: (1) What is it that Paul is saying? (2) How, in light of Paul's own experiences, is he able to say it?

Paul is expressing his deep love and trust in God. This isn't some theological or abstract concept for Paul. He's been through many horrific and painful experiences and God's grace has always been sufficient. No, God didn't make it easy; Paul was never allowed to coast, go on extended vacations or live a life of luxury and freedom from want or pain. Did Paul welcome his suffering? I doubt that. But Paul knew after years of serving his Lord that without Him, the earthly sufferings wouldn't have been bearable.

What then is the "good" towards which God works? If we examine the foundation for this concluding statement {Romans 8:1-18}, we know Paul's focus is the good that God is working within us is the essence of the Gospel. Our very existence is per the spirit of God and we are empowered and sustained by that same spirit. Therefore, we are in Christ. We are his children. We are heirs to His kingdom. And, we are no longer in bondage to sin and death. Does that transformation which Christ makes possible within us give us a "Get Out of Jail Free" card in life? Does being a Christian make us bulletproof or immune from the consequences of our own sins and a corrupted world? No!

Phase I of our transformation occurs when the Holy Spirit dwells within us and we can now start to discern who God is, who is Jesus Christ, what is the Bible, etc. As we grow in grace through God's teaching and leading us, we are being prepared to be Christ's disciples. The discipleship is our victorious walk as mortals. Victory doesn't exempt us from the consequences of sin and corruption. But, despite those consequences, it is the start of a wondrous victory march as God works good into our lives.

Phase II of our transformation occurs at the resurrection—new untainted, glorified bodies and an eternal and wondrous existence with our Lord Jesus. Then there will be no consequences of sin. *And those things of earth will grow strangely dim...*

Next time we'll discuss a test given by God. {Genesis 22:1-2} Would you pass?

-Bruce Woods-



Seneca Presbyterian Church
 115 W. S. First Street
 Seneca, S.C. 29678

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Phone (864) 882-2505 --- Fax (864) 882-2528
 Email: senecachurch@bellsouth.net
 Website: senecapresbyterianchurch.com

Office Hours:
 Monday – Friday
 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Congregation – Ministers

Dr. Nancy M. Morris	Pastor
Mr. Stan Hinton	Organist
Mrs. Emmalyn Frye	Choir Director
Mrs. Glenda Pitts	Secretary
Mrs. Lane Neamand	Friday Secretary
Mr. Jim Hylkema	Custodian
Mr. James Gaines	Custodian
Dr. Robert S. Dendy	Pastor Emeritus
Dr. Barbara Nagy	Missionary (serving in Malawi)

“The Sunday Morning Place to Be”

Join us for Sunday Morning
 Contemporary Worship at 9:00 a.m.
 Traditional Worship at 11:00 a.m.

Nursery Care

During All Sunday Morning Sunday School &
 Worship Services

Sunday School

9:00 a.m. - Downstairs

Nursery – 5th grade

10:00 a.m.

Educational Building, Upper Level:

Study of Genesis Group - Library
 Sara Davis Stribling Class: Women
 Men’s Bible Class

March Scripture

March 6: Exod. 24:12-18; Ps. 2 or Ps. 99;
 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

March 13: Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Ps. 32;
 Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

March 20: Gen. 12:1-4a; Ps. 121;
 Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

March 27: Exod. 17:1-7; Ps. 95; Rom. 5:1-11;
 John 4:5-42