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September 2016

Outer Banks Presbyterian Church
Down to the River to Pray

Outdoor Worship Service & Church Picnic
Sunday, September 18th • 10:30am
Soundside Park • Point Harbor, NC

BBQ • Fried Chicken • Fixin's
Sign Up in the Gathering Space

September 2016

Outer Banks Presbyterian Church
Outer Banks Presbyterian Church
**Prayer Concerns**

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you..." II Corinthians 9:8

Jack Abernethy
Marc Basnight
The Rev. Dr. Richard Batzler
Don & Nancy Bierwerth
Shawn Bowman
Family of Elliot Copeland
Ruth Dutt
Karen Foard
Al Grimm
Shirley Grimm
Karen Lurie
Mickey Meekins
Nancy Messinger
Lynn Miller
Landon Moore
Barbara Nock
The Rev. Bob Pitsch
Jane Smith
Max Strange
Rev. Nick White
Leah Williamson
Those Serving our Country

**Down to the River to Pray!**

An exciting first for OBPC will happen on Sunday, September 18th at 10:30 am (yes, that's right 10:30 am). We will hold our first ever Worship Service/Church Anniversary Picnic outdoors! The Worship and Fellowship Committees have been hard at work the past few months to coordinate this event. It all takes place just over the bridge in Currituck County at the Sound Park in Point Harbor. The park is located on your right just after passing Parker's Landing and the BP Gas Station on your right. Darrell's Restaurant will cater the delicious B-B-Q, Fried Chicken lunch afterwards. We hope to offset the $15.00 charge per person by voluntary contributions in baskets provided at lunch. This Sunday, we are sure, will bring back fond memories you have of other gatherings and family reunions in summers past. Please mark your calendars and plan to be with us as "We Go Down to the River to Pray". There is a signup sheet in the Gathering Space where you can check bus/carpool if you would like a ride.

**We are Thankful for our Willing Volunteers**

**Coffee Hour Schedule**
September 4 ............... Helmkamp/Berg
September 11 ............. Cahoon/Boyd
September 18 ............ (No Coffee Hour)
September 25 ............. Evangelism

**Flower Schedule**
September 4 .................. Alice Steel
September 11 ...... Greg & Karol Browder
September 18 .............. (No Flowers)
September 25 ............... Available

**Liturgist Schedule**
September 4 ............... Linda McGee
September 11 ............. Nancy Mathews
September 18 ............ (No Liturgist)
September 25 ............. Youth Group

**Children's Church Schedule**
September 4 .......... Hollie & Jody Lewis
September 11 .............. Bev Jones
September 18 .... (No Children's Church)
September 25 ........ Braymiller/Wood

**Nursery Volunteers to assist Heather**
September 4 ................. Gary McGee
September 11 .............. Linda McGee
September 18 ............... (No Nursery)
September 25 .............. Dan Haynes

**September Birthdays**

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Judy Bear</td>
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<td>Taylor Lewis</td>
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<td>John Rickers</td>
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<td>Al Schalk</td>
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<td>Karen Hastings</td>
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<td>Sharon Moore</td>
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<td>Nancy Worsley</td>
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<td>Paul Munson</td>
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<td>Trish Thomas</td>
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<td>Forrest Seal</td>
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<td>James Jackson</td>
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<td>Gwen Engleright</td>
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<td>Nancy Bierwerth</td>
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<td>Liz Hamley</td>
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<td>Judy Whittle</td>
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<td>Bev Bridges</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Glenn Baum</td>
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<td>Linda McGee</td>
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<td>Lynda Wood</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Trish Blackmon</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Anita Bennett</td>
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<td>Carol Trotman</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Margaret Hartman</td>
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**September Anniversaries**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Glen Baum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Buzz Boyd</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Merrill Hastings</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Doug Helmkamp</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Greg Browder</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Al Ihrig</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Matt Lowcher</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Dan Harris</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Phil Moore</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Bobby Gentry</td>
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A Word from our Pastor

There will be a number of special events here at Outer Banks Presbyterian Church during the month of September. Our church will be hosting a Disaster Relief Training for the Salvation Army all day on Saturday, September 10th. I’m grateful to the Outreach Committee for organizing this event and for all the people from our church and community who have signed up and have shown their willingness to share Christ’s love when it is most desperately needed. In the news, we have seen a recent example of why disaster relief is needed through the devastation of the flooding in Louisiana. We see the hands of Christ in all those who are offering their support to the people of Louisiana. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is one of the organizations that is already helping the victims of the flooding.

On September 11th, we will celebrate the baptisms of both Logan Walter and Lily Irene Pickens, the children of Christine and Brad Pickens. Baptism is a joyous occasion when we celebrate God’s covenantal relationship with us and great love for each one of us, even before our birth. As a community, we promise to share God’s love with those who are sealed into God’s covenant through baptism.

Outer Banks Presbyterian Church was officially established on September 23, 1979 with thirty-eight charter members. Anniversaries, whether they are for churches or weddings, are meaningful occasions. We have a number of couples in our church who have been married for more than fifty years—we even have a few who have been married for over sixty years. I have been inspired by the wisdom and gentle, persistent love that I have observed from some of our very own couples who have been together for many years. In honor of our church’s thirty-seventh anniversary, the Fellowship and Worship Committees have planned something special for us. We will be going “Down by the River to Pray” as we gather for worship and a picnic on Sunday morning, September 18th at 10:30 am. There will be no worship service in the sanctuary that day—instead we will gather for worship at Sound Park in Currituck County north of the Wright Memorial Bridge. Following the worship service, a catered lunch will be served. Sound Park has a two covered pavilions, restrooms, a playground, a gazebo, and several other facilities for us to enjoy.

The last Sunday of the month, September 29th, the Session has called a congregational meeting to receive a report from the Nominating Committee on the individuals to serve on the Session’s class of 2019. Finally, please mark your calendars for October 22nd when our congregation will be hosting the ninety-ninth stated meeting of the Presbytery of New Hope. Presbyterians from central and northeastern North Carolina will be traveling to the Outer Banks that weekend: we anticipate around 300 people attending. Please keep the Task Force that is planning for this presbytery meeting in your prayers!

Peace in Christ,
Judy Moore

Sermon Series for September & Early October

The Rev. Jody Moore

September 4: Psalm 139:1-18: The psalmist shares that God knows us intimately, even better than we know ourselves. God has formed our inward parts; we are fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator. Wherever we go, God will seek us out. This psalm shares the good news that when we are lost, God will actively pursue us.

September 11: Luke 15:1-10: In these verses, Jesus tells us the parable of the lost coin and the lost sheep. One sheep wanders away from the flock, yet the shepherd leaves all the other sheep to find the one who is lost. In the Bible, a nomad is a wanderer; one who is lost as a nomad has wandered away from the faith. God’s desire is to bring those who have wandered away back into the fold.

September 18: Luke 5:1-11: We will gather “Down by the River to Pray” for this special outdoor worship service in honor of Outer Banks Presbyterian Church’s anniversary. As we worship God near the water, we will hear the story of when Jesus came to the Lake of Gennesaret and called several disciples to leave their fishing boats so that they could follow him and begin catching people for the sake of God’s kingdom. What does it mean for us to follow Jesus today?

September 25: Luke 16:1-13: Jesus often teaches in confounding ways to help us see new insights and glimpses of the kingdom of God, as he has done in the parable of the dishonest manager. Jesus is teaching us to be faithful with what God has entrusted to us. God calls us to resist this world’s temptations and have hearts that are dedicated to serving the Lord.

October 2: Ephesians 4:1-7: This passage describes the things that unite us as Christians. Paul explains that Christians share faith in one body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. This passage reminds us that even though we may disagree about particular issues, there are many important commonalities that unite us as Christians. What would it look like if we let our worldview and our encounters with other Christians be guided by these principles? We will be celebrating World Communion Sunday.

October 9: Lamentations 1:1-6 and 3:19-26. Lamentations contains prayers of lament for the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians. These texts offer some of the most honest and poignant laments in the entire Bible. There are times in life that we have heavy hearts and Lamentations helps express those spiritual longings. As people of faith, we cry out to the Lord for healing and reconciliation.
A special offering for peacemaking and global witness will be taken on Sunday, October 2nd. Twenty-five percent of our special offering will be given to Hotline, our community’s local shelter for battered women. The remainder goes to the larger church for peacemaking and witness projects throughout the world.

South Sudan is a nation riddled with conflict. Violence levels are extreme, but mission workers operating alongside RECONCILE Peace Institute are training leaders to become peace builders in their communities.

An issue that affects peace and justice in Colombia, causing struggle for many of the nation’s citizens is land grabbing, whether by the government, wealthy land owners, or the cocaine industry. Peasant farmers are run off, harassed, or even murdered. Colombia mission workers volunteer with the Colombia Accompaniment Program which allows Presbyterians to stand in solidarity against violence in the face of intimidation. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and the Presbyterian Church of Colombia collaborate with this program in order to help those affected by land grabbing.

Your gift to the Peace and Global Witness Offering will help initiatives like those in South Sudan and Colombia provide support for those affected by violence and injustice around the globe as well as here in Dare County.

**Third Thursday Lunch: Sept. 15**

Hope you had a great summer. We will kick off Third Thursday Lunches by going to Henry’s in Kitty Hawk. Henry’s is on the bypass at the 5.5 milepost. The date is Thursday, September 15, at noon. You will make your own selection off their menu, and receive a separate check.

Everyone is invited to come – church members and friends. In order for Henry’s to have enough seats and staff, please let Jeanne Martie (441-8608 or jlmartie@charter.net) know by Sunday, September 11 if you will be attending. Hope to see you there!

Jeanne

Help is being sought for the Intake Coordinator for the Room of the Inn program. The job is 6 days a week (5 days 2 hours, 1 day 4 hours) Nov-Apr. It pays $17.50 per hour. They are looking for someone with some social worker or counseling training (not necessarily certified or licensed) and who has strong leadership skills. There are actually 2 positions, a morning (7-9 am) or early evening (4:00-5:30/6:00 pm). If you have questions, please contact Carol Copeland. Resumes may be submitted to her at copelandc@dcdss.org. They are hoping to fill the position by early Oct though they have not indicated a deadline for resumes.

Thanks for considering this opportunity for a parishioner or associate who could provide coverage in these paid positions.

A full job description may be located at the church office.

**Stewardship Speakers Sought**

Consecration Sunday will be October 16th. Last year, in the weeks leading up to Consecration Sunday, we heard brief messages from Tom Williamson, Dan Haynes, and Susan Harman-Scott. They shared with us what stewardship means to them and how they practice stewardship as part of their personal faith journeys. This year on September 25th, October 2nd, and October 9th three of you will have the same opportunity. Our individual forms of stewardship are sometimes deeply personal, and the product of wrestling with our aspirations of faith and our limits of time and other resources. They may be difficult to cast into words. But when expressed they are inspiring, illuminating, and powerful forms of leadership. They are in fact...stewardship. Please let us hear from you! Two minutes is only two paragraphs the size of this one, read aloud. You can do it! Contact Ben Cahoon at 473-7396, 441-0271, or ben@obxarchitects.com if you are interested.
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<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> There are sessions of A.A. that meet here Monday through Friday at 7:30 am and 10:00 am.</td>
<td><strong>Labor Day</strong></td>
<td>5:00 pm: Volunteering at Ruthie’s Kitchen</td>
<td>6:00 pm: Sanctuary Choir 6:30 pm: Adult Study 7:15 pm: Handbells</td>
<td>10:00 am: Grief Share</td>
<td>8:00 am: Men’s Study</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Sacrament of Holy Communion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Sacrament of Baptism</strong></td>
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<td>3:00 pm: Stamp Club</td>
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<td><strong>Down to the River to Pray Worship / Picnic Soundside Park, Point Harbor 10:30 am</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Elder of the Month: Buzz Boyd</strong></td>
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<td>1:15 am: Congregational Meeting</td>
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<td>5:00 pm: Youth Group</td>
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- Sunday School: 9:00 am
- Worship: 10:00 am

**September 2016**
Several Thank-You notes have been received from individuals in our church for your many acts of kindness!

We would like to thank our church family for the thoughts, prayers, cards and visits. We are thankful to be improving each day.

Love,
The Grimm Family

To all my friends at OBPC,

Your love and prayers have been overwhelming. Cards, phone calls, e-mails, food and visits have made me feel so loved. I don’t think I would have made it this far without your prayers. I feel each one and I know God has been watching over me all the way. I hope to be back with you all sometime soon, but, until then, just keep praying. Thank you all!

With God’s love,

Nancy Messinger

I would like to thank you so much for granting me the $500.00 scholarship for college. I am so grateful for your investment in my education. I just got back from my orientation at Chapel Hill, and I know I will have an amazing time there the next 4 years. I will continue to work hard in school and will be out to make my church family proud!

Thanks again,

Carla Hardy (First Flight, 2016)

Greetings in Christ,

From the bottom of my heart, I extend my thanks to OBPC for your love and support during our time of grief for our mother. The Choir’s participation fulfilled one of her last written wishes. I know she was pleased by the show of affection for Ronnie that she witnessed on the occasions she attended your church. Ronnie was the light of her life (her words) so your support of Ronnie in this way was a true blessing to our family.

Grace to you all and peace,

Michelle Sunkler

The Faith Knitters will begin its’ 2016-2017 sessions on September 13th at 9:30 am. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month at Alice Pratt’s home, 100 Mill Point Road in Martins Point. Anyone interested in joining the group who knits or crochets or who would like to learn is welcome. We have beginners to experts. The group makes prayer shawls for the area nursing homes and other various groups who would benefit from knowing that God cares for them and can help them to recover from whatever illness they may be experiencing. If you would be interested in more information about this meaningful project of love and caring please contact Barbara Nock at 252-255-5979.

Faith Knitters Resume

The Outer Banks Presbyterian Church will again serve Ruthie's Kitchen on Tuesday, September 6, 2016. Please contact Mollie Bass at 480-0858 if you would be willing to assist in any way.

Ruthie’s Kitchen
Please join us on Monday, September 12, 2016 at 5:30 pm at the church for our Presbyterian Women's Fall Gathering. Our Bible lesson will be presented by The Rev. Dr. Jody Moore. Please bring a covered dish to share. Set-up will be done by the Lydia Circle and Clean-up will be done by the Dorcas Circle. For more information, please contact Carol Moore at (757) 508-1657 or you may send an email to obxkdhcarnel@gmail.com. In addition, the PW is in desperate need of a secretary. Please let Karen Lurie or Carol Moore know if this is something you may be able to do.

**Celebration of Baptisms**

On September 11, Logan Walter and Lily Irene, children of Brad and Christine Pickens, will be baptized during the morning worship service at Outer Banks Presbyterian Church! The church family is invited to celebrate their baptisms with a reception following the service in the fellowship hall. Please come help welcome Logan and Lily to our church family!

Additionally, if you would like to bring basic baby care items to help stock-up Lily's nursery at home, feel free to do so on this day. Helpful items would include diapers, fragrance-free wipes, burp cloths, etc. Most of all, Brad and Christine would appreciate your presence as they celebrate the baptisms of their precious children!

**Healing Service**

Our monthly Healing Service is held on the third Sunday of each month following the morning worship service. There will be no Healing Service during the month of September due to the church worship service and picnic at Soundside Park. The next Healing Service will be held on Sunday, October 16, 2016.

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Join us on Sunday, September 4, 2016 as we observe the Sacrament of Holy Communion during our morning worship service.

This Sacrament is a true reminder of God’s sacrificial love for us by dying on a cross to save us of our sins and resurrecting that we might spend eternity with him.

**Back to School Challenge Time!**

Most parents will agree that when it is back to school time, there are challenges to be faced. We will be concerned about making sure they have the right school supplies, maybe some new clothing. Perhaps we’ll be worried about our child’s new teacher, or a different mix of kids in the class. All of these are self-focused worries!

I’d like to offer this thought as a new school year dawns: Our most important concern is how we—both students and parents—will impact the people around us. From the sermon on Mount to Great Commission, the followers of Christ were to be focused outwardly. This year, make an impact on others!

**Remember your EXAMPLE.** We tend to focus on self at this time of year, but Romans 14:7 reminds us that none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. Our lives have an effect on others! We need to be careful not to be hypocritical (Rom. 2:17-24). Must be positive with our responsibilities (Phil. 2:14-16). And above all, we should shine for Christ (Matt. 5:16)!

**Remember your MISSION.** If we are in Christ, we are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17-20). That new creation has a job to do! Paul said he was an ambassador for Christ, and we have a responsibility to be the same (1 Cor. 11:1). Students, youth is no excuse not to be about our Father’s business (Jer. 1:4-7). If Jesus is your Savior, then He is your Lord too (2 Peter 3:18). Act like it!

**Remember your PRIORITIES.** If you are a Christian, then your priority is the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). There will never be a convenient time to put God first and yourself last (Matt. 16:24), so start now! Remember the heroes of the faith from past days (Heb. 11:13-16) and seek that heavenly city!

Starting a new grade brings new possibilities, new opportunities, and a new beginning. But don’t forget you can impact the life of someone else forever!

Remember your EXAMPLE, your PRIORITIES, and your MISSION!
This summer has been the busiest in the history of our pantry. 336 clients were served in July alone which is a significant increase over the July average over the last 4 years of 265. With an increase of this size during the summer, we feel certain that the off-season demand will also be very high.

In response to this demand for food, we are planning a number of food drives and money-raising events. One such event occurred in July as a LUAU at Jeannette’s Pier complete with Polynesian Dancers who performed magic tricks and other games for children, limbo and hula-hoop contests and delicious food from 5 local restaurants that donated the food and their time. The evening ended with a fire dance on the beach. It was quite a spectacle as well as a good money raiser.

When considering food donations, please note that the pantry is in need of the following items: soup, salad dressing, seasoning packets, hamburger/chicken/tuna helper, canned fruit, canned vegetables, laundry detergent, feminine products and toilet paper.

Pantry duty this fall will be the week of September 12. We will be responsible for the entire week so please sign-up to help by contacting Susan Smith at 252-255-4855 or smifobx@live.com.

Organ (Plus) Concert Held

On Wednesday, August 24 an organ (plus) concert was held at 7 pm in our sanctuary featuring Mr. Jesse Ratcliffe as well as Jason Evans, pianist, an Ecumenical Handbell Choir and the Sanctuary Choir. The 168 attendees thoroughly enjoyed a wide range of musical styles that were so intricately performed! Pictured below is Jesse Ratcliffe with Jason Evans.

PC(USA) leaders issue post-General Assembly letter to the church
June 28, 2016 by Presbyterian News Service

PORTLAND – Brothers and sisters in Christ, there is a new season in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as witnessed by the actions of the 222nd General Assembly (2016). The body of 594 commissioners who gathered June 18-25 in Portland, Oregon, elected Co-Moderators Denise Anderson and Jan Edmiston, and J. Herbert Nelson as the Stated Clerk. Both were historic, and both signal a new way forward for our church.

The business decisions made by the body also were transformative for the 1,572,660 members and 9,642 churches of the PC(USA). The work wasn’t easy, and involved careful deliberations. Collectively, the body acted on nearly 100 overtures by discerning the will of Christ.

Among other things, we now have a new addition to our Book of Confessions – the Confession of Belhar. It is the first of our confessions that comes from the global south. And, the PC(USA) has a new Directory for Worship; and Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures. God is truly guiding us to be more faithful and just to all of God’s creations.

Much discussion has been taking place around the identity and purpose of the denomination, and this week the assembly voted to create a 12-member Way Forward Commission “to study and identify a vision for the structure and function of the General Assembly agencies of the PC(USA),” and a 15-member 2020 Vision Team to “develop a guiding statement for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation.”

To quote Stated Clerk-elect J. Herbert Nelson, “We are not dead … we are alive, we are reforming and we are transforming this world, one person at a time.”

Looking outward, the assembly voted to engage in selective, phased divestment from fossil-fuel companies through the PC(USA)’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee, and re-affirmed a two-state solution for Israel-Palestine.

Please know this is only a snapshot of the actions taken, and just a glimpse at where God is leading this denomination. Complete business actions can be viewed at www.pc-biz.org.

We are, brothers and sisters, in a new season. It’s exciting, but also a little scary. Yet in the midst of it all, take comfort that God is still guiding and controlling all – and we need not fear. God is calling us to hope, and to God be the glory!

The Reverend Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
News from the August Session Meeting

CALL TO ORDER, DEVOTIONAL AND PRAYER: The Rev. Dr. Joseph (Jody) Moore, Jr. called the meeting to order and led the discussion on “Discernment as a Way of Life” by Ruth Haley Barton; he then opened the meeting with prayer.

SESSION APPROVED:

A. Stewardship Committee’s recommendation for Consecration Sunday October 16.

B. Use of Fellowship Hall on September 11 for the Baby Shower for Lily Irene Pickens.

C. Administration Committee’s recommendation for use of the church by the Scouts for the pig picking’, August 27, 11 am – 7 pm.

BUSINESS

A. Jeanne and Jody reported on the July 26, 2016 NHP Meeting in Wilson, NC. They gave details of the breakout session led by Rev. Moffett Churn on Human Trafficking especially noting the high incidence in North Carolina.

B. Session then focused on responding to the PCUSA decision to allow member churches to perform Same Sex Marriages. Background materials were reviewed, including the four sources that “Christians should use when trying to make theological decisions” and possible responses identified by the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, NC in their discernment. Open and serious positions were presented by each member during the discussion. A motion was made, seconded and approved by majority to amend the OBPC Wedding Policy as follows:

Members and “friends of the OBPC” (defined as those who worship and/or participate in our church family regularly), regardless of sexual orientation, may be married in the OBPC, upon approval by the Session, with relief of conscience for staff and members.

C. Worship Committee said that the Worship Service/Picnic at 10:30 am at Sound Park on Sunday, September 18, 2016, will have a catered lunch by Darrell’s for $15/person. Session recommended placing a “Basket for Contributions” at lunch.

CORRESPONDENCE

A. Personal note “in appreciation for how you share the good news of Jesus Christ” with a $1,000 donation to OBPC from Hank and Marie Sprenger.

B. Anonymous donation of $250 for an area rug and other needs in the nursery.

Congregational Care News

Note from Judy Dempsey

Dear friends at OBPC, I still feel pretty disorganized. My NC house did sell, and we purchased a house in Arizona: my new address is 1640 Eagle Point, Prescott, AZ 86301. I did get my book *Joshua’s Journey* published, and it can be purchased on Amazon, at Barnes and Noble, or at the Cotton Gin or Island Book Store in Kitty Hawk.

I am doing yoga four days per week. I joined the choir at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, have attended the Bible study, and also joined a Writers Group. Much love to all.

Blessings, Judy

Fall Senior Seminars

The Congregational Care Committee (CCC) will again be sponsoring Senior Seminars; this year, we are planning to have short introductions and long “Question and Answer” times. We have invited a physician in October, and The Rev. Dr. Jody Moore has agreed to give an interactive “spiritual” discussion on November 1. Watch bulletins for details, and get your questions ready!
**Youth News**

On a very hot Saturday at the end of July, 20 of our youth, children, and chaperones loaded the church bus and spent the day traveling to Montreat for the Youth Conference, "A World of Difference." We arrived in Montreat late that evening, exhausted but excited to discover a great new rental house, milder temperatures, and a life-changing conference. This year's conference encouraged our youth to BE different while MAKING a difference in this world. Each day, we were inspired by relevant keynote addresses and sermons that addressed topics such as our families and how young people can serve their churches. The youth enjoyed recreation events such as a genuine square dance in the barn, a movie night, a glow in the dark dance, and a variety show. In their free time, they went rock-hopping, ate lots of ice cream at the Huck, and enjoyed a trip to Black Mountain. Our new rental house was equipped with a game room that included a ping pong table, foosball table, and plenty of puzzles and board games to keep the kids occupied with old-fashioned fun. Of course, the room was also equipped with a drop ceiling which collapsed one night, which provided a great laugh (praise God no one was injured and the rental company came out right away to repair it). Throughout the week, we enjoyed delicious meals prepared by Aunt Lisa Helms. She also spent many late nights staying up with the youth, talking and making memories. Perhaps the most meaningful part of the week was watching our OBPC Youth transition from "attending" worship to "participating" in worship. For the first time in four years, our youth were genuinely involved in the youth leadership of worship and keynote. Two of our youth, Ronnie Sunkler and Chloe Futrell, applied and were accepted into the Jeremiah Project, a special small group for mature youth who may even be sensing a call into ministry. They served as liturgists and led dramatic interpretations all week long.

Additionally, many of our other youth volunteered to assist with worship: Joseph Lewis served as a liturgist one evening, he and Hopelyn Kovacs sang in choir (Hopelyn even had a solo), Cailin Lewis and Hopelyn were in several dramatic presentations, and Michael Bennett was an usher. It was uplifting to see our youth take their worship to a new level, interacting with the conference leadership and taking such an active role in the worship services. All of these roles required the youth to give up a portion of their free time, coming to rehearsals during mealtimes or early in the morning, and they did so with a joyful heart. Their spiritual maturity genuinely shone through, and they set a great example for some of our newer youth.

As always, Montreat would not be possible without the prayerful support of so many in our church. Thank you to everyone who contributed financially to make this trip possible. Thanks to those who donated items for the various mission projects we participated in at Montreat. And, from the bottom of my heart, a huge heartfelt thank you goes out to our adult chaperones: Steve and Stacey Hanf, Lisa Helms, and Jody Lewis. This was truly a life-changing week for our youth...one they won't soon forget!

In His Grip, Hollie