

GENERAL PRESBYTER REPORT

Rev. Bobbi White

July 28, 2009

These are very hard times economically for our communities, members, churches and Presbytery. Yet I sense the Spirit is moving among us. It is not something that we are doing, but it is something that God is doing.

Several Sundays' ago, Kathy Campbell, the first full-time pastor in years, was installed at the Crossnore Presbyterian Church. It was a beautiful service. Kathy invited all the pastors in Avery County to bring greetings and encouragement, as well as Lees McRae College and Crossnore School. She is hopeful about finding ways the churches might work together. The reception was held in Crossnore's new fellowship hall. This is particularly exciting for Crossnore since they have dreamed of a full-time pastor and hope to grow in faith and membership. Thanks to the churches in the Presbytery that helped Crossnore fund this full-time position, giving Crossnore a chance to reach out to others and more fully nurture their members in the faith. The Spirit is moving among us.

Kenilworth was also able to call a full-time pastor this spring, thanks to your help. They have just added 12 new members. One person joined because the church had a barrel on their front lawn to collect food for their food pantry. This person was impressed with the way the church is reaching out to the community. In addition, some members of the church are helping some of the senior citizens in their community with yard and house work. The Spirit is moving among us.

Over 350 people attended the Acts Initiative meetings. It was a time of learning, prayer and good fellowship. The Acts Initiative takes the Bible seriously. Acts 16:5 says, "The churches were strengthened in their faith and increased in numbers daily." At tables, people talked about their faith and the need for churches to "Reach, Grow, and Send:"

REACHING out to those not in church or not active in their church
GROWING in Faith and Discipleship
BEING SENT to do Mission and Ministry

Those are key words in the Acts Initiative process, but those are words for all of us. In these times, it is even more important to reach out to people who have no Christian community and need a relationship with Christ. Thirty-five churches have committed to a process of listening to God's vision for their church and working to grow and change. The teams from those churches will get together every six months for more learning, prayer, planning and sharing on how God is working in their midst. The Spirit is moving among us.

On June 28, the Sylva Presbyterian Church celebrated Bill Serjak's long and fruitful ministry of more than 30 years in their midst. There were tears at Bill retirement, but thanksgiving that he leaves a faithful, healthy and growing church full of committed Christians of all ages. Bill said in his sermon he always tried to "point to Christ." He said he felt joy in looking back on his ministry and how Christ had worked in their midst. During his last Sunday worship service, he baptized two young children and celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He will be missed, but this church will continue to be strong. Tyler Martin, who was present, will be their interim beginning July 12. The Spirit is moving among us.

Dr. Barbara Nagy will be returning to our Presbytery in August. She has exciting news. Things are going well at the hospital. One of the contributing factors is the lab equipment that the Presbytery's Mission Team took with them on the mission trip. She is also very hopeful about the possibility of Happy's adoption

becoming a reality before she returns to the States. She asks that we continue to keep the adoption in our prayers and she says she is looking forward to being in our midst and visiting the churches. The Spirit is moving among us.

Dr. Barbara Nagy is supported 80% by our partner presbyteries in Guatemala and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. Children in some of our Guatemalan partner churches collect cans at the scholar games for the children in Guatemala and the presbyteries collect money for Barbara. We called this a triangle of love (Guatemala, Malawi and the USA). Last year, thanks to First Gastonia, we were able to build two classrooms for a school needed for the children of the hospital workers and others. This year Mariella Provost, a retired missionary to Korea, challenged the graduates of a school her husband started in Korea to build the second building of two classrooms. The ground breaking was started while our mission team was in Malawi. This year our team included two Korean Americans involved in the funding of the second building. Helping Barbara, the hospital, and the school now is a team effort of people from Guatemala, Korea, USA, and Malawi. The next need is teacher housing. The Spirit is moving among us.

God is calling all of us to be about the hard, but joyful work of ministry and discipleship. Let us look for ways to build up the body, and work with God's Spirit that is moving among us.