



## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."*

So, we've made it through another Christmas season. For me it was my 74<sup>th</sup> time of celebrating the coming of God into this world in the form of a human being. Seventy-four times of singing the great old Christmas carols. Seventy-four times of decorating a tree and eating Christmas turkey. During those 74 years this world has experienced some daunting challenges. I was too young to remember Pearl Harbor. But I do remember the war and how we were required to cover our windows at night with dark shades. And I remember collecting empty tin cans and throwing them on the truck that came through our neighborhood every Saturday so they could be recycled into bullets. And I remember the fear that folks in our neighborhood just outside of Washington DC had about the possibility that we were going to be bombed. Fear is a terrible thing. Like a cancer, it can eat away at your spirit and cause you to act in ways that are not rational, nor loving.

Think of the ways that we have experienced fear over the past few years. Political pundits know that people will vote their fears at the polls. All an opposition candidate has to do is convince the public that his opponent is in league with the devil, or will destroy the country, or will take away your constitutional rights. The charges don't have to be true or even based on fact. All they have to do is whip up that latent fear that rests in the depths of our spirits. Who was it who said: "All we have to fear is fear itself."? I think it was FDR!

One of the fundamental tenants of the Christian Faith is our rejection of fear. The angels appeared to the shepherds on the hillside and they were afraid, afraid of something that they did not know, afraid of something new, afraid of powers and forces over which they had no power. The angel of The Lord told them not to be afraid. Well, that is easy to say. When you are up to your neck in alligators it's too easy for someone to call out from the shore, "Don't be afraid!" What you need to hear is: "Don't be afraid, grab on to the boat behind you and we'll

pull you in." The message to us is "don't be afraid, behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." You and I can let fear go when we know that something phenomenal is happening that will counteract the forces which cause us to fear. You see, what the Christian faith is calling us to do is reject fear. Reject fear that would cause us to say and do those kinds of things that are counter to the teachings and life of Jesus Christ.

Now, don't get me wrong, there is a place for fear. The Old Testament is quite clear that "fear" is an essential ingredient in the believer's respect of God. Proverbs 9:10 "The first step to wisdom is the fear of the Lord." Proverbs 14:27 "The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life." The author of 1 Peter gives us this admonition, "Give due honor to everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the emperor." However, it is not only the angels appearing to the shepherds who tell us not to fear. Time after time, Jesus admonished his disciples to reject fear. Look up Matthew 10:26, 10:28, 10:31, 14:27, and 17:07. Also, look up Luke 12:7, 12:32.

So, where is all this leading us? We are entering a new year. 2015 will bring us lots of opportunities to let fear control us. There are those who would use "fear" as a weapon to whip us into a frenzy of reaction and retaliation.

When you feel this beginning to happen, remember the words of the angel to the shepherds. "Do not be afraid!"

God is in the process of bringing about new possibilities, new opportunities, new vistas of service in love and grace. You can be a part of these new and exciting possibilities. In your personal life look for the hope that nullifies fear. In your church life look for the hope that looks forward instead of the fear that looks backwards. And may 2015 be a year of abundant grace and hopeful renewal for the fellowship of Christ here at Tazewell Presbyterian.



*Peace, Pastor Bob*

# Prayer Concerns



## ***Church Family***

BOB PARKS  
ELIZABETH & EDDIE NASH  
MATTHEW KINCER  
MARTHA MASSIE  
BOB BROWN  
CHARLOTTE GRANT (*moving*)  
CHARLIE ASBURY  
JOSH THOMPSON  
EUNICE JONES LESTER  
AL GILLESPIE  
PAUL FOURNIER  
DONNA DAVIS CRUEY

BARBARA STANSBURY  
ROBERT HELDRETH  
CONNIE FLETCHER  
DAWN & DAVID OLINGER  
SHIRLEY MELTON  
BETTY KELLY  
PARKER NECESSARY  
GEORGIA HALE  
MILDRED PENNINGTON  
JUANITA BOLING  
DOROTHY NUCKLES

***Active Military Personnel:*** John Patrick Flynn, & Jon Wright

***Missionaries:*** The Wellers & The Ardnts

## ***Others***

Jeff Nash  
(*Eddie & Elizabeth's son-in-law*)  
Joann Sawyer  
(*friend of Janine Addair*)  
Eli Jones (*surgery*)  
Ryan Chaney (*brain surgery*)  
Phyllis & Oakie O'Quin & Family  
Jan McClure  
Katie Wyatt  
(*Deanna Combs' aunt*)  
Lisa Brown  
Jan Gressman  
(*friend of Mary Graf, surgery*)  
Jenny O'Neill (*Dora's niece*)  
Darden King  
Wayne Hoops  
(*close friend of David Pruitt*)

Michaux Grant  
Elke Popoff & family  
(*Jerry Cromer's niece*)  
Charlotte Wilson  
(*daughter of Martha Massie*)  
Gilliam Shelton  
(*Debbie Crews' father*)  
Dustin Hicks  
Edsel Harris  
Blanche Carpenter  
(*Ron Carpenter's mother*)  
Paula Sparks (*Teacher at TMS*)  
Rev. Curtis Murray  
Jaelynn Wright  
Justin Hankins  
Sam Cecil (*cancer*)

# January 2015 Session Action

- † *The Session approved that bonuses for the staff must go through the payroll.*
- † *Standing Nominating Committee Chairman Frank Barnes reported the following nominations for Elders: Robert Brown, Debbie Crews, Jim Thompson, and Dorothy Wright. The 2015 Nominating Committee will include Gizele Bowen, Elene Combs, Randall Cooper, and Vicky Rinehart. (Elected at the December 21, 2014 Congressional Meeting by acclamation.)*
- † *The Website Committee will be getting in touch with designated "reporters" from each area of church programs to keep the church secretary updated on activities to be printed on website and in the Lamplighter. Webmaster Sergent will be exploring ways to update the format of our site. He has trained Kris Fox to keep items current.*
- † *Frank Barnes of the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) will explain the five stages of the PNC progress on the website and in the Lamplighter.*
- † *The Session approved that Rev. Button use his further education supplement of \$1,000 to assist two church associated families in need.*
- † *The Session accepted the budgeted Presbytery Unified Mission Request of \$ 13, 860.*
- † *The Session agreed that the Hunger Offering be taken on the Sunday that the children sing for the worship service.*

*Note: We are extremely thankful for the session members who have completed a term of service and will be rotating off the session this year. Dr. Roy Wright, Amy Olinger, Bert Taylor and Elaine Francisco have been important members of the session for the past tree years and we shall miss their wisdom.*

# Tazewell



During January we will concentrate on the work that we are doing in Ethiopia. Tazewell Presbyterian Church is a direct supporter of Presbyterian Missionaries, Rachel and Michael Weller. Michael is the regional director of our Presbyterian work in that area of Africa. I want to share with you several excerpts from Rachel's October letter to the church back home in the US.

October 22, 2014 (Rachel writes...)

*I am back. Back from Kenya; back from the Community Health Evangelism (CHE) Internship; back from Addis, where I stayed a couple weeks to see Michael and get my computer fixed. We are thankful that we have a house – not a guesthouse – to stay in there. It means minimal unpacking, knowing that there is food in the cupboards and some in the freezer, and coffee ready to brew. We share the house with John and Gwen Haspells, who also live a bit of a mobile life as they come and go from southwestern Ethiopia where they have been working for the past couple of decades. So we were shocked the day that John called Michael on the phone saying, “We’ve been shot!” That day Michael was driving through Addis traffic when his phone rang. He decided to answer it – he could just quickly tell John he’d call him back as soon as he pulled over. But with that greeting, everything changed. He stayed on the phone with John long enough to find out that John was driving, but could not see from one eye and the other had blood dripping into it. Shots had gone through Gwen’s lower face, so she held her own face while dabbing the blood from John’s eye so he could keep driving. Miraculously, neither of them ever fainted. Miraculously, they had their travel documents in hand. Miraculously, the phone system was working. And miraculously, everything fell into place as Michael called the various agencies, including our support system in Louisville, to get them help at the closest hospital (four hours driving) and then evacuate them the next day to Addis and then South Africa, where they are now receiving excellent medical care. ... To be clear, it was a random shooting and would-be attempted robbery. They were probably not being targeted, nor was it a political or religious act. The Haspells immediately sent a message to the Suri people that, though they were in pain, they offered forgiveness to those who had hurt them and wished that they would know the forgiving love of Jesus.*

What an exciting story about the mission work that we Presbyterians are doing in Africa. Just a reminder that there is much to do and much to overcome in a land where we Presbyterians have been declaring the Gospel for less than 300 years. Next month we will visit the Wellers again to learn how Rachel is working throughout Ethiopia to teach agricultural practices and hygiene practices which promote healthier families and communities. Meanwhile, Rachel sends this final message: *Michael and I are thankful for all of you who support us regularly. Your prayers sustain us, your emails and communications encourage us, and your offerings keep us working.*



*The Worship team would like to say a special thanks to all who helped decorate and clean up the church during and after the Christmas season. Thanks to Carol and Roger Weaver for obtaining our tree and to Joe and Gizele Bowen for taking care of the Chrismon decorations as well as overseeing the decoration of the tree. Also thanks again to Dr. Wright and Dorothy for providing the greenery. Eunice Lester took charge of the Poinsettias and Freddie Blair put in lots of extra work to clean up after us. Many others also helped put decorations in place. Cindy Lowe had the bows packed in such good shape that they were easy to use once again. Extra thanks go out to Kasey Addair and friend this year for all of their "climbing skills." Joan and John Flynn were there to help direct and do the work as well as Janine Addair, David Pruitt, Charlie Asbury, Elaine Francisco, Ron Carpenter, Donna TePoel, Dora Barnes and Rev. Button. I'm sure we're leaving someone out, but please know that any and all cooperative work together is always a wonderful blessing.*

*A special thanks also Pam Irvin for planning children's activities and to Pat McPherson for our music for both the Cantata and adventure time children. Our secretary, Kris Fox, also works especially hard this time of year. So thanks to you all for the extra work and time spent on making Advent and Christmas a special worship time for us all.*

## SPECIAL THANKS

*FROM THE  
FOOD PANTRY*

From me and all the volunteers at the Food Pantry a big thanks for all you gave during the holidays and throughout the year. We were able to serve over 320 families during December – that was with regular food bags and the special Christmas bags. May God richly bless all you who gave.

Pam and all the volunteers

## Upcoming Need

Some of the Chrismon decorations need repairing or need to be re-done. Julia Butler says she can possibly help after recovering from her knee surgery, but that will probably be in mid- February. If anyone is interested in tackling this job, please let the church office know. There are instructions available. Perhaps a group can get together for this over the winter months.



## **SHOEBOX MINISTRY A BIG SUCCESS**

On December 19 I received a phone call from a Mr. Smythe of Samaritan's Purse, representing Franklin Graham, to thank our church for all we gave and for being the receiving point for our community. Their goal for this year is 8.3 million boxes and as of December 19 they had 7.9 million. We gave 118 from the town church and 107 from Black's Chapel. We had 15 volunteers working 67 hours and David Pruitt and I took 515 boxes to the Richlands Presbyterian Church to be shipped. I want to give a huge thank you to all those who gave and helped in any way. I am sure we helped make some children very happy during this blessed season

Pam

