



# The Church Mouse

## The Newsletter

### Presbyterian Church (USA) In Clinton



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As I sit here typing away, another wintry mix is pelting down from the heavens. It has been a difficult winter, to put it lightly, and we still have plenty of winter left to go. Even when spring and mud season finally arrive, the difficulties will only diminish, not disappear.

The gray weather outside is more than matched by bleak news in our homes, our communities, our country and our world. The current economic conditions that we are facing are the most severe that many of us have ever seen, and are predicted to grow worse before they begin to get better.

But you know all that. You know it only too well. And so that is not the news I want to share with you in this letter.

The news that I have the privilege to share is Good News. This News is missing in most of our conversations, and most of the conversations occurring on the national and global level, but it is the News that we need to keep our eyes trained on.

Let's be clear: Good News is not a close-your-eyes-and-hope-the-monster-under-the-bed-goes-away news. Good News is the true reality that reminds us that there is more to Life than the car we drive, the job we have, and the success we may achieve.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is about love, grace, mercy, peace, joy, and compassion, all things that seem to be in short supply in the news we hear every day. The Good News of Jesus Christ helps us cut through the miscellaneous and distracting clamor all around us and focus on the long road of salvation. The Good News of Jesus Christ helps us live in times like these with confidence, tranquility, and humor.

It is my privilege to proclaim Good News; it is not always the reality I live in. I'm sure the same is true for each of us. Good News is ours to claim, to hold on to, to inhabit, but I know that I often forget to grab Good News and grab every-day news instead.

You see, there's a balance that we have to find in our lives between the every-day news and the Good News of Jesus Christ. Both are important, both impact how we live and both are real, but both are not equally important and they both describe different realities.

The Good News needs to be our foundation, the sure rock we stand on and the basis for every decision we make. All the other news finds its real importance when it helps us listen more closely for God's voice in our lives, without knocking our feet out from under us. Standing firm on the Good News, we can react to the news of job losses with prayer and outreach to those affected. Rooted in the Good News, we can read reports of global food shortages, and respond with action, repentance, and different lifestyle choices. Instead, I think we more often base our lives on the countless voices vying for our attention every day, turning from one crisis to another with an increasing sense of desperation, and only turn to the Good News when we need a rescue line.

With the economy turned upside down, we have an opportunity to turn our lives right side up. True, it may be an opportunity forced on us by the winds whipping around our heads, but it is still an opportunity. Now is our chance to look at the material and tangible stuff of our lives, to examine the relationships and priorities of our lives, and have serious conversations about what matters. We can leave behind the upside down priorities that popular culture insists we worship, and instead live standing tall in the timeless qualities of love and grace. This is the best way, and I believe the only true way, to continue to move forward.

So hear the Good News: our God is abounding, abounding, in steadfast love; our God's mercies never, never, come to an end; our God's grace is flowing abundantly; our God's love is deeper, wider, and greater than the galaxies surrounding us; and our God's faithfulness is new every single morning. Thanks be to God!!!  
Amen.

*Pastor Cindy*

*Community Café Rotation*

**WE NEED NEW VOLUNTEERS!!!**

*There is a Sign-Up sheet in the  
Fellowship Hall*



**& Birthdays  
Anniversaries**

**FEBRUARY**

- 2 Belinda Bedele
- 3 Shelby Dickinson
- 10 Amanda Correllus
- 11 Susan Gleason
- 14 Stephen Bohannon
- 18 Darleen & Ray Bohannon
- 26 Donna Scott
- 26 David Silberstein
- 28 David Leigon

**Office Hours Update:**

Pastor Cindy is in the office on  
Tuesday from Noon to 7 pm.  
She is available by cell phone for  
emergencies.

Jenn is in the office:

T: Noon-6 pm; W/Th: Noon-3 pm

**Volunteer Schedule for February:**

<b>Greeter:</b> 1 Thelma Towne 8 Tanya & Sons 15 Louann Joyce 22 Judy Malcolmson	<b>Worship Leader:</b> Caroline Tamfu Butch Lemere Susan Dullea Scott Dickinson
<b>Counters:</b> 1 Scott Dickinson 8 Joseph Awasume 15 Dot Grady 22 Glenn Garvey	<b>Coffee Host:</b> Tanya Adams Jenn Dickinson Anna Foster Tanya & Jenn
<b>Children's Church:</b> 1 Closed 8 Dot/Laurie 15 Devin/Colleen 22 Shelby/Bonnie	<b>Youth Message</b> Pastor Cindy Susan Dullea Joanne Thomas Lisa Carlin

*Oh My!*

*The Dow Jones daily averages  
Are falling out of sight.  
Each time I look, my I.R.A.  
Receives another bite.  
Some say that fundamentals  
Are quite sound--the future's bright.  
But I'm inclined to think  
That Chicken Little had it right.*

*Robert J. Malcolmson 12/10/2008*

“Why Me, Lord?”  
by Lana Lombardi  
*Staying the Course*



I know that God is in control - ultimately. I also know that there are many decisions I make daily that are my responsibility. Sometimes those decisions will either keep me in a rut - whether physically, mentally, relationally or spiritually - or sometimes I do make and stick to decisions that will move me along on the path of maturity. I am not a robot. Admittedly, there are times I wish God would intervene so I couldn't continue to make the same mistakes over and over again.

Unfortunately, He doesn't and so I fail to stay on track even when I feel passionately about some commitment I have made earlier in the day. Sometimes it's an external resolution, but more often than not, it is an internal infraction I am struggling with. Because I know the Holy Spirit resides in me, I do feel the sanctification process come to a screeching halt when I stray from my commitment. He gently convicts me of straying. Once He throws up the red flag, it then becomes my decision once again. Will I ask for forgiveness and start fresh immediately, or do I do what I do so frequently - shove the red flag aside with some unique (or so I think) excuse for why it is too soon or I'm too busy or it's someone else's fault why I can't get beyond this particular issue.

Weight Watchers (I'm a revolving-door customer) claims that if we do not attend the meetings and keep the keys to success in front of us every week, we will have memory losses when it comes to eating right and our exercise commitments. It doesn't take very long - when we ignore the pricks of conscience - before the physical consequences (weight gain) will eventually shed a nasty light on our lack of commitment. I find that the same healing process occurs spiritually.

When I move away from the disciplines/commitment I have made in order to heal in some area of my life, I experience guilt for having failed once again. There's nothing wrong with healthy guilt when I am doing something destructive - internally or externally - despite what modern pundits would have you believe. It's actually a God-given red flag that will keep us in the life-long game of healing and sanctification. It's not like we lose an eye or an arm when we fail. We simply are given another opportunity to make the necessary adjustments so we can get back in the game of healing.

God called the Israelites in the Old Testament “stiff necked”. We all have areas of our lives where we are just as stubborn and unwilling to commit to the change that will put us back on the effective - though admittedly sometimes painful - path of healing. Those pricks to our consciences are simply a gentle warning that we are once again in a place where we must make a decision - our decision - not His. What is so bad about that? He's not forcing Himself or even His healing process on me. He's merely letting me know that He does have the answer - the best answer - and that healing will only materialize when I do it His way. If the decision I make is to brush the red flags of anger, resentment and revenge aside, my heart begins another kind of process - a numbing process - that eventually becomes a way of life. My character which feeds my thoughts will then create the end product of activity. Those actions I will then rationalize as normal and acceptable even though I can see that they are injuring me and others. It's a crazy way to live. But there are millions of these decisions which develop a philosophy of life for many that resemble the familiar bumper sticker - “Life sucks and then you die.”

If we can just “get” what it means to have a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus - allowing Him to be our constant companion and red flag attendant, the destructiveness of guilt quickly dissolves. Guilt and shame do not have to be the place we live our lives, yet it is for so many of us. In fact, for many it's a way of life that actually feels comfortable!

I'm learning that I will fail every day and probably several times a day. I just don't live in a perfect world and I am certainly far from perfect. But if He is the merciful God I read about in the Bible, then His mercies are new for me - not just every morning - but they are new and available for me every time I fall. All I need to do is sincerely ask for forgiveness and the chance to do it better with His help. Sanctification is not an event. If it were I would have already attended the convention and gotten my badge! It is a journey - a long and tedious one at that. But it is also filled with hope (I feel it regularly) and joy (I have those times as well) and a peace (I sometimes experience in the middle of tragedy) and an assurance that He is not surprised by any circumstance - large or small - in my life. I'm learning to look around me all day and every day. When I do that I find so many reasons to be grateful that God is God and I am His child.

## Mark Your Calendars:

Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> – No D,D, & D  
Feb 10<sup>th</sup> – Choir 7 pm  
Feb 17<sup>th</sup> – Session 7 pm  
Feb 24<sup>th</sup> – Choir 7 pm  
Feb 25<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday Service 7 pm

## Looking Ahead:

Leadership Training and Visioning Retreat –  
*Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 9 am-3 pm*  
Required for all new and returning officers. New officer training will be in the morning, followed in the afternoon by discussion, visioning, and planning around the Congregational Transformation Grant.

## *Dames, Drinks & Discussion*



Our monthly women's group meeting will be held on the first Tuesday night of the month at the Manse from 7-8:30 pm to have a time of fellowship and discussion over drinks. We continue to study "The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life."

## PRAYER CONCERNS FOR....

Scott as he was laid off, and that he may find a new position soon  
Doug is in rehab, and that he may continue to recover  
Marie and her health issues  
Tentative cease-fire in Gaza, that a peace may be found and that the people may be reconciled  
Our new President, Barack, wisdom and discernment for him and his staff and cabinet  
Dotty K who is very sick in the hospital, and that the doctors may find a diagnosis  
Papa White who is in hospice care  
Pastor Dan and his wife as they adopt two sons from Haiti, that travel and transition may be smooth  
A church in Bangladesh as they grow in church planting and in women's ministries  
Our military and their families



## PRAISES FOR:

Francisco is back!  
Our many blessings!  
David D. got a clean bill of health on his knee – no more MRIs needed  
David L. got a clean bill of health, just monitoring  
Our many blessings!

## FROM THE PULPIT:

2/1 Mark 1:21-28 *Teaching with Authority*  
2/8 Guest preacher: The Rev. Dr. Mario da Silva  
2/15 II Kings 5:1-14, Mark 1:40-45 *Make Me Clean*  
2/22 Mark 9:2-9 (Transfiguration) *Unveiled*  
2/25 Ash Wednesday Service of Confession and Penitence 7:00 pm  
3/1 First Sunday of Lent, Communion  
*The Meaning of the Cross* sermon series begins



## Snow Removal Schedule for February:

Feb 2-8: Keith Pucecki  
Feb 9-15: John & Julie  
Feb 16-22: Bob Kellegrew  
Feb 23-Mar 1: Scott Dickinson

