

THE NEWS

April 1, 2011



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF
ARLINGTON

1200 South Collins St
Arlington, TX 76010
(817) 274-8286

www.firstprestexas.org

fpcatx@yahoo.com

Preschool: (817)274-4051

9:30 - 4:30

Monday - Thursday

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

8:30 AM

11:00 AM

CHURCH STAFF:

Rob McClelland
Pastor

Sophie Draffin
Youth & Missions

Esther Choi
Congregational Care

Russell Farnell
Minister of Music

Kyle Terwilliger
Director of Children's
Ministry

Jeanne Chin
Finance Manager

Jo Anne Thomson
Organist

Lesley Beckmann
Preschool Director

Jim McCoy
Facilities Manager

Nicole James
Administrative Asst.

Lisa Giles
Administrative Asst.

To the FPCA saints,

Words cannot express how much I appreciate your prayers during our recent Belize mission trip. This was a team of 15 youth and adults sent on behalf of FPCA, and the trip would not have been possible without the prayers and support of this congregation!

The trip was a tremendous success. We spent the week serving at a school called Youth Enhancement Services (YES). It's a school for girls who, for one reason or another, do not fit into the normal education system. In the United States, education is offered to anyone who wants it, but this is not a luxury available in Belize. Both public schools and private schools cost money, public schools are just less expensive.

YES is considerably less than even the public schools and caters to girls who cannot keep up in a traditional school setting. Many of these girls have been abused, live in non-traditional homes, or even live in group homes. We worked at YES in 2010, helping to build a classroom building. This year we painted that building and added an awning to it. In addition to the physical work we did to the campus, our team was able to spend time with the girls, teaching classes (sewing classes and computer classes) and building relationships with them.

I am bursting with stories to tell - like how one morning at YES, Lew Johnson had a few extra minutes, so he decided to fix a faucet that had been dripping for years. Or about how Judy Northup (Ms. Mimi, as the Belizean girls called her) was teaching sewing lessons, but she also listened to and learned as Colleen described her need for Christ in her life and as Nishmer described the sadness she felt because she had been raped. Or how Jim Cicherski went into the kitchen to help with the daily lunch preparations, but as he helped cook rice and beans for the group, he built a relationship with Margaret as they laughed and visited. Margaret is a woman who has been cooking for 15 years to support her family, and at the end of the day she told us that that was the first time she'd ever enjoyed her time in the kitchen. There are plenty more stories of how our 15 person team (ranging in age from 12-73) was used by God and was touched by God during our trip. I would encourage you to find one of the Belize team members and ask them about time they spent with the girls. You will learn far more than I could ever type in a newsletter article.

On a side note, we were also able to spend a day driving to Corozal, a Northern town in Belize where Moises and his family live. You may remember the story of Moises, a little boy who in 2009 needed life saving surgery. He was flown to Amarillo for that surgery. We were able to spend a day catching up with him and his family and are happy to report that Moises is a happy, normal, Belizean boy! He is still working hard at memorizing Scripture!

Thank you for all your prayers and support. Blessings, Rev. Sophie Draffin

Time to Order Easter Lilies!



If you would like to place a Lily in the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday, contact Lisa Giles in the church office, or fill out a form which can be picked up in the Narthex or the office. Please fill out the form and place it into the offering plate on Sunday or mail it to Lisa Giles. The cost is \$8.75 per Lily (per dedication) and the deadline for orders is April 17th.

Denominational Issues:

Last month I began the discussion of two of the three major issues which were discussed by the 2010 General Assembly - the change to the Form of Government section of the Book of Order, and the change to Ordination Standards. This month, I would like to offer a brief explanation of the third big item, which is the addition of another confession, the Belhar Confession, to the Book of Order.

Many people, unless they have grown up Presbyterian (and even some then) feel that the Creeds and Confessions we have in the Presbyterian Church (USA) are ambiguous in today's church culture. They don't understand why we use them or why we quote from them during worship from time to time. Before commenting on the Belhar Confession, let me say that Creeds and Confessions do three very important things for the church: They identify us as Christian believers, they educate us on Christian beliefs, and they unify Christian believers from different places and times. For example, when we say the Apostles Creed, we are unified with Christians all over the world, sharing the same identity that believers had in the third century when they recited the creed, and teaching our children core beliefs about the Godhead - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creeds and Confessions serve other purposes as well, but all of them promote those three facets within the life of the Church. Knowing that, let me explain why the addition of the Belhar Confession is being debated .

The Belhar Confession was adopted in 1986 by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of South Africa to focus on unity among churches involved in apartheid. As such, The Belhar Confession lifts up "unity" as the highest value of believers, stating that, ". . . anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted." This has caused debate because some within the PC(USA) have agreed that unity is the top priority of the denomination, while others believe that the focus has become unity at the expense of purity and peace within the denomination. Because the Belhar Confession does not acknowledge the authority of Scripture, it is being critiqued as "easily open to misuse". Some point out that the Belhar Confession (as written) could be used to say those who uphold biblical moral teaching are threatening the unity of the church.

I believe that the issues of racial equality and reconciliation are already fully addressed within the context of acknowledging the authority of Scripture in the "Confession of 1967," and that is already a part of our *Book of Confessions*.

Since this is a change to the Book of Confessions, in order to adopt of this amendment and add the Belhar Confession to our *Book of Confessions*, it would require approval by 2/3 of the presbyteries. Currently, the vote is 52 Presbyteries in favor of adding the Belhar to the Book of Confessions, 29 against adding it. 92 Presbyteries, including our Presbytery, have not voted on the amendment as of yet. 116 affirmative votes are needed to change the Book of Confessions.

YOUTH GROUP SPRING RETREAT

When: Friday, April 8—Sunday, April 10

***We will meet at the church at 5:00 on Friday and will be back at 12:30 on Sunday.**

Where: The Petrie Lake House at Palo Pinto Lake



Speakers: Jeremy Sheppard and Amelie Miltenberg



Who: All FPCA youth and their friends.

Cost: \$30

What to bring:

- Sleeping bag and pillow
- Bathing suit
- Bible
- \$\$ for dinner on the way to retreat and \$\$ lunch on the way back

**Please get your sign-up sheet to Sophie by Sunday,
April 3rd!**

SAVE THE DATE FOR SUMMER TRIPS

Music and Mission Trip to New Orleans (June 5-11): This trip is open to everyone (even if you don't have any musical talents or have never been on a mission trip). You will have a chance to help those impacted by Hurricane Katrina, the Agapes will share God's love through music, and we'll have a ton of fun in the process.



Senior High Trip Fun in the Sun Trip to South Padre Island (July 10-15): Open to all rising 9th graders through graduating seniors! Come learn more about your faith at the beach! Can you think of a better way to spend a week than worshipping with 400 other high schoolers and playing on the beach?

Junior High Trip Great Escape Trip to Gunnison, Colorado (June 18-25):

Open to all rising 6th through 9th graders! Come learn more about your faith in one of the most beautiful and exciting places in the entire country, the Colorado Rockies! We will join hundreds of other junior high students to worship God. We will also have plenty of time to hike, rock climb, and go white water rafting!



Children's Ministry Summer Camp

It is Time For...

**Registration Deadline is April 10.
Sign Up TODAY!**



If you love being ahead on your summer reading list, cleaning out the attic, mowing your grass in the hot sun or eating all your vegetables, then **DON'T ATTEND CAMP KIDJAM THIS SUMMER!**

COST - \$200 Per Person!

DATE: July 22 - 25, 2011

Kids entering the 3rd - 6th grades in the Fall of 2011

For more information contact:

Kyle Terwilliger at 817-274-8286 or FPCA_childrensmin@yahoo.com

Kid's Night Out!

**Come on, invite your friends
and join in the free fun!**



KIDS NIGHT OUT!

Pizza, Hanging Out, and more!

April 15th 6-9 pm

Kids K-5

Summer Mission Experience

THE MISSION 2011

*Have you ever wanted to go on a mission trip,
but just find the time?*



*Or you just didn't think
you were capable enough?*

All you need to join **THE MISSION** is a love for God and a desire to serve Him.
There is a spot for you on **THE MISSION 2011** trip to New Orleans!

Here's the basic information:

Who: YOU, All FPCA Youth *and* Adults, ages 11 to 100.
What: Mission and Music Trip to New Orleans with ELCA (who we worked with in Galveston)
When: June 5-11
Where: New Orleans
Why: So we can be Church in the world, instead of just doing church in our building.
How Much: \$75 per person – Contact Sophie for a family price (immediate family)

If you have any questions, please contact Sophie at (817) 274-8286 or fpca_youth@yahoo.com.

Holy Week Worship Opportunities

Please take a look at the Special Holy Week Worship Opportunities which are being offered this year.

April 17 - Palm Sunday - Holy Week begins.

April 18 - Prayer and Meditation Service at **7:00 p.m.** in Sanctuary.

April 19 - We will be hosting a All-Church Potluck Dinner and Passover Seder Supper led by Susan Perlman. You can read more information about Susan below. Dinner will begin at **6:30 p.m.** with Seder presentation to follow. We hope that you will come experience the Passover Seder in a new way this year! *This event will be about 2 hours long.*

April 20 - Prayer and Meditation Service at **7:00 p.m.** in Sanctuary.

April 21 - Maundy Thursday - We will host a Service of Healing and Wholeness at **7:00 p.m.** in the Sanctuary.

April 22 - Good Friday Worship at **7:00 p.m.** in Sanctuary.

April 24 - Easter Sunday BREAKFAST and Worship!

We are very excited and blessed to have Susan Perlman presenting "Christ in the Passover" at our Tuesday Night Passover Seder this year. Susan is one of the Co-Founders of Jews for Jesus. She grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home in Brooklyn, NY. Susan came to believe in Jesus after a street encounter with folk singer Larry Norman. Susan is an advertising copywriter and social activist and currently lives in San Francisco, CA.. Please join us for this wonderful dinner and worship experience. Contact Jane Leatham with questions.

Mission and Evangelism - SOS Project

The SOS for April will be a food drive for Arlington Charities.

Please place can goods or staple items (flour, sugar, etc) in the gray SOS boxes located across from the office, In the Red Hall and near the Coke machine. Mission and Evangelism team will deliver items.

Thank you for your support

One Great Hour of Sharing

Palm Sunday, April 17, is the official Sunday of the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering at our church. This is one of five special offerings collected during our church year. Offering envelopes are provided in the pews and outside the chapel and sanctuary. We also have Lenten Devotionals available.

Presbyterians worldwide have participated in this offering for over 60 years and give about as much as all other denominations put together. The offering gifts are divided between each of three programs- Self Development of People, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. For a list of how these gifts were used in previous years or for more information, see www.pcusa.org/oghs.

This year's theme is: Sharing Brings Joy To Others, To God, and To Us.

A Night Of HOPE

The H.O.P.E. Tutoring Center ("HOPE") will host its annual *Night of HOPE* dinner on Friday, April 15th from 6:30 PM to 9 PM in the Great Hall at the First Methodist Church of Arlington. The event will be catered by Piccolo Mondo with entertainment provided by the Bowie High School choir. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Shirley Theriot, the Director of Community Services at UTA. Her topic will be *From Hope to Service*.

The proceeds from the dinner and silent auction support the HOPE tutoring program for third through eighth graders in Arlington.

HOPE's goal is to improve student grades and attitudes concerning their schoolwork. Most of the students live in East Arlington and are under performing in school. Some are potential dropouts. Last year, with the help of community volunteers, **HOPE was able to improve the grades of 88% of the** 100+ students tutored.

First Presbyterian Church of Arlington is one of seven tutoring sites and 15 members play significant roles in the tutoring program and the HOPE Board and Advisory Board.

Our church is organizing several tables for the event. Please contact George Morey if you would like to attend. Tickets are \$35/person.

First Presbyterian Church
1200 S. Collins Street
Arlington, TX 76010

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DEADLINE for the May Issue of the “NEWS” is April 10

Questions about the schedule? Check the calendar at - www.firstprestexas.org

Prayer Ministry Page:

IN THE HOSPITAL:

Dick Rabb and Carol Prine

AT HOME or IN REHAB:

Ethyl Johnson, J.W. Floyd, George Kleopfer, Mary Ellen Miller, Susan Byers, Roy Anderson, and Rodney Orr

CONTINUED PRAYERS FOR:

Marge Orr and Ken Swanson

IN MISSION:

Arlington Charities as we begin our annual canned food drive to support them.

OUR FAMILY SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES:

Aaron Alonso (son-in-law of Karen Flynn), Colin Peden (son of David and Isobel Peden) Ben Boughton (grandson of Edna Collins-Harris), Eric Dill, Jason Polk, Matthew Johnson (grandson of Ann Scarr) Jeff Grimes (nephew of Sheri and Jim C. Quick), Sgt. Mike Mancini, and James Shryock.

Pray for those who do not know Christ!

Dear saints,

Following our Called Congregational Meeting on March 13, there seems to be a spirit of confusion moving through the Church. The Team Leaders of both the Session and the Deacon Teams met to discuss this on Tuesday night, March 22. During that meeting, the officers asked me to share with you the same information that was shared at that meeting, in order that it might clear up some of the confusion that came from the Congregational Meeting. I will try to be brief, but will try to clarify each of the bits of misinformation or confusing information the Church Leadership has heard.

The first two pieces of confusion both deal with the reason for the called meeting - **Pastoral Bonuses**. After ending the 2010 year with a surplus, the Session elected to accept the Administration Team's request to offer staff bonuses to those members of staff who had worked through the entire 2010 fiscal year. Since a bonus for a pastor is technically a change in terms of call, the congregation has to vote on it. So, on March 13, the congregation met to vote on a **one time bonus** for the two installed pastors. **This was not an annual raise**. In fact, I have not received a raise since 2009, nor have I asked for one. Sophie did receive a raise in 2010 and 2011, in order to keep her salary above the mandatory Presbytery minimum for pastors. **So, to be clear, no raises were offered at the meeting, and all staff that worked through 2010 were afforded a bonus**. And let me say, "thank you" for the unexpected gift.

The next piece of confusion is that our congregation is **declining in membership**. During the past three years, we have been working to clean and organize our church rolls. Marye Drexler has been key in seeing this project through, but it has taken all of three years to see it accomplished. During that time, we moved names to the inactive roll of those who had not attended in years. We also deleted names of those who had been inactive for years. If you look at the 2008 end of year report, you will see "0" beside those made inactive. In 2009 and 2010, that number totals 64. These are people who have not been attending for years and should have been moved or deleted years ago. In cleaning our rolls, our membership declined, but only by names of those not here anyway. Our new members and our reactivated member numbers out weigh our transfers and deaths. Once the Session finalizes the rolls in 2011, we will see the stats change in a positive reflection of growth. **So, to be clear, our perceived loss in membership is due to the cleaning of the rolls**. The annual numbers show that.

The next piece of confusion is that currently our congregation is **struggling financially**, and that our **giving has decreased**. This is not correct. **Our total giving for 2010 was in excess of \$1.1 million**. In fact, if we look at the last five years of operating expenses and income, you will see the following:

For 2006, our actual operating expenses totaled \$611K, while our actual income totaled \$687K.

-That means **we were \$76K in the black**

For 2007, our actual operating expenses totaled \$628K, while our actual income totaled \$683K.

-That means **we were \$55K in the black**

For 2008, our actual operating expenses totaled \$786K, while our actual income totaled \$738K.

-During 2008 we incurred \$40K in extra facilities expenses (reflected in the \$786K), and received our Oil and Gas Bonus of \$82K as income (not reflected in the \$738K).

-With the Oil & Gas Bonus, that means **we were \$34K in the black**.

For 2009, our actual operating expenses totaled \$748K, while our actual income totaled \$782K.

-During 2009 we paid for Phase 1 of the roof (\$90K) and our Audit (\$17K) with Designated funds, which we began 2009 showing as part of our Annual Budget, but we were later advised that that was not standard accounting practice. That is why our Annual Budget for 2009 showed a budget of well over \$800K.

Actual Operating Expenses were as listed above.

-That means **we were \$41K in the black**

For 2010, our actual operating expenses totaled \$735K, while our actual income totaled \$747K.

-During 2010, we held a Capital Campaign and received income, over and above our operating expenses totaling \$420K. We also received pledges for the remaining balance of the Campaign, completing the pledging portion of the campaign in just over 8 months.

-That means that **we were \$12K in the black - not including the extra \$400K+ that was given**.

What that means is from 2006 to 2010, through the worst economic times in recent history, we have ended each year with an operating surplus. And, during the last three years, our operating expenses have remained within a \$50K window of one another. **So, to be clear, our expenses have remained similar for the past three years, and our giving has grown (including our Capital Campaign)**. This information is also reflected in the charts on the back - from the PC(USA) 10 year trends information.

The last piece of confusion is that we have **cut all Mission and Evangelism**. We have not cut any ministry programs this year. The Session has been presented with the fact that we currently have 350 active members in the congregation and 118 programs being carried out each year. That equals one program for every 3 people roughly. During the past five years, I have heard people complain that they wish more people were attending or involved with the program they love. The reason we are having this problem is everyone has their own program! And they do not have time, nor an interest in being involved in any more ministry programs. So, during 2011, the Session has been tasked with the theme of “pruning.” As we see in Scripture, God prunes that which is not connected to Him, God prunes that which is not bearing fruit, and God prunes that which is not bearing the BEST fruit. We are in a discerning process to see which, if any, of our current ministry is bearing the best fruit. **So, to be clear, we have not cut Mission and Evangelism. The Session has, as was explained at the January 23, 2011 Congregational Meeting, decided to supplement the 2011 budget using** some of the over \$400K in **designated funds** we currently have, of which over \$125K are specifically designated for Mission and Evangelism. Designated Funds are different than Endowed Funds and Restricted Funds. Endowed Funds come from donor restricted gifts and/or bequests and provide a permanent source of income for the church. Restricted Funds are those carrying a donor imposed restriction on a gift, limiting its use to a specific purpose. Designated Funds are funds which the Session itself places a designation on for a specific use. The difference between Restricted and Designated is that the Session can change a designation at any time, where as a Restricted fund cannot have its purpose changed. **So to be clear, the Session chose to use designated funds to supplement the 2011 budget, while praying that through growth and increased giving, we will again see our giving exceed our operating expenses.**

Below are some graphs from the PC(USA) web page’s ten year trend tracking for FPCA. Since they do not have the 2010 information posted yet, this is 1999-2009. I hope that this helps show how FPCA is doing.

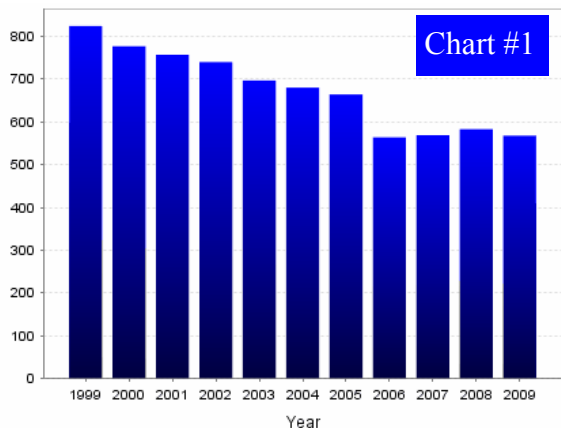


Chart #1 shows Church membership since 1999. You can see that we have begun to move upward again. As mentioned, our slight decline is due to the 3 year cleansing of the rolls. We are currently the 18 largest church in Grace Presbytery.

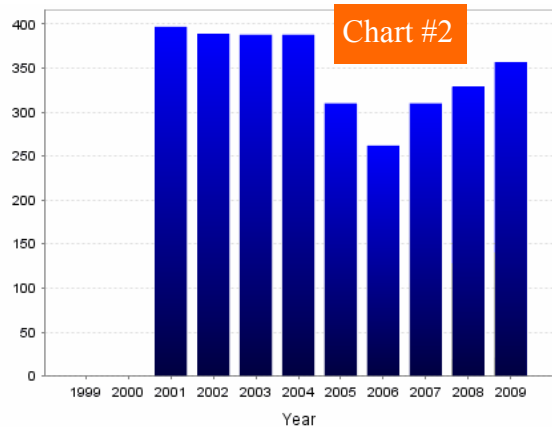


Chart #2 shows Worship Attendance since 2001. You can see that in 2009 we were within 50 people of equaling our 2001 attendance - when we had almost 200 more members.

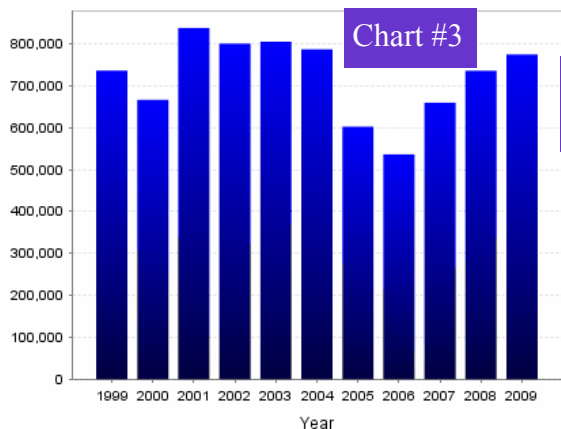


Chart #3 shows total contributions since 1999. You can see that our giving has been steadily increasing since 2006.



Easter Breakfast
 Sunday, April 24th
 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Everyone is invited to partake Of this wonderful array of breakfast Goodies and dine with your brothers and sisters in Christ on Easter morning.

Hosted by: The Fellowship Team

No Sunday School that morning