

THE BEACON

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JUNE, 2011



**Sym-
pathy
to the
Fami-**

lies of: John
Hood and Ray
VanHook

**Special
Prayer For:**

Betty Bam-
brough, Shirley
Blackburn,
Dante Contri,
Anna Cuif-
fetalli, Walter
Davis, Betty
Delony, Ruth
Ellington, Rich-
ard Garfat, Nor-
man Gill, Sha-
ron Goins, Lois
Goleash, Vir-
ginia Hill, Rob-
ert Hubbard, ,
Lila Keiser,
Elizabeth Lowe,
Pauline Maton,
Fran Matheis,
Marilyn
Reichart, Ginny
Schwarberg,
Anna Simpson,
Francis Spon-
sky, Maurice
Stille, Roy &
Ruby Tilson,
Marvin & Doro-
thy VanDyke,
Logan Webb,
Those in the
Military.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

I once heard a Puritan defined as “someone who lives in mortal fear that somebody some-where is happy.” It is not a fair description. It is not even close to being accurate. That image is rather the result of books and movies like, “The Scarlet Letter” and “The Crucible” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.” Taken together, they have many of us convinced that Puritans (or other Christians of their ilk) were people who wanted to practice their faith in the worst possible way, and did so. We think of them as priggish, dour, stern, sex-ually-repressed, and altogether unloving. To say that surely some Puritans must have been that way is to say no more than to acknowledge that some Presbyterians, atheists, Republicans and eco-terrorists are that way. It is saying nothing.

The actual Puritans made their primary impact on our Western culture, beginning in England, from about 1550 to 1700. Much like the label “protestant” started out as a slur on people who embraced Reformed theology (as in “that lousy bunch of protesters!”), the name “Puritan” was a slur on a generation of reform-minded church men and women who essentially started a movement for church reform, pastoral renewal, evangelism, and spir-itual revival. They held a worldview that was shaped by scripture, Reformed theology – specifically Calvinism – and readily concurred with our own Westminster Confession. They believed in the sovereignty of God, the necessity of the church, and the need to “reduce to practice whatever the Scripture taught in terms of specific lifestyle cues and directives.”

The British theologian and pastor, J.I. Packer, has likened the Puritans to the famous California redwood trees. They are, by Packer’s description, not pretty, ornamental trees, but truly awesome in their proportions. They are, in fact, the largest living things on earth. What is astounding about Redwoods is not just their incomparable size, but the fact that many of them have been struck by lightning and burned in forest fires and have lived on, some since the time of Christ. What is interesting, too, is that while their root systems are not necessarily deeper than other trees, they are extraordinary interlinked with the roots of all the surrounding redwoods – so much so that when one of the older trees falls down, it continues to live for generations; fed by the sustenance of the “community” of trees around them.

Just so, the Puritans lived in a time when life in Western Europe could be aptly described as “nasty, brutish, and short.” Somewhat more than half of the children born to families in that era did not survive to adulthood. People had neither the time nor the naiveté to fiddle around with seminars on how to stay young forever, or have ageless skin, or six-pack abs. They had the good sense to take the Bible as the Word of God written; and the conviction that a Christian life must be guided by a fully formed and well thought-out manner of life based on what that Word teaches. They really bought the idea that “the Bible was in truth the most precious possession that this world affords” and that our day of worship was the most important day of the week; and that by it, Christian minds, hearts, philosophy and practice were shaped.

(continued on page 2)

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You can read about all this in J.I. Packer's book, A Quest For Godliness, The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life (published in paperback by Crossway). It was the book that electrified my most recent week of study leave. I bring all this to your attention because I so resonated with the Puritan take on the responsibilities that weigh on us as we approach Sunday mornings. For the pastor, the duties are clear. He or she must see the Bible as their primary textbook. As a rule, sermons should be fairly evenly divided between exposition of the text and the application of the principles it teaches. The pastor should help parishioners to "reduce to practice" the commands and lessons of the text. More often than not, Puritan pastors would preach through entire books of the Bible; and labored to make sure that those gathered in worship understood and could explain central Biblical doctrines and confessions.

That said, the people coming to worship were considered to have responsibilities every bit as serious as those of the pastor. It was their job to come to the sanctuary ready to worship, pray, listen and learn. That meant that Saturday was, in part, a day of preparation. They laid out their clothes. They went to bed early so as to be rested and alert when worship began. More importantly, by spending time in prayer, confession, and the Scriptures, they prepared the soil of their heart so that they would be totally receptive to the seeds God was about to sow, and fully capable of teaching them to their children after worship. They weren't spectators or consumers, but co-laborers with the pastor to maximize the effects of worship

~ Pastor Brent ~

Women's Fellowship

Women's Fellowship will be meeting Tuesday, June 7 at 6:30 PM in fellowship hall. Lou Jordan will lead lesson #10 Setting the Pace from Bible study Living Above Worry and Stress. Elsie Ball will give the opening devotion, and Lou Jordan will provide refreshments. ALL women are welcome to join us in a devotion, prayer time, Bible study, refreshments, and great fellowship. Come and get acquainted with some of the women in the church. You will be glad that you do!

Cookies for Presbyterian Home



The Chancel Choir is asked to provide cookies to the Presbyterian Home on Sunday, June 19, 2011. When asked to provide cookies please remember we need eleven dozen cookies to accommodate all the residents at the home.

The "1" Group

On Tuesday, 14th the "1" Group will gather at 5:30 p.m. at the King Pin Lanes. Tuesday night is their "Fried Chicken" special, and it's really good. Remember – if you are single, divorced, widowed – and don't like to eat alone, this group is for you. We meet for dinner once a month and have great fellowship together. So, if you are a "1", come join us on June 14th. Any questions, please call or see Sandi.

Northside Children's Community Library

If you are interested in finding out more information about this project, whether it be to donate time, books, \$'s, you can talk with Carole Holladay, Sally Hall, Julie Vanderwater, Phil & Bonnie Douglas, Judy Goin, Bob Colwell or Sandi Woodard. We will be more than happy to answer questions and bring you up to date! Also flyers will be available in the Narthex.

Our Family Continues to grow:

Ella Lola Reine Bryant was born on April 28, 2011. Michelle and Daniel Bryant and Jorie Lynn Bryant, proud parents and big sister.

Stay tuned three have arrived and one to come.

LADIES, mark your calendar now for our annual Retreat to be held November 4 & 5 at the Chiara Center. The theme for this fall is "Sea Side Escape: Where Women Bask in God's Presence. The brochures will be coming out late June, so be watching.

CAROL'S CORNER REVISITED

(June 1996)

My husband was being a very good sport. If given the choice in regards to yard responsibilities, he would choose only the mowing of the lawn. But in preparation for our daughter's upcoming graduation party, he was willing to help out with some rather major yard-mending projects. We had earlier that morning been discussing how chaotic and non-stop our lives have become the past few years. We mused over the amount of "things" that needed to be accomplished for graduation as well as for other responsibilities. Bottom line, we were finding ourselves a tad exhausted by it all.

So here we were working side by side in the great outdoors as we tackled yet another item to be completed; and as I was transplanting a bush, and thinking about nothing in particular, a great rush of feeling welled up inside me. It was as if I was stopped dead in my tracks and filled with a tremendous sense of joy. I turned to Brent, and with my arms opened wide and with a laughing smile, I declared, "Life is so good!"

And I truly meant those words. In a brief moment it was as if time was suspended: in the blink of a few seconds I was overwhelmed by all the blessings I have received. Any apprehensions about the future were held at bay as I reflected upon God's generous involvement in our lives.

God called me to look back to the past to bring to mind how He has not faltered in His faithfulness. He has seen us through down times ... He has been ever-present even when we could not feel His presence ... He has been our stronghold when we felt our grip slipping. He has blessed us beyond measure with the loved ones in our lives, both family and friends. He has made us a part of a church family that is dear to our hearts. To declare His devotion and His "working together for good" enveloped me with a breathtaking sense of God's gentle caring and compassionate ways.

I hearkened back to the words spoken by my doctor during our early years of marriage when he stated emphatically that I would probably never have children. I recollected having a rather ho-hum reaction to his words which surprised me greatly. In place of fear, I remember the impression of the Lord assuring me not to worry. A few months later I was pregnant with Lindsey...

Following Lindsey's birth I hemorrhaged so severely that three blood transfusions were necessary. A nurse never left my side during the next eight hours so she could monitor whether the hemorrhaging had stopped. In the hallway I could hear the doctors discussing the need to do an emergency hysterectomy in the morning. In and out of consciousness, I remember wondering about any future children. By morning, the bleeding had significantly diminished. Three years later, Blake was born ...

Due to the transfusions following Lindsey's birth, specialists determined I had contracted what they thought to be a rare form of hepatitis, which proceeded to attack and destroy my liver. (*An accurate diagnosis of autoimmune disease was given in 2008, which was not caused by the blood transfusions given in 1977.*) The damage to my liver was not discovered until after Blake was born. So much damage had occurred by then that the doctors predicted a life span of possibly another five years, perhaps ten. Our children were toddlers at the time and I was determined to be around to see our grandchildren. Granted, I had no say over how many years the Lord would give me; but having a goal kept the determination to survive alive. Except for one recurrence, I have been in remission for fourteen years since that original prognosis was made ...

I have learned to take man's predictions lightly, for God is the one who has the plans and determines His purposes for each life. Life may not always occur according to how we would choose. Nor is there an explanation for why it happens one way for one person and totally different for another in like circumstances. But ultimately the Lord is ever in control. We are asked to trust Him implicitly in all the situations of our life.

And here I stand at the threshold of watching my oldest child walk across the stage to receive her diploma. I am in great anticipation of that moment. I respect the person she is and the woman she is becoming. I am proud of her achievements and the goals she has set for herself. And I thank God that I may be a part of this milestone in her life. I do not take this blessing lightly. I am well aware that the scenario could have been played quite differently.

Praise be to God -- the Giver of life and all its blessings.

~ Carol Hovland-Mitchell

THE DATE TO REMEMBER: SUNDAY, JUNE 12TH we will hold a "Book Fair" at Barnes & Noble Book Store. A flyer with coupon is attached. Come shop for yourself, for gifts, or for the Library.

THIRD PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

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E-mail: patmiller6378@sbcglobal.net

Return Service Requested.

Worship Service 9:15 A.M., Fellowship 10:30 A.M., Sunday School 10:45 A.M.

VBS Announcement

Calling all Kid's from preschool through 5th Grade.



Have you signed up for this year's vacation bible School? This year's VBS will be held on Wednesday evenings from June 8 – July 6. A simple meal will be served at 5:30 P.M. Bible School will be held from 6:00 P.M. until 7:30 P.M .

This year's theme is "Shake it up Café." We will explore the Bible as an exciting cookbook filled with recipes for living out God's Word.

Adult Bible Study will be conducted by Phil Douglas and Pastor Brent.

Registration is required. Attached to this newsletter is your registration form. Fill it out and return it to the church office or you may pick up a registration form in the narthex on Sunday mornings.

Gospel Sing, June 11 at Kumler United Methodist Church

If you attended the last Gospel Sing, you know how much fun it was, and if you didn't then it's time you found out about them. This will be held from 6 – 8 p.m. with refreshments available from 4-5 p.m. Donations are appreciated. If you have any questions, please call 522-8618.

Don't forget the Worship in the Park on Sunday, June 5 at 11:00 a.m. We will worship in Enos Park in then come over to the church for a potluck. If you wish to put something in the refrigerator or warmer, please enter at the kitchen door on the South side. Bring your lawn chair for worship. There will be no Sunday School that day.