



The Slackwood Grapevine

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
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Rev. Ryan Irmer, Pastor
Director of Music: Shelley Zuckerman

February 2016

The Wood Cutter and A Busy February

Once upon a time there was a very strong wood-cutter. He asked for a job from a timber merchant and he got it. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area in the forest where he was to work.

The first day the wood-cutter cut down 18 trees. His boss was extremely impressed and said, "Well done. Keep it up. You are our best wood-cutter yet." Motivated by his boss's words, the wood-cutter tried even harder the next day, but he only cut down 15 trees. The third day he tried even harder but only cut down 10 trees.

Day after day the woodcutter cut down fewer and fewer trees. His boss came to him and told him that if he did not chop down more trees each day he would lose his job. The wood-cutter needed the job, so he tried harder and harder. He worked during his lunch breaks and tea breaks, but still he could not cut down enough trees. "I must be losing my strength" the wood-cutter thought to himself. He worked over-time, but still it was not enough.

Eventually his boss came to him and told him he was fired. The wood-cutter was really upset, but he knew that he had worked as hard as he could and just did not have enough time to chop more trees. He sadly handed his axe back.

The boss took one look at the axe and asked, "When was the last time you sharpened your axe?"

"Sharpen my axe?" the wood-cutter replied. "I have never sharpened my axe. I have been too busy trying to cut down enough trees."

For being the shortest month of the year, February sure packs a lot into it: Groundhog Day, Chinese New Year, Ash Wednesday, President's Day Weekend, Valentine's Day, Black History Month, and we even get Leap Day this year. Have I forgotten anything?

After coming back from a year in Northern Ireland, I have noticed life in America is often fast paced, hectic, and overly scheduled. On the surface it doesn't make sense to add more with events like going to church, attending the Adult Forum, or attending a midweek Bible study. Yet when we observe the Sabbath, take time to pray, and do devotionals, we are "sharpening our axe" so that when we do go back to our daily routine and all its demands we are sharper, more focused, more refreshed, and have more energy. Sabbath is not a punishment or an obligation, it is a gift from God for us that provides space and a healthy rhythm to our lives.

I hope that despite our busy schedules, we can recognize the value of regularly attending worship, reading a daily devotion, and coming to God in prayer. When we do so, we will find that the rest of our lives are more joyful, productive, and enjoyable and we won't be working with such a dull axe.

Your Pastor,
Rev. Ryan Irmer

ANNUAL MEETING - NEW OFFICERS

At the congregational meeting held on Sunday, January 31, the following people were elected by the congregation to serve in leadership roles:

Elders:

Carol Belles
Bill Mansmann
Sandy Murray

Deacons:

Jim Branson
Amelia Irmer
Tami Branson
Theresa Suanno
Lilian Young

Nominating Committee:

Susan Gibbs
Carol Ward
Sherry Branson

Auditing Committee

Arlene Filson
Bob Lesslie
Tom Okeson

Thank you to each of them for their willingness to serve.

THANK YOU

The appreciation of the entire congregation is extended to Sherry Branson and Susan Gibbs who have completed their terms on the session and to Arlene Filson and Susan Janoski who completed their terms on the Board of Deacons. Their faithful service is very much appreciated.

GUEST PREACHER

Pastor Irmer will be out of town at a family event on Sunday, February 21. Preaching that morning will be the Rev. Alex Wimberly.

SNOW!

The first big snowfall made its mark as a blizzard! With help from Carl Belles and Bill

Mansmann sidewalks were cleaned in time for Monday activities. More snow could be on the way! We can always use some help and we have snow shovels, ice melt and a terrific snow blower available for use. If you are able to lend a hand in this task please speak with Bill Mansmann or call him at 609-651-1321.

2016 PER CAPITA FEE

The Presbytery set the Per Capita fee for 2016 at \$32.50 per member. These funds support the work of the greater church. Slackwood had around 100 members on the roll at the end of 2014 and the church's total fee will be over \$3,000. It is important that each member of our church participate and contribute the Per Capita Fee. Any shortfall in receiving the Per Capita fee is paid from the general funds of the church that reduces funds available for other needs of the church.

PROPERTY AND FINANCE

Another project at the manse has been completed. Thanks to Scott Stebbins, the front door of the manse has been professionally renovated! The new door and entrance way look terrific.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN MEETING

This month's meeting of the Slackwood Presbyterian Women will be on Thursday, February 18 at 12:00 noon. We will discuss Lesson 5, "Stormy Water". The bible study will be Amos 5:21-24, Righteousness.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men of the church are invited to join the next meeting of the "Men's Breakfast Club." February's meeting will begin at 9:00 am at the church on Friday February 19, 2016. Following an enjoyable meal we will continue our fellowship by completing small jobs around the church. Mark your calendar and join us on February 19, 2016!

RECYCLE PRINTER INK CARTRIDGES

We have discovered a place that we can get paid to recycle used printer cartridges. There will be a box in Fellowship Hall for you to drop off your used printer ink cartridges. We will ship them to a company who will pay us for them. The Session designated that the proceeds from this project go to the "Bus Transportation Fund." This is a Win-Win for all of us as we get to "environmentally discard" used printer cartridges and have the church benefit financially from this recycling project!

SPIRITUAL MESSAGE

By Cathy Salvatore/Ryan Irmer

Rage or Blessings

Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. - Ephesians 4:26

In my opinion, building godly relationships is a key theme in this verse. Loving, truthful, selfless, and obedient relationships are to be our goal, relating to others in the same way that Jesus relates to His Heavenly Father and to us. If we are to relate to others as Jesus does, all our relationships must be marked by honesty and truthfulness. No relationship based on deceit will endure.

Our tongues have the potential to produce evil and be full of deadly poison or can be used to uplift and encourage those in need. Today may God direct our words and help us each day to put our tongues under control and to heed God's voice. Amen.

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD..."

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the bible – Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Rick was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Rick was so nervous, when it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd... and that's all I need to know!"

Happiness keeps you sweet,



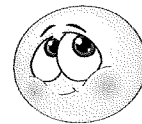
Trials keep you strong,



Sorrows keep you human,



Failures keep you humble,



Success keeps you glowing,



But only faith keeps you going!



WHO'S WHO AT SLACKWOOD CHURCH

A few issues back we shared with you some interesting information about our newest members at Slackwood. It's always fun to learn more about our new friends and understand our similarities as well as our differences. The harder thing to do is to help them to know more about each of us, the Slackwood "veterans". There are, after all, so many of us and we all have extensive histories to share.

Starting this month, I am including a column called "Who's Who at Slackwood Church". Hopefully I will be able to provide a little information about a few of our members each month that will help us all to know one another a little better.

Sandra Thomas

Sandra estimates that she's been a member of Slackwood for about 23 years, having joined us around 1993. She was born in Bridgeton, New Jersey and moved to this part of the state right after college in 1985 (okay, I can see you all calculating her age right now – STOP IT!! That's not what this article is about!). Sandra is a senior buyer for Patheon Biologics, and although her job keeps her too busy for much free time, her favorite pastime is reading. Sandra and Mark met at work in 1991 and began dating shortly thereafter. "I started coming to church with him and took a liking to everyone. You guys were so welcoming! I decided to join the church and then we got engaged and married. The rest is history." They are the parents of two gorgeous girls, Sydney and Chase. One of her favorite things to do? "I enjoy spending time on the beach (the Caribbean...that is!)."

Fred Mitchell

Fred has been a member for 56 years. He was born in Alloa, Scotland and moved to this area in 1953. He was a toolmaker and integration and test specialist at RCA Astro Space in Hightstown. His favorite pastimes are woodwork, soup, and being a guide at the Grounds for Sculpture, "all second to family". I asked Fred to tell us something about himself that he thinks others would be interested in knowing about him. This is what he said:

I came to Slackwood because of a very special person, my wife June. We were married for 53 years, this space isn't big enough to tell you all about June. Many of you know her and the amusing person she was. If you didn't know her, ask one of the older members about her. There are many anecdotes about her that will give you an insight as to what Slackwood is all about, "family". I honor June's memory by making SOUP, and delivering it to our shut-ins. I know what it is to be shut up in your home and not have friends come to visit. It can be a lonely life. This is what Slackwood is about: visitation or a telephone call cheers one up to no end. One member, George Dunn, took me aside one day after I joined the church and said "Fred, when you talk to me you call me Mr. Dunn. I know that it is out of respect that you refer to me by that term, but call me George. We all respect each other and we are all Members of this Church.

Fred was one of my Sunday School teachers many years ago. I called him Mr. Mitchell back then. I call him my friend, Fred, today.

Marilyn Stebbins

Marilyn has been a member of Slackwood her entire life, and in fact she was one of the first babies baptized in the Presbyterian Church – it had been the Slackwood Chapel. She was born right in the Slackwood neighborhood at 30 Carr Avenue (the house is still there at the corner of Carr and Hopewell Avenues). She is a retired teacher and loves to play tennis and read. Marilyn has always enjoyed traveling, has even visited all 50 states, and participated in teacher exchanges in Australia, New Zealand, Holland, and Sweden. She sang with Voices Chorale for 12 years, travelling to sing in Germany, Canterbury Cathedral and Carnegie Hall! Marilyn also volunteers her active story-telling with the Garden State Storytellers. She is a docent for the state of New Jersey, giving tours and teaching Make-a-Law classes (teaching social studies/civics to school field trips). She also works with the Urban Promise (inner city after-school program) reading club. Marilyn also is very active at all levels with the Presbyterian Women. Some of her fondest Slackwood memories and special people are:

Rev. John Craig and wife Naomi kept me interested as a "Jolly Junior" and assisted in Vacation Bible School.

Norman Holpp got me interested in Sunday School teaching.

Laura Bates and Doris DiDonato as fellow co-Sunday School teachers.

Theresa Chidley had junior high school/high school girls "Laurennettes" Club.

Community activities.

Fred Combs, when I needed help as Sunday School Superintendent.

Slackwood Presbyterian Church

February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:30 PM AA Meeting	2	3 6:30 PM Christian Education Committee	4 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	5	6 8:30 AM AA Meeting
7 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Communion 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	8 7:30 PM AA Meeting Chinese New Year	9	10 Ash Wednesday 7:00 Ash Wednesday Service	11 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	12 1:00 PM Daughters of Scotia	13 8:30 AM AA Meeting 9:00 AM Leadership Training Day – Princeton Seminary
14 Valentine's Day 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Ordination/Installation of Officers 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	15 Presidents' Day 7:30 PM AA Meeting	16 7:00 PM Membership and Outreach Committee	17 6:00 PM Personnel Committee 7:00 PM Session meeting	18 12:00 PM Pres. Women Meeting 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	19 9:00 AM Men's Pancake Breakfast 8:00 PM Daughters of Scotia	20 8:30 AM AA Meeting
21 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 12:00 Deacons Mtg. 12:00 Property Committee Mtg. 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service	22 7:30 PM AA Meeting	23	24	25 6:30 PM AA Meeting 7:45 PM Debtors Anonymous	26	27 8:30 AM AA Meeting
28 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Service						

To submit articles, calendar events, or address changes, please e-mail BaumannP@aol.com

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*Some things have to be believed
to be seen*

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