

The Slackwood Grapevine

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

May 2016

Involve Me and I'll Learn...

This week I find myself a bit sentimental. On Friday, Amelia and I will celebrate our 10-year Wedding Anniversary, and on Saturday, I will officially graduate from *Princeton Theological Seminary*. There are times when it is healthy to look back on our lives (as long as we don't look back for too long). For now, I'd like to focus on the past four years, and my time as a seminary student.

This picture I share came after 3100+ mile journey from San Diego to the Trader Joe's parking lot in Princeton. My first year included an internship at *Kingston Presbyterian Church*. I witnessed first-hand how the P.C. U.S.A. call process works, was allowed to lead worship, and experience the inner workings of an everyday church in central New Jersey. During this year, I have foundational memories where I felt God truly leading me to the path of becoming a pastor.



The following year I was a chaplain for the Religious Ministries Department at *The University Medical Center, Princeton-Plainsboro* (where Amelia is currently employed). In a world that can discourage us from being open and vulnerable, I found being at someone's bedside to be a unique and sacred place where people would be honest with a complete stranger. During these moments I heard so many powerful and heartbreaking stories of life, faith, and perseverance which shaped me to become a better listener and a more a compassionate person.

Last year, our family packed up and traveled to *Groomspoint Presbyterian Church* in Northern Ireland to serve as the Assistant Pastor. It was an unforgettable year, including the people, history, and beautifully rugged scenery. Though we were "across the pond", God continued to mold me through the people and unique experiences, which would form my life and my ministry in ways that I could never have imagined.

When we returned to America, within the first 24 hours, we were having a pleasant lunch with Slackwood's P.N.C. Despite the jetlag we were experiencing, I recall feeling extremely comfortable while laughing and sharing stories over a delicious meal. I remember walking around a beautiful and well maintained sanctuary and church grounds, and later, Terrie chasing after us in the parking lot to give us paint swatches for the manse. Though it was just a couple of hours together, those memories were snapshots of a congregation that values worshipping Christ in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel, creating a welcoming family atmosphere where we don't take ourselves too seriously, and a congregation that's filled with members with a heart for service.

It's striking that all these PTS memories are not from classes but from my various internships. I hope you don't get the idea that I skipped classes regularly, was a daydreaming student, or that I didn't learn a great deal from my professors. Rather, many people, including me may be a living examples of what Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I'll remember. Involve me and I'll learn". How grateful I am for Princeton Theological Seminary's Field Education Department and Rev. Deborah Davis who facilitated each of these unique opportunities. All of these places and people provided opportunities to learn and grow into your new pastor. Nike's old motto, combined with God's spiritual direction, truly applies to my seminary experiences, "Just Do It!"

Your Pastor,

Ryan I.

TENSION

I have long been fond of the time between Easter and Ascension. After all, here, too, there is a great tension. How are human beings to endure earthly tensions if they know nothing of the tension between heaven and earth?

--- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Boundaries Leading to Tension

While on a bus headed to my dialysis treatment I heard on the radio a religious program. The bus drivers often have their favorite programs on before the passengers get on. This one was about the tower of Babel. It brought my attention back to the account in Gen.11:1-9. Babel is the story of the boundary between the divine intention in the creation and the human desire to usurp that boundary, thus leading to tension. Although God's imperative is to fill the earth (Gen.1:28, 9:1,7), the human reach is to heaven. "Let us make a name for ourselves, otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:46). Their seeking to disregard the boundary between God's heaven and their arrogance based on their own creative attempt led to tension. The tension did not stop there. Tension arises again in the New Testament. The people place their hope in an earthly messiah but God sends God's Son, Jesus the Christ, from above. Christ ascends beyond human ability, God puts no limits on him. Even death cannot separate him from the Creator and creation. Thus "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:5-11). God informs us in both the Old and New Testaments. But as Christians in the world today, who and what are we listening to? Does our speech and actions reflect a confusing babel or the cohesiveness of the tongues at Pentecost? As we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost let us not overlook the ascension, the unlimited power of the triune God has no boundaries. Let us also try to ascend by dispensing with wall making and boundaries.

Bernadine McRipley

PENTECOST By Cathy Salvatore Barrett

When Pentecost Day arrived, the disciples were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. They saw flames of fire alighting on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. Acts 2:1-4

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams. Even upon my servants, men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

Let us remember the Holy Spirit lives within us. The ultimate purpose of this experience was to give power for Christian living and witnessing.

Let us learn about each other's traditions, and faith can change and enrich our lives.

PRAYER:

Lord help us to love and enrich experiences that teach us to love different faiths. Amen.

CHURCH BUS USED IN UNITY WALK

On Sunday May 1, the United Mercer Interfaith Organization conducted a unity walk to sites around Trenton to memorialize the spot where people have died due to street violence in Trenton during the past year. Many clergy of all faiths around Mercer County participated along with about 35 people who made the three mile walk to join another group who left from Ewing at the Ghandi Garden on East Hanover Street in Trenton. Bill Mansmann drove our bus with the walkers to provide a ride for those unable to walk the entire route. Pastor Irmer also participated, and he and Bill report that the prayers and comments by clergy, parents and friends of those killed were very moving. The goal of the walk was to reduce the numbers of senseless violent acts here in Trenton. We were happy to share our church bus for this event.

GRACE CONGREGATION BAZAAR Saturday, May 21

Sorry for the late notice!! On Saturday May 21, there will be a bazaar from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the church fellowship hall. Our friends of Grace Congregation are selling homemade traditional Taiwanese delicacies: Taiwanese noodles; Taiwanese specialty soup; Taro cake; Steamed buns, etc. Reminiscent of their Taiwan homeland, these delicacies are made by the sisters of Grace Church.



MEN'S BREAKFAST CLUB

The next meeting of the Club will be Friday June 17, 2016 at 9:00am at the church. Mark your calendar for the June meeting to join in the great breakfast, fellowship and work of the church!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO CUT GRASS



We maintain the church grounds throughout the spring and summer. The Property Committee is always seeking a few good people! If you are available to help in cutting the grass this year please speak to Bill Mansmann or Frank DuMont. They would be glad to fill you in and help get you started.

RUMMAGE SALE

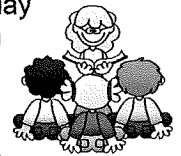
Another successful rummage sale was held! We made \$3,176 for our mission projects over the day and a half of sales. Thank you to every person who worked setting up the sale, the sale itself, the food prepared to keep us going, and the clean up afterwards. A lot of work goes into every sale and the efforts of each person are greatly appreciated.

Got a busy calendar? Mark your calendars **now** for the fall sale: **Weds, Oct. 12 to Sat, Oct. 15, 2016.**

Terrie
and Bill Mansmann, Co-chairs

THANK YOU!!

Another successful year for the Sunday School program will conclude on Sunday, May 29. A great deal of thanks goes to everyone who taught classes and to parents for seeing that their children attend Sunday school each week. Teachers for the youngest class were Sandra Thomas, Carol Belles, Amy Valentino, Helen Zuckerman, Susan Gibbs and Susan Janoski. Working all year with our teenagers was Josh Young and Alicia Morrison. And faithfully leading the adult forum each Sunday was Mark Thomas. Watch for information on days when groups will meet during the months of June, July and August.



CHURCH PICNIC



A church picnic will be held following worship on Sunday, June 5 on the property at the rear of the parking lot. Hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages will be provided. Those attending are asked to bring a side dish or dessert. Games, fun and good fellowship will be included. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLPARK

The Membership & Outreach Committee is organizing a group trip to a Trenton Thunder Baseball game. Seats have been reserved for the Saturday, July 30 game at 7:00 p.m. against the Altoona Curve. Fireworks will follow the game. It is important to know how many people plan to attend, so please sign up on the sheet that can be found in fellowship hall, or email Carol Belles at carolb125@aol.com and let her know how many tickets you need. Tickets are \$8.00 each. Plan to share this fun evening with others in your church family. Tickets must be reserved by July 5 in order to sit in the group section.



PARADE REMINDER!

The Lawrence Township Memorial Day Parade will be held on Saturday, May 28. Marchers will gather at Lawrence High School and the parade will step off promptly at 10:00 a.m. Once again our church bus will be in the parade and we need members of the congregation to walk alongside the bus. It is an easy

walk, approximately one mile, and it is lots of fun. If you cannot walk, come and ride the bus. If you want to go to the high school on the bus, it will leave the church parking lot at 8:50 a.m. Or, you can meet the bus and other marchers at the high school. Please be there by 9:30 a.m. Carol Belles is happy to answer any questions you have about the parade and the church's participation.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Membership & Outreach Committee is sponsoring Movie Nights on two occasions this summer. A family friendly movie will be shown on the grassy area at the rear of the church parking lot on June 25 and July 22. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy a night under the stars with your church family and guests. Watch for more information on time. Also, a neighborhood fun night with games and food will be held on August 27. Details for that event are in the works.



CONGRATULATIONS!



Pastor Ryan Irmer will be graduating from Princeton Theological Seminary on Saturday, May 21. Congratulations to Ryan – and Amelia and Alison who have taken this journey with Ryan.

EXPLORATIONS PRESCHOOL

As the school year comes to an end, Explorations is making preparations for another awesome summer! If you're looking for a safe, fun, inexpensive way for your 2.5-8 year old to spend his or her summer, please contact Shana at (609) 647-4214.

We are (quickly) filling all of our available positions for our 2016-2017 school year. If you or someone you know might be interested in registration, please contact us as soon as possible. (609) 647-4214.

Shana Schiavo

FATHER'S DAY – JUNE 19

The Deacons will be hosting a Father's Day brunch following the worship service on June 19th. Please plan to join us to honor our fathers, uncles, grandfathers, brothers – all the men who have lovingly served in a "fatherly" role to someone special in their lives.



WHO'S WHO AT SLACKWOOD CHURCH Carol Belles

I was born in Trenton, New Jersey at what was then McKinley Hospital and is now Capital Health Regional Hospital (Helene Fuld). My maiden name was LeCompte

and I am one of eight children. When I was born my parents lived on Indiana Avenue in North Trenton. Right after I graduated from high school, my parents moved to Slack Avenue and I now live in that house. After my father died, my mother moved into an apartment and I bought the Slack Avenue house from her. After marriage, Carl and I lived in an apartment in Hamilton Township, and then a house in Yardville. We have two children, Carl, Jr. (known to many as Gene) and Kimberly (who prefers to be called Kim). Carl, Jr. is married to Cheryl and lives in Miami, Florida, and Kimberly is married to Craig Robbins and lives in Hamilton Township.

I have been with Slackwood Church all of my life. I grew up in the Sunday School, went through confirmation classes and joined the church when I was 13. I was also baptized on that same day. My mother, who grew up Baptist, did not believe in infant baptism and so I was baptized when I asked to join the church.

In 2013 I retired from Princeton Theological Seminary as the assistant to the Director of Senior Placement. I worked at the seminary for 22 years. Prior to that I was the only support staff person in the offices of Prospect Street Presbyterian Church, Pilgrim Presbyterian Church and Bethany Presbyterian Church, all in the city of Trenton. The pastors of those three churches, and several other people including me, were working on a new model for ministry in the city. It was our thought that there would be one office for all three churches, so the pastors could work in a more collegial manner with more shared ministries among the congregations. However, the members of the churches never caught that vision, so I rotated each day of the week among the offices of the three churches. I used to say my office was the trunk of my car where I carried whatever I needed to a particular church.

Now I am a full time grandmother. I retired specifically to help care for my grandsons, Patrick and Matthew. I provide their after-school care each week day and am with them on school holidays and other times when they are not in school. It is the joy of my life! There are no words to describe the blessing they are to me each and every day, and I thank God for the privilege of being a part of their lives.

I love to read – love, love, love to read. I read novels, historical fiction, mysteries and the occasional biography. I loved "A Man Called Ove," by Fredrik Backman, "The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry," by Gabrielle Zevin, and "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry," by Rachel Joyce. I am a fan of Alexander McCall Smith, Anne Tyler, Barbara Kingsolver, Anne Lamott, and Henri J. M. Nouwen.

If I could sit down and talk with anyone present or past it would be Eleanor Roosevelt. She is my hero!



**Slackwood Presbyterian Church
May-June 2016**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAY 15 PENTACOST SUNDAY 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Communion 11:45 AM Deacons Meeting 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	16 7:30 PM AA Meeting	17 7:00 PM Membership and Outreach Committee	18 7:00 PM Session meeting	19 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	20 9:00 AM Men's Breakfast	21 8:30 AM AA Meeting 10:00 AM PTS Graduation – Ryan I. 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM Grace Bazaar
22 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship and Communion 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	23 7:30 PM AA Meeting	24	25	26 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	27	28 8:30 AM AA Meeting 10:00 AM Lawrence Twp Memorial Parade
29 9:30 AM Adult Forum and Sunday School 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	30 MEMORIAL DAY 7:30 PM AA Meeting	31	JUNE 1	2 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	3	4 8:30 AM AA Meeting
5 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship CHURCH PICNIC 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	6 7:30 PM AA Meeting	7	8	9 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	10	11 8:30 AM AA Meeting
12 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship. 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	13 7:30 PM AA Meeting	14 FLAG DAY	15 7:00 PM Session meeting	16 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	17 9:00 AM Men's Breakfast	18 8:30 AM AA Meeting
19 FATHER'S DAY 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship FATHER'S DAY BRUNCH 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	20 7:30 PM AA Meeting	21	22	23 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.	24	25 8:30 AM AA Meeting Movie Night – Slackwood Lawn
26 9:30 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM Worship 2:00 PM Grace Taiwanese Services	27 7:30 PM AA Meeting	28	29	30 6:30 PM AA Mtg. 7:45 PM DA Mtg.		

**Upcoming Events: July 22 – Movie Night (Slackwood Lawn)
July 30, 7:00 pm – Trenton Thunder Baseball game
August 27 – Neighborhood Fun Night (Fellowship Hall)**

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

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

May 2016

*It is the Holy Spirit's job to convict, God's job to judge
and my job to love." — Billy Graham*

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Newsletter of the Slackwood Presbyterian Church