

APC Connections

Volume 8, Issue 1

September 2015

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 6—Outreach meets
- Sept. 8—PW Circle 11 AM
- Sept. 9—7:30 PM Choir rehearsal
- Sept. 13—Rally Day Breakfast 9:15; Session 12:15 PM
- Sept. 15—October newsletter articles due
- Sept. 20—Sunday School 9:30 AM
- Oct. 4—World Communion Sunday/Peace & Global Witness Offering



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Pastor's Page

Friends,

On Sunday, August 16, I arrived early at church to discover that our building had been vandalized. On the Myrtle Street side of the building, in big pink letters, someone had spray-painted "F*** God." It was hard to tell if we were supposed to "get" a message from it, or if it was just something crude to paint on a large white canvas, or if someone was taking out their troubles with God on the side of our building. It's not got the eloquence of a "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" but point taken, the author was not happy with God, the church, or whatever at that very moment. I get it. Aggression resides just outside the church walls. Sometimes very much within the church walls as well. What are we going to do when hate comes to the church?

Well, for our situation, it wasn't quite so grave. A kind officer of the Ashland police came to our building to tell us that a vandalism report had already been filed. After worship, we found neighbors already working to scrub off the paint. By the time Rob came back with scrub brushes to help, Marti and Charles had gotten some "Graffiti be gone" or something like that and had it mostly scrubbed back to white.

What I hope it did do, in this instance anyway, was bring us into solidarity with other church communities who have lost so much more than a little bit of innocence over the idyllic small town community that is Ashland, Virginia. It brought to mind the time I found KKK literature put on my desk in another church setting. It reminded me of the hateful gossip that can be so disruptive inside the church family. But most of all, it reminds me to be aware of brothers and sisters whose churches have been burned to the ground. It grieves me deeply to think of the violence that has rocked the world of multiple church fami-

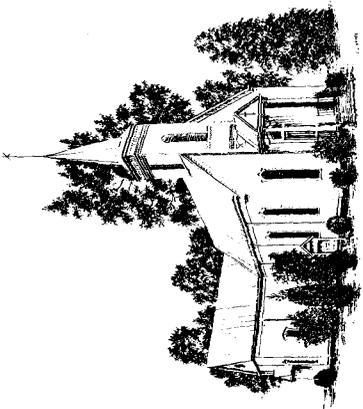
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lies as a lone gunman came in and took lives. A little bit of paint can be washed off, covered over. You can't bring back a sense of safety once the church is no longer a place that can promise it. The only thing we can do is live in freedom.

As someone who finds the Christian narrative compelling, it is expected that those who worship the living loving God will see some trouble. *Blessed are the persecuted* – says Jesus in his famous sermon. Yet, most of the time, I feel more supported than persecuted as pastor of a small Presbyterian congregation in a college town community. We face little to overwhelm us, so when someone throws religion back in our face, I hope it means that we're doing something right. Jesus taught love, and people wanted to kill him, and succeeded. That wasn't the final answer. I'm not praying for more trouble. I don't want it to come our way, but if we don't side with those who have lost sacred spaces, lost loved ones, or lost their sense of safety because of others who don't sit on the side of love, then we've surely lost our way.

What was the motive for spray painting our church? I have absolutely no idea. But if it wakes us up to a new way of seeing our world and our place in it, so be it.

God's Peace, Pastor Kerra

Mark Your Calendars for these September Events

| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  <p>RALLY DAY Breakfast September 13 at 9:15 a.m.</p> |  <p>Presbyterian Women PW Circle meetings resumes Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 11:00 a.m. for study and lunch.</p> | |
| |  <p>Choir Practice Resumes Sept. 9</p> |  <p>JOIN us at Sunday School Sunday School resumes Sept. 20. More details to come next month!</p> |

MEET OUR NEXT STUDENT INTERN: Melissa Miller

Hi, I'm Melissa! I grew up "bi-coastal" because one parent lived in Los Angeles, CA and the other here in Richmond, VA – though I primarily lived in RVA and spent school breaks and summers in LA. After High School, I was accepted to the University of Richmond and pursued a BS in Business Management and Marketing. In the years since graduation I've worked mostly in the non-profit arena, currently with the Hanover Chamber of Commerce.

Truthfully, my faith popped in and out of significance in my life until about four years ago. Something, I'm not sure exactly what but I'm sure it had to do with my

Usher and Greeter Schedule

| | GREETERS | USHERS | COMMUNION ELDERS | COMMUNION PREP & CLEANUP | LITURGIST | FLOWERS |
|----------|----------------|--|--|---------------------------|------------|----------|
| 9/6/15 | M. Lumpkin | J. Tate, G. Young | K. Basilio | S. Henderson, C. Schutte | V. Neeley | Basilio |
| 9/13/15 | B. Mathes | L. Allison, K. Basilio | REMEMBER, If you cannot serve, please find a replacement and leave a message on the office phone, 798-5543. | | E. Shea | Simpson |
| 9/20/15 | S. & D. Moncol | S. & M. Carneal | | | M. Carneal | Allison |
| 9/27/15 | V. Neeley | J. Glazebrook, S. Henderson, B. Mathes, C. Schutte | | | M. Miller | Tate |
| 10/04/15 | E. Pepper | B. & E. Shea | K. Basilio, T. Blair, S. Carneal, L. Herring | K. Basilio, J. Glazebrook | | DuPriest |



Happy Birthday to: September

- 3 Wendy Doyle
- 7 Bob Lybrand
- 10 John Carswell
- 14 Sally Moncol
- 20 Pat Dunn
Grace Arey

We have been busy helping out this summer! Many thanks to the women who carried dinner over to the Free Clinic at St. James the Less on August 5. Linda Allison, Jane Glazebrook, Sheila Henderson, Suzanne Huff, Emily Pepper, Kathleen Pugh, Caroline Schutte, and Ella Mae Simpson found time to contribute money or fix and carry food. Thank you, Ginger Young



SPECIAL OFFERINGS PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS World Communion Sunday, October 4

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to sustain their local peacemaking ministries.

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Pastor Nzeba will address issues centered on women and their families. Under her leadership, women from over 60 denominations federated under the ECC are united to address sexual violence against women and children in conflict-ridden eastern Congo. Since the influx of refugees following the 1994 genocide in neighboring Rwanda, the area regularly suffers violent attacks by roaming militia, which are funded by revenues from mines they control. Rape has proliferated from a barbaric war tactic into an epidemic social ill. Pastor Nzeba accompanies local women's groups who offer sanctuary to rape survivors and ensure that they receive full medical attention. Increasingly aware of the intricate connections between mineral wealth, armed conflict, and sexual violence, she has become an outspoken critic of foreign companies involved in trading conflict minerals.

Pastor Nzeba also serves as the Women's President for the West Kinshasa Synod, Presbyterian Church of Kinshasa (CPK). She has been invited by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program to be a 2015 International Peacemaking speaker.

In addition to the keynote address, the conference will provide updates from mission co-workers and various partner organizations on recent work in Congo, as well as discussions on education, health, and spiritual programs.

This year's **conference will include** worship and workshops, including **presentations by Jeff Boyd**, regional liaison for Central Africa, Presbyterian World Mission, **Dr. Lawrence Sthreshley**, health consultant, PC(USA), and **Inge Sthreshley**, agricultural consultant, PC(USA.)

For more information and to register, visit: <https://www.regonline.com/cmnc15>



Ash Grove Women's Retreat at Richmond Hill

November 13-14, 2015

**Keynote Speaker: Mimi Weaver, Life Coach
and Spiritual Director**

**Topic: Changing Seasons: Making Transitions
with Grace**

We all go through many times of transition in our lives. These interactive sessions will provide you with ways to let go of whatever is holding you back from moving forward into the life you really want. **Brochures are in the narthex and office.**

(somewhat) generally curious nature, led me back to church at a close friend's invitation. At the time I was hungry for something more internally fulfilling and what I found was richer than anything I knew before - praise God for always showing up on time.

I soaked up everything I could, in that church and outside of it, and found faith as an adult far more satisfying than I experienced it as a child. I kept asking questions and discovered Christianity as an internal belief and fire instead of a simple set of rules and expectations. Over time, I got to the point where I wanted more and didn't know where else to go on my own. Enter, Seminary. Right now I'm one year into a three year degree for an ultimate purpose I'm still discovering. But somehow, I know it will all come together – and in the meantime, I can't wait to see my seminary (and internship) journey unfold.

Today, I reside near Union Presbyterian Seminary's campus with a fellow student and my two sweet kitties, Castle & Beckett. When I'm not working or studying, I love reading, being outside, exploring new places, attending live theater or performances and baking things I try not to eat before they're cooked.

NOTE: Melissa begins her internship with us on **Rally Day Sunday, September 13!**

Congo Mission Network Conference: Union to Host Congolese Pastor and Activist Berthe Nzeba September 18-20



The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo are deeply troubled, but also amazingly joyous and resilient; it's our joy to stand in solidarity with them. Presbyterians have been active in Congo for more than 120 years, and today the Congo Mission Network is made up of Presbyterians from all around the U.S. who work with mission co-workers, Louisville staff, and other non-profits to advocate for the people of Congo and to support the work of Congolese Presbyterians to strengthen education, jobs, healthcare, peacemaking and evangelism in Congo. At this conference, the Congo Presbyterian Community and the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa will be represented by guest speaker, Rev. Berthe Nzeba, the first female Presbyterian Pastor in Congo and general secretary of the Women's and Families Departments for the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC).

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