



The Stained Glass Window

Salem Presbyterian Church
www.salempresbyterian.org

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Under the Big Tent by Trina Brown

In January of this year I started my role as the Communications Ministry chairperson here at Salem Presbyterian Church. When I began I thought to myself, what do I know about communications in a church? What exactly is my role? I bought books on the subject and devoured them. I'm still doing that. And I went looking on the Internet for resources, especially on the Presbyterian Church USA's Web site. I found something called the Presbyterian Communicators Network and it had a free email newsletter I could sign up for, so I did.

Then, earlier this year I got one of these emails from the Presbyterian Communicators Network and it announced that there were scholarships available through it for the "Big Tent." The Big Tent is a Presbyterian Church USA national event held every two years. The first one was held in 2009 and the second one was to be held June 30th through July 2nd this year in Indianapolis. I thought I would give it a try and applied. A few months later, I received an email from the Presbyterian Communicators Network announcing that I'd won a scholarship. It paid for my registration in the conference and my meals.

The event is called the Big Tent because it

is one event combining 9 national Presbyterian conferences under one roof and one theme: "Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide." There were over 1,750 Presbyterians in attendance and among the 9 conferences were the Evangelism and Church Growth Conference, the Healthy Ministry Conference, the Peacemaking Conference, and the Presbyterian Communicators Network Conference.

I went to workshops as part of my conference such as "Graphic Design for Non-Designers." Everyone was encouraged though to go to workshops outside their own conference, and I did so. I went to some wonderful workshops, including one called "Small Churches—Lighthouses in Rough Seas" that talked about what small churches are doing to find renewal and growth and new mission.

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July 2011

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The Stained Glass Window newsletter is published monthly by the Communications Ministry of the Salem Presbyterian Church. The colors in the banner on the front of the newsletter are colors found in the church's own stained glass windows. The newsletter is distributed via email, postal service and personal delivery and is available in PDF format to read and/or download. It may also be found at the church Web site at www.salempresbyterian.org.

We welcome your ideas and submissions for the newsletter! Please contact Trina Brown about what you would like to see.

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Under the Big Tent (continued)

All the workshops I attended were extremely interesting and some very inspirational. I came out of them with a new enthusiasm. But the highlights of the event for me were the times I got to talk with other people attending the conference, a field trip I took as part of the event, and the worship services. While it was a national conference, there were representatives there of so many cultures, so many countries, and I heard different languages spoken. It was interesting to me that all these people were Presbyterians.

The field trip I took was to Tabernacle Presbyterian Church. It was founded in the early 1920's and in the 1960s and 1970s found itself in the middle of an area of great racial unrest. All the other churches in the area pulled out to safer and more prosperous neighborhoods. But Tabernacle stayed and is still serving the community today. You would not believe what this church has accomplished, the ministries it's gotten started. They have a very active recreation program where children come to play just about every sport and serve on a number of teams.

Across the street from the church is a beautiful, full-service medical center. They even have a dentist. And in a run-down area with a bunch of boarded up houses, the church started the Unleavened Bread Café, which welcomes all people who walk through the doors be they homeless, drug-addicted, victims of domestic violence, etc. We met some women there who had found hope, support and faith there, who had turned their lives around.

Friday morning I heard Serene Jones speak. She's the first female president of Union Theological Seminary in New York. She gave a quiet and reflective sermon but it had a powerful message. She said her theology is one she calls "The Theory of Just Breathe." She said Christians are called "to stay awake and take in the moment in which we find ourselves. Cast off your shoulders that ridiculous notion that it is up to you to change history. It's going to happen with or without us – our task is not to force it forward but to stay awake ... with our eyes on Scripture and the world."

At the closing worship, Reverend J. Herbert Nelson from the PCUSA's Office of Public Witness in Washington, DC, gave a sermon in which he said the Presbyterian Church is at "an in-between time." He said the Presbyterian Church needs to move from success, back when it had high numbers and a lot of clout, to significance, "sharing the love of Jesus Christ wherever we go." Using John 15: 1-6 as his Scripture reference, he said, "The Lord is pruning the Presbyterian church, cutting it back so it can be ready to blossom and bloom." His sermon was so moving and so inspirational that the words he spoke brought everyone to their feet in a rousing standing ovation.

Overall, the conference was a wonderful, inspirational and amazing experience for me. I learned a lot, met a lot of terrific people, and came away with a new-found hope for the Presbyterian Church as a whole. The only downside is that you all couldn't be there with me.

Celebrating Alice McGinnis' 95th Birthday!

On July 24th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Mariner Hall at Salem Presbyterian Church, we celebrated Alice McGinnis' 95th birthday. Hosted by Alice's family, the event was very well-attended. Friends from the church family and community were there to wish Alice a very happy birthday and enjoy fellowship. Ed and Elinor DeJean, the writing group of which Alice is a part, and little Abby Spaulding with mother, Monica Spaulding were among the many guests. A very happy 95th birthday to you, Alice!



All photos
by Vickie
Saewert



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A Conversation with Beth Walden-Fisher

Reverend Beth Walden-Fisher will become our pastor at Salem Presbyterian Church on August 1, 2011. The Fishers – Beth, Andrew, Emory and Rachel – are looking forward to worshipping at Salem Presbyterian Church and meeting members of the congregation on August the 3rd. I met Beth, Rachel and Emory one recent evening and spoke with them about their joining us.

Emory and Rachel are 9-year-old twins. They just returned from summer camp where Emory's favorite activity was canoeing and Rachel's was swimming. They will be entering 4th grade in the fall.

Andrew and Beth have been married for 20 years. Andrew is a graduate of the University of Texas and played rugby at UT and Rice University. He has long since retired from rugby, but according to Beth "you may notice a few dents in his head(!)." Before they moved to the Fisher family farm in Indiana, Andrew worked for Apple computer. Currently Andrew is farming and the family has added a pheasant-raising operation to the mix.

Beth is looking forward to becoming our pastor, helping to cultivate a sense of how our church is flourishing and discovering together the direction the Spirit is leading us. She said it excites her to come in and meet new people and learn how together they make up a congregation. While she has a good deal of experience and has suggestions



Photo by Andrew Fisher

to offer and ideas she wants to share with us, it is important to her to come into a new congregation with a beginner's mind. She explained, "The experience you gather as a pastor is truly invaluable, but at the same time if you don't come into a new congregation with a beginner's mind, you can make all kinds of assumptions that turn out not to be correct."

Beth is not a stranger to Salem Presbyterian Church. She has been here before. In 2006 she had been Pastor at Nabb Presbyterian Church for 6 years and took the position of Director of Christian Education at Fairlawn Presbyterian Church

in Columbus, Indiana. Her children were small at that time and this position was part-time. She thought the position would be a good way to stay involved in the church and to have ample time to spend with her toddlers. Her summers were free except for Vacation Bible School. One thing she missed during her time at Fairlawn was preaching. She had the opportunity to preach occasionally, but not often because there were several ministers attending that congregation. She said our pastor Reverend Sara Shields went on a summer vacation at that time and Sara asked Beth if she would like to preach at our church for two Sundays in a row. Beth said yes.

Beth recalled that one of the Sundays she preached at our church, some singers from the community had been invited to provide the special music. She said they did a great job and sang about the Rapture. In her sermon she talked about differences among Christians and how wonderful it is that Christians can all be together with those differences. She pointed out that Presbyterians do not believe in the Rapture but “we have brothers and sisters who do and we’re glad to have them here.” More recently, in October 2010 Beth got to meet the Helsel family after Peter Helsel died in Madison. At the time of his passing he did not have a minister and the funeral director recommended Beth to officiate at Peter’s funeral.

Just prior to coming to Salem Presbyterian, Beth served as interim pastor at Hanover Presbyterian Church in Hanover, Indiana. She also serves on the Committee on Ministry (COM).

She learned of Salem Presbyterian Church’s need for a pastor through the COM and said two different people who knew her well came to her and told her they thought she would be a good fit for our congregation. They asked if it would be okay if they passed along her information to the Pastor Search Committee and she said yes, by all means. She passed along her Pastor Information Form and told them she would be happy to talk with the search committee.

Beth had heard good things about Salem Presbyterian Church. She knew Sara, having attended presbytery conferences with her, and had the opportunity to speak with her at length during those conferences. She said Sara had really good things to say about our congregation. Beth also knew Ed DeJean on the COM, and found it interesting to talk with him. Beth said, “I had heard that the church was theologically diverse. Not that everybody’s liberal or everybody’s conservative, but that there’s a lot of discourse. I’m excited to learn more about that.” She went on to say that this is true of more and more mainline churches, that people are coming from all kinds of backgrounds and that mainline Protestants seem to be thinking a little more “big picture” now, rather than focusing on adherence to signature doctrines of their specific denomination. She said people seem to be realizing that signature doctrines “reflect part of what’s true but not all of it.” Beth explained that her mantra when faced with seemingly opposing ideas on a theological issue is to see the

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A Conversation with Beth Walden-Fisher (continued)

truth in both, that it is really “both/and” rather than “either/or.”

Beth shared with me that she'd grown up in the Church of Christ, and if you weren't a member, it was thought you weren't saved. She said at least initially this makes churches both cohesive and exclusive, because the members thought themselves the only ones saved. She came to the point where she felt like she was on the outside looking in, that she was studying her own faith tradition and critiquing it. While in graduate school in Austin, Texas, she found a more progressive Church of Christ congregation and this church was considering ordaining some women to be deacons. When this church ultimately decided against

that, Beth decided it was time to look for another church home. She attended Disciples of Christ, Episcopal and Presbyterian churches before choosing to become a member of a Presbyterian church. She really liked the way the Presbyterian Church is governed, that both clergy and lay-people share in governance. She finds that a nice balance.

Beth and I talked about evangelism, that in the Church of Christ they're so motivated to

bring people into their church because of their belief that those people not a part of their church will go to Hell. Beth told me about a book she'd read called **Unbinding the Gospel** in which the author poses the question, in Beth's words, “If we want to be more evangelistic but we don't think people are going to Hell, then how do we do it?” The book author discussed other reasons besides saving someone from Hell to get them interested in Christianity and, again in Beth's words, “in the teachings of Jesus, in the community of the body

In Beth's view, Presbyterian churches are often best-kept secrets. But “we all long for some sort of connection with God and our neighbor, and to have meaning. I think people are seeking but don't always know where to go.”

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think people are seeking but don't always know where to go.”

I asked Beth about her call to become a Presbyterian pastor. Beth had gotten a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration at Abilene Christian University in Texas and then a Master's degree in Public Administration from Texas State University. Then in Austin she'd been looking at graduate programs in religious studies thinking she might like to be a professor. But after she joined a Pres-

byterian church in Austin, one Sunday a woman got up, a parish associate, and preached. Beth said the woman said the most beautiful prayer and Beth realized “this is what I really want to do.”

The concept of calling seems to Beth to be more emphasized in the Presbyterian Church than in other denominations, or may be uniquely Presbyterian. Beth said this wasn't emphasized in her upbringing because “it was so dualistic. You've got the world and heaven. What you did in the world was of no consequence.” Beth told me that the concept of calling would have saved her the Bachelor's degree and Master's in Public Administration she'd gotten. Beth believes that “God does give you gifts and talents and passions. You're supposed to pick up on those. But I was not taught to pick up on those at all, especially if they were to a field where women weren't supposed to be.” She said the call to become a pastor was latent in her, that she had ignored it for years and years but that she had an Aha! moment when she saw a woman get up and preach. Beth could ignore her calling no longer. So she stayed in the job she held for two years and then enrolled in Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and received her Master's of Divinity degree in 1998.

Beth is currently getting her Doctorate of Ministry degree at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She started her studies in January of this year. She said she has to pinch her-

self sometimes that she's actually getting to study what she really wants to study and that it's the most amazing thing to her. The program is neat because it allows one to get a marriage and family therapy license. Beth hopes that her studies will benefit her in the parish, in sermons and in teaching. Previously she had focused mostly on preaching on the Gospels and the New Testament, but she's more confident now in delving into difficult Old Testament texts so plans to broaden her preaching to include more of those.

It was a great pleasure speaking with Beth and her children and beginning to get to know them. They are looking forward to joining us at Salem Presbyterian Church and learning about our congregation just as much as we look forward to their arrival and learning about them. Toward the end of our conversation, Beth's daughter Rachel said, “It feels like I'm going into a new church that has the same beliefs except there are new people that you can meet and find out about them. Churches are just a place you can find out about people, learn more about God and just enjoy it.”

- Beth Walden-Fisher was interviewed by Trina Brown. If you would like to interview a church member for the newsletter, would like to be interviewed, or have a suggestion for an interview, please contact Trina Brown at trinab@blueriver.net, or by phone at 883-5689.

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
	1	2
<p>7</p> <p>19th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Reverend Beth Walden-Fisher will be leading the worship service. Communion will be served.</p> <p>Liturgist: Jo Barnett</p> <p>Communion elements: Sharon Clark</p> <p>Doris Woodward (883-3513) is the contact person for Coffee Hour for August.</p>	8	9
<p>14</p> <p>20th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Reverend Beth Walden-Fisher will be leading the worship service.</p> <p>Liturgist: Julia Dyer</p> <p>Luke Spencer-Pierce's Birthday</p>	15	16
<p>21</p> <p>21st Sunday in Ordinary Time. Reverend Beth Walden-Fisher will be leading the worship service.</p> <p>Jan Morris' Birthday</p>	22	<p>23</p> <p>Gene Wozniak's Birthday</p> <p>James Caum's Birthday</p>
<p>28</p> <p>22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Reverend Beth Walden-Fisher will be leading the worship service.</p> <p>Maurice Godfrey's Birthday</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Sara Shields' Birthday</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Jane Spencer-Pierce's Birthday</p>

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 Welcome Pitch-In Dinner for Pastor Beth Walden-Fisher and family. Mariner Hall, 6:30 p.m. For details, contact Jo Barnett at 883-4176.	4	5	6
10	11	12 Katie Morris' Birthday	13 Cameron Morris' Birthday Leah Fihe's Birthday
17	18	19	20
24	25	26 Rosemary Webster's Birthday	27 Sharon Clark's Birthday
31 Jordan Humphrey's Birthday			

Our Mission Statement

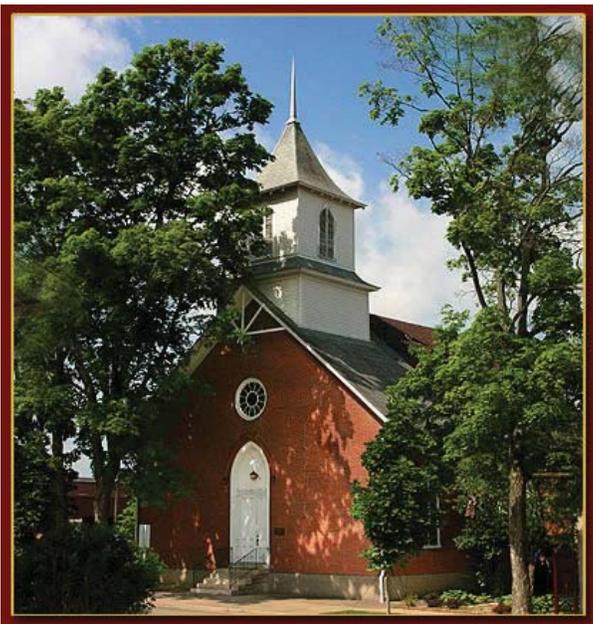
Understanding that grace is a gift from God to the world, to us.....

The Mission of the Salem Presbyterian Church is to support our church family in fostering growth in the Christian faith, in leading meaningful lives, and in doing good works to the glory of God.

To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.

Micah Chapter 6, Verse 8

**Salem Presbyterian Church
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12 July 2011