Keeping Your Church Growing

[This is a guest article written by Rev. Dr. Ben Shaw, Professor of Old Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Ben is also my father-in-law. This is a good description of how we should act toward visitors at Main Street.]

I read a blog post a couple of weeks ago. The post was titled something like, "We're Going to Stop Being a Welcoming Church." Sounds terrible, doesn't it? But as the post went on to explain, it was actually a good idea. His point was that his church was welcoming. They had coffee, they had greeters, they had people to help direct visitors to the right place. But in his view it wasn't enough. They needed to be an inviting church. That is, a church that the members invite people to. This pastor had stumbled on something that growing churches have been doing for a couple of millennia. People inviting their friends to church.

Now maybe you don't have any friends to invite to church. Maybe all your friends are already in your church, or in some other church. Then you need to cultivate some new friends. Maybe they won't be friends that you can invite to church right away. But give it time. Pray for them. Be a real friend to them. Then one day, maybe you can invite them to church. Sounds simple. But many of us don't do it. And that's a shame, because there are plenty of people out there who need friends, and who need the church. They just don't know it yet. So get started.

While I'm on the subject, is your church a church that you'd want to invite people to? Is your church a welcoming church? I don't mean coffee and donuts. I mean a church where a new visitor feels accepted. Do people at your church interact with visitors? I don't mean a simple, "Hello" before moving on to someone else. I mean taking an active interest in the visitor. Not in an overwhelming, smothering fashion, but in a way that says to the visitor that you are interested in them as a person, not just a number that can be added to the "we had X number of visitors this month." Are the people in your church going to forego talking with their friends in order to converse with a stranger? If they're not, you don't have a welcoming church. Visitors won't come back. If they won't come back, there's less chance of them meeting Christ in your church.

Continued on Page 2, Keeping Your Church Growing
Granted, some visitors don't want to be noticed. They'll come in late and leave early. They're probably not sure they really want to be there. Not much you can do about that. But that's not most visitors. They hope, even if they're not fully conscious of it, that someone will take notice of them. You be the one to do it.

This doesn't happen by accident. It happens by intent. If other people in your church are ignoring visitors, make sure you don't. Even if the visitor is someone you know will never join your church, such as a family visiting while on vacation, make sure you speak with them. Let them know that this is a church that welcomes visitors, that invites people, that wants strangers who will become friends.

If your church doesn't welcome visitors in this way, by drawing them in, letting them know they've been noticed, and that the church is interested in them, your church is already beginning to die. It may look good. It may have a lot of people. But it's already dying, because it's closing out those who need to be drawn in.

Think about it.

Congratulations!

Joshua Crandall

Columbus Christian Academy

Son of

Richard and Karmel Crandall
First, I want to clear up a slight misunderstanding. Last month I mentioned that I was a bit frazzled and some of our out of town readers thought I had been sick. No, just busier than usual. I was involved in my 55th class reunion, which was quite an undertaking but lots of fun and worth it all! Now we have made it to the 24th of May and Happy Hearts has had a wonderful time today. We gathered at our usual time and sang our favorite hymns for over an hour! Rhonda White played the piano beautifully and sang with us too! Don’t you wonder how she does that? I do! And she does it exceptionally well. Mrs. Edna has had an overloaded month of May (somewhat like my April), so Rhonda graciously agreed to accompany us. Thank you, Rhonda!

We sang to our hearts' content. We started with "The Old Rugged Cross" which is always requested by Nick Hairston when we sing favorite songs. It isn’t in our hymn book, so we sang it acapella and by memory. It was awesome! Pat Wallace agreed to be our song leader and did her usual good job with the task. She has such a beautiful voice, loves sharing her thoughts about the songs, and leads us in a remarkable way. So that you will be assured of the songs the senior citizens love to sing, I want to list the hymns in the order we sang them. Lynn Estalote was keen enough to list them for me:

"I Need Thee Every Hour", "God Will Take Care of You", "Only Trust Him", "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus", "It Is Well With My Soul", "Trust and Obey", "I Want Jesus To Walk With Me", "Breath on Me, Breath of God", "Amazing Grace", "Just As I Am", "Be Thou My Vision", "Jesus Paid It All", "Rock of Ages", "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today", and "Take My Life and Let It Be".

Do you see the progression of the messages of the songs? It was an inspiring study. We discussed the circumstances under which "It Is Well With My Soul" was written. If you don’t know, inquire. And do you know what the cleft represents in "Rock of Ages"? It enlightens the meaning of this song. We talked about being in heaven and in the glory of our Lord and Savior. Then we will fully understand the Trinity. Then we will be made Christ like and complete, oh glorious day! When we sang "Be Thou My Vision" we thought of Craig and Mary Beth Bernard because this song was sung repeatedly to Craig (his favorite) during the months he was unresponsive. Every song stimulated our thoughts, hearts, and feelings. It was a joyous time for all of us. One person suggested we have a song fest every other meeting! And we are considering a Happy Hearts special (to be announced later). It was all good! Pat and Rhonda did a great job and the rest of us sang the very best we could! I thought we sounded pretty good for a group of senior citizens! Pat did too, and she really knows!

Our meal was as good as our program. Clara Peterson offered to make chicken salad sliders, Debbie Jenkins offered to make stuffed eggs, Nell Fleming offered to make a congealed fruit salad and her mint tea, Kathy Newton offered to make Mrs. Frances’ cookies. The emphasis is on "offered". It amazes me how everyone wants to help with our meal and what an amazing help it is! We all appreciate the effort that is put into making our gathering a special event. Also "offered" were the decorations. Marianne Field offered gorgeous, fragrant gardenias, lace cap hydrangeas, pink and blue hydrangeas, all from her garden. Frances Laws also offered oak leaf hydrangeas, as well as beautiful pink ones.

Continued on Page 4, Happy Hearts
I dropped the flowers into vases and they were spectacular in their natural arrangement. They looked somewhat English and very much representative of summer in the South. I especially liked that they were fresh flowers from Frances and Marianne’s gardens. And would you believe, the pink and blue tablecloths used on the food table were donated to our church by our sweet Susan Wright? We continue to miss Susan and Rick! We were pleased to have visitors today. Jean brought her sister, Betty Sanchez, and her friend, Ann Barkley who comes frequently. Nell brought her friends, Sherry Guyton and Deb Shelton with her. It was especially good to have Jennifer Garner, Peggy Kennedy, Jane Rogowski, and Lynn Estalote with us, as well as our regulars who contribute so much to the success of our meetings. Ben Chilcutt was having a fine time irritating Pat Wallace, and of course Johnice Pilcher was doing her best to pick on everyone at her table. We do have fun and laugh a lot!

We would love to have you join us. We will not meet in June, but we are scheduled to meet on July 8 at 10:30 in the fellowship hall. Our guest speaker will be entertaining and his program will be very patriotic. We will enjoy the usual July menu of BLT’s with mayo or salad dressing. Some things never change. See you Friday, July 8.

Bess
What a privilege and blessing it is to be a part of Main Street Christian School. As I look at the pictures of the precious children, I marvel at how much they have grown and matured.

One of the best things we can do for children is to help spark a love for learning. We can fan the flames of curiosity. It is such a joy to see the children’s excitement as they discover. Everything is new and fresh to them.

The Farewell to Fours program was one of the best we have ever had. I especially enjoyed meeting some of the Grandparents. They have such a stabilizing influence in the lives of their grandchildren.

Please take time to pray for these children and all the children in your life.

Together for the Gospel,  
“Miss” Cathy

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Psalm 100:1
Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.  
Ecclesiastes 12:1

Be ye kind one to another.  
Ephesians 4:32

Love one another as I have loved you.  
John 15:12
All Creatures of Our God and King

by Ron Simpson

This hymn is number 115 in our Trinity Hymnal. Under the last line of the hymn music, the author information on the bottom left tells us the hymn was written by Francis of Assisi sometime around 1225 A.D. Imagine that. You are singing a hymn written by the original Franciscan Friar (and arguably the founding member of PETA) that has been around in one form or another for almost 800 years! We have William H. Draper to thank for translating and paraphrasing the original text into English in 1926.

Your hymnal also has a note on the right side of the page of this hymn indicating the source of the tune is Geistliche Kirchengesange, Cologne, 1623. The reference is to a Jesuit hymnal printed in Cologne in 1623. The full title of that hymnal is, Auserlesen Katholische Geistliche Kirchengesänge (roughly translated, “Choice Catholic Spiritual Church Songs”). The unpronounceable name of the tune is; Lasst Uns Erfreuen which Google translates as, “Let’s Be Happy,” but to sound less Pharrell Williams and a bit more Presbyterian we will say it means, “Let us Rejoice.” In 1906 the modern composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams arranged the harmonies of “Let us Rejoice” into the form you now have printed in your hymnal. In our hymnal, the tune is used for the hymns, “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing” (TH289), “Doxology” (TH733), and “All Creatures of Our God and King” (TH115). It is also commonly used in many hymnals for the hymn, “From All Who Dwell below the Skies”.

The text is a meditation on Psalm 145 but incorporates concepts and imagery from Job 12 and Psalm 148. The opening phrase of the hymn invites all creatures of our God and King to lift up their voices in worship and praise of God. The heavenly spheres, one by one are addressed and encouraged to glory in their God. The four elements of Earth, wind, fire, and water, likewise are called on to lift their praise. One cannot help but notice that historically, sun, moon, stars, earth, wind, fire, and water have all been worshipped and venerated as gods at some time in many cultures. Here, each of these “creatures” has been called upon to declare praise to God and worship He who created them. The sixth verse is a clarification and celebration to the Trinity. The One and only Creator is singularly glorified. The persons of the Trinity are declared individually. Then once again a singular pronoun is used, “Praise Him!” Each stanza ends with a three-fold “alleluia” which serves as another Trinitarian element resounding throughout the entire hymn.

How marvelous and how wonderful our God is. We can find this pattern throughout hymnody. Quite often we see God takes the work of many individuals over a course of time and creates a hymn of lasting value. The words of a scripture text impact the meditations of a poet. The words touch hearts, and a translator delivers the text into other languages. A musician writes a melody. Another perfects that melody. It all comes together under the direction of the Spirit and becomes something beautiful that impacts the hearts of the worshiper and lifts high the name of our God. In all things, regardless of the success of human intellect and creativity, or its failure; He will be praised!
FAITH PROMISE

An Attitude Adjustment

An excerpt from a devotional by Paul Kooistra

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!
II Corinthians 9:15

Have you ever had anyone tell you, you need an attitude transplant? If you have, you know it feels like a slap in the face. It hurts if you deserved it, but it hurts even more if you didn’t.

In the past, the Corinthians had given even more than Paul expected, and he makes it clear that he expects them to continue the giving trend set earlier. Still, He reminds them that as they plan their gift, they should examine their attitude. It is important for us also, to search our heart attitudes in relationship to this process.

Giving to God’s kingdom work is far too important to be simply a duty. The foundation of our stewardship is God’s indescribable gift of His Son, who “for the joy set before Him,” took the punishment for our sin upon Himself. We come to Him with nothing but our sin and our need. He gives us His righteousness for our sin, His riches for our poverty. He transforms us into sons and daughters of God and changes our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. The gospel at work in our lives causes us to give. We give out of the gospel.

Those of us who have been enriched by the work of Christ are to embellish that richness through the act of giving...There is much spiritual poverty because of the lack of giving among believers. Through our giving, we experience the privilege of being instruments of God’s grace. Missionaries who have given up much for God’s work are empowered to preach the gospel to those trapped in the darkness of unbelief. Churches are planted as light in places where there is little hope. Homeless children are brought to experience love through the family of God. Broken people find healing through medical missions.

Our culture is obsessed with the accumulation of wealth, but not spiritual wealth. Nothing is sadder than to be rich in material things, but poor in the experience of God.

Little we do pays spiritual dividends as high as giving to God’s work around the world. Giving, like love, cannot be forced. Paul may even be suggesting that giving under compulsion can be dangerous to your spiritual health. As you consider your faith promise, pray not only that God will guide you in your giving, but that He will give you a longing to give. Ask that this desire will be so great that it would hurt too much not to give.

It is in this same spirit that Paul says,

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
II Corinthians 9:7

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the privilege of giving.
You have enabled me to give, and You have provided the faith promise opportunity for me to respond. I now ask You to give me a heart that desires to give with joy. Let me give out of the gospel. Show me what You want me to give, and please continue to enable me to give.
Amen.

Continued on Page 8, Faith Promise
Questions:
1. What does it mean for you to give out of the gospel?
2. Do you consider giving a duty or a privilege?
3. You have been praying about your faith promise pledge. How much did you intend to give before you began?
4. As you have studied God’s Word, has He stretched your commitment?

IF WE IGNORE THE PRIVILEGE AND JOY OF GIVING, WHO IS HURT?

Remember this: *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously* II Corinthians 9:6

When we fall down in our stewardship, some say we are stealing from God. God, however, doesn’t need our money. Others indicate that Christian work will be handicapped, but God cannot and does not fail. When we fail in our giving, we rob ourselves of the privilege, the joy and the blessing that come to those who excel in the grace of giving (II Corinthians 8:7c).

MAIN STREET FAITH PROMISE PLEDGE UPDATE

IF YOU’VE FORGOTTEN TO TURN IN YOUR PLEDGE CARD, PLEASE DO SO ON OR BEFORE SUNDAY, MAY 29.

There are pledge boxes in the chapel; cards may also be turned in to Russ Russell (Missions Committee Chairman), or the church office. Pledges may be anonymously made. Our pledge total so far falls almost $10,000 short of meeting the reduced budget from last year.

The Missions Committee will be using the total pledged to set the budget in June.

Clete Hux Visiting
June 26

Rev. Clete Hux will be our guest pastor on Sunday, June 26. He will be sharing a ministry presentation with the adult Sunday School class and preaching during both the morning and evening services.

During the Sunday worship service, his sermon topic will be Jesus in a pluralistic age. In the evening, the sermon topic will be Biblical sexuality and the LGBTQ culture.

Clete writes:

*How are you and the Main Street folks? It is so good to hear from you.*

*I've been doing a lot these days explaining How America Became Pagan, showing the various sectors of societal penetration. Also, I've been presenting the difference between Biblical Sexuality and that presented by the LGBTQ Culture. I continue to teach a lot on Comparative Religions. I'm forever having to distinguish the Biblical Jesus in an Age of Pluralism.*

As you may know, in addition to being the Director of ARC, also, I'm now the Director of PAM (Partners in Asian Missions). I'll be going back to India this summer to train our pastors there. I would love to share about that!

*I look forward to visiting Main Street.*

*God bless!*

Clete

www.arcapologetics.org
Radical and malignant changes have been occurring in western culture. There’s been a comprehensive shifting of values, world-views and ways of life. While most Christians have some perception of this drift towards cultural decay, several Christian leaders and thinkers have been sounding the alarm in clear and stark terms.

For example, apologist/philosopher Francis Schaeffer had been sounding the alarm about this present plight for over 20 years. In his book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, published in 1984, he warned, *But something has happened in the last 60 years. The freedom that once was founded on a Biblical consensus and a Christian ethos has now become autonomous freedom, cut loose from all constraints. Here we have the world spirit of our age – autonomous man setting himself up as God, in defiance of the moral and spiritual truth, which God has given.... The world spirit of our age rolls on and on claiming to be autonomous and crushing all that we cherish in its path.*

**What exactly does ARC do?**

- **Publish** – Our writing ministry is extension including *Areopagus Journal*, *Worldviews Newsletter*, articles for journals, books, and blogs. This is the key format for equipping the saints in apologetics.
- **Speak** – We travel and speak on apologetics topics at churches and otherwise as invited. Several of our staff have been interviewed for radio and television media as well.
- **Coach and Council** – We meet with believers and unbelievers alike who have serious questions about faith in Jesus Christ and help them see the rational of viewing life through the biblical worldview.

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**Linda Wixon**

*Dear Main Street,*

*I am afraid time has moved too fast, and I am moving very slow in many ways.*

*I do appreciate Main Street and apologize sincerely for not writing sooner.*

*From last summer, we had some changes in ministry in the area where I live. I am the only member of our team living in this area. We rented space for church afternoon meetings and a cafe and also for English classes last May. The woman who originally managed the cafe could not financially make it so the cafe under her management closed at the end of August. After some discussion and prayer, Cynthia (Life Hope Network crisis pregnancy ministry) along with counsel decided to reopen the cafe in October.*

*I helped out by cooking 3 of the 4 days we were open. Primarily the cafe is to make contacts in the area. During last summer we started English classes 3 nights a week and also on Saturday afternoon. There are 3 classes in the same room as the cafe. Their purpose is to make contacts. I teach the 3 night classes. So, with the cafe and classes, I’ve had very full days.*

*I had also been teaching a Tuesday night class at Nisshin Christ Church which is about a fifty minute drive from the area where I live. In April a short term missionary has taken that class for me from April to July. As I can, I try to help out with the home stays by cooking a night meal or helping*
take the ladies shopping or to other appointments.

Since the middle of March, we have had some volunteers help at the cafe. This means I help cook at the cafe 1 day a week for April and will probably only have 2 days to help at the cafe in May. I have tried to take time to rest up and get some much needed chores done.

Physically, I am in need of exercise and am dealing with GERD which comes and goes. Stamina is always a prayer request! Spiritually, I am getting stronger as I learn to trust God's direction at this point in my life. I am asking God what He wants me to do as I finish out this year in Japan. The plan is for me to return to America January 2017 for HMA.

God's grace has been evident throughout. Cynthia has her adopted son, home stays at various times waiting the birth of their baby, phone counseling, and helps at the cafe as waitress and owner. As I think about what has gone on, it is only a work of God. Our hope is that the cafe will be operated by Japanese who are interested in ministry and who will use the cafe as outreach to the community. One of the church members has become involved and little by little will continue to help. Neighbors see the cafe as a peaceful place and are getting a view of Christianity that they have never seen before.

Thank you for your diligence and faithfulness to me and our Nagoya, Japan ministry.

Much love,
Linda
Ministry in Israel
In February we are traveling to Israel. In addition to seeing biblical sites for enhancing my teaching ministry, we will visit various Jewish Christian evangelism ministries. The goal is to learn about opportunities for short term mission groups from the states to help these evangelism ministries in practical ways. One of the people traveling with us is an unsaved Jewish woman who is open to hearing about Jesus. We will be meeting many Messianic Jewish believers (Jewish Christians) and attending Messianic Jewish worship services. Jane (not her real name) will have many opportunities to hear the Gospel.

Prayer Needs
Donna is getting acupuncture treatment for her left shoulder. It is beginning to alleviate her pain. This is the best help for now, beside a shoulder replacement.

My deliverance from diabetic neuropathy is now allowing me to walk miles at a time, praise the Lord! However, I am experiencing back and sciatica pain on the outside of my left leg." Please pray for me find a way with God’s help to resolve this new problem.

In our 32 years of ministry we are finding our financial support from churches dwindling as some of our supporting churches are having financial problems. If you know mission minded people who are supportive of evangelism to Jewish people, please refer them to AMMI. They can view our mission activities at http://www.ammiministry.org, or you can share our recent newsletters with them.

Gratefully yours, 
Ron & Donna Elkin
AMMI Ministry
P.O. Box 481
Willow Grove, PA 19090
215-843-1764

Austin Lenox

Austin writes:

It’s truly hard to believe that my first year on staff with RUF at Tennessee is coming to a close. So much has happened since the last newsletter! Ellie and I took a group of 12 students to St. Louis for Spring Break to partner with City Lights urban restoration ministries. We had our Winter Conference at Fall Creek Falls state park. I had the opportunity to speak at RUF large group on Proverbs and what it tells us about our words. In between all that there were numerous walks, lunches, and coffees spent talking about what God is doing in the lives of our students.

Would you be in prayer with me for our students? There are many walking through addiction, loneliness, dealing with their sin and idolatrous heart just as I am. Please lift the conversations we as staff get to have with them, that God would be beautiful and freeing to them.

Please also pray for the Lord to once again so faithfully provide for me financially to continue to stay here at UT with RUF. I can’t express my gratitude enough to you who are reading this for prayerfully supporting and loving me in this time.
Bob McPherson

Bob writes:

That Others May Know Him

Dear Ministry Partners,

You meet a lot of interesting people in prison. A few weeks ago a man named “Joe” came to my Bible class. I made an appointment to talk with him the next week. After meeting for a while, he told me he is a believer.

I asked him to share his testimony. He told me he was a drug dealer before he came to prison. Also, he was into Satan worship and blood sacrifice. Then, his fellow Satan worshippers began to tell him to read the Bible because the God of the Bible was the true God.

This really confused Joe and, eventually, he went to talk to a pastor who told him God was causing Joe’s friends to tell him that. One night, Joe was unable to sleep and prayed, God, if you are real, prove it to me. The next day he got a letter from the pastor who could not sleep a few nights before and the letter quoted several Bible verses. One of them in I Kings talked about being confused. Joe took that as an answer to his prayer and invited Jesus Christ into his life.

God used Satan worshippers to witness to Joe! Isn’t that amazing? Bet the devil did not like that situation at all!

As always in Christ,
Bob and Becky McPherson

Gifts to the Church

In Memory of
Libby Springer
by
Toni Terrell James

In Honor of
MSPC Graduates
by
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Franks

Women
in the
Church

The monthly Bible study and luncheon will resume on September 6, 2016. We will continue our journey through Hoping for Something Better by Nancy Guthrie.

The Transformed: PCA Women’s Conference is on September 9th and 10th starting at 7:00 p.m. and we would like as many of our ladies in the church who are able to go! Nancy Guthrie is the speaker for the three sessions.

Early registration is until July 29th for $75. After that registration is $100 (both prices include lunch on Saturday. Additional costs would be hotel and dinner on Friday night). If interested in going, please register at pcacdm.org and contact Kathryn at 662-242-1434 to coordinate hotel arrangements.

Have a wonderful summer!
CONTINUING NEEDS:
Our Shut-Ins:
  Dot Norton
  Louise Armstrong
  Joan Buster
  Sadie Brewer
  George & Martha Clegg
  Jamie Mills
Elizabeth Wright Darby
Jennifer Garner
Phillip Goodwin
Bubbie Yelverton
Verda Laws
Edna Mae McCoy
Jean Yelverton
Billy & Emily Shull
Fran Perkins
Dot Pilcher
John Mark Russell
Jessica Talley
Faith Whitlock - Christa Chapman’s mother

President Barack Obama
Officials in Washington
Governor Phil Bryant
Mayor Robert Smith
Police Chief Oscar Lewis
Sheriff Mike Aldredge
State and City and County Officials

Helping Hands
Life Choices Pregnancy Center
Palmer Home
All churches and pastors in Columbus

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### Nursery Volunteers

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<tr>
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<td>Ann Marie Chilcutt</td>
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<td>Roger &amp; Joy Day</td>
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<td>Shirley Swoope</td>
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<td>Patrick &amp; Morgan Shipp</td>
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<td>Melissa Duncan</td>
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<td>Gee &amp; Becca Allgood</td>
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### Ushers Volunteers

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<td>June 26</td>
<td>Gray Flora, Bill Laws, Matt White, Ben Woodson</td>
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**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.**

*Romans 12:12*
Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Psalm 90:14
Enjoy the summer, but…

Don’t Take a Vacation from Church
Main Street Presbyterian Church
(A Presbyterian Church in America Congregation)

Sunday Schedule
9:00 a.m.  Church Officer Prayer Time
9:30 a.m.  Sunday School
10:40 a.m.  Morning Worship
6:00 p.m.  Evening Worship

Thursday Schedule
Weekly Prayer Meeting at Noon