

*First Presbyterian Church
418 West Coolidge
Borger, TX 79007
~January 2009~*

The New Year's Way(s)

According to historians, the celebration of the New Year is the oldest holiday. Ancient Babylonians first observed it in the spring about 4,000 years ago. In 153 B.C.E., the Roman Senate declared January 1 as New Year's Day.

The early church started to hold religious observances that coincided with pagan celebrations. Some denominations still mark Christ's circumcision on New Year's Day (NO not the Presbyterians).

The tradition of making resolutions dates back to the Babylonians, who often promised to return borrowed farm equipment. Using a baby to symbolize rebirth and the New Year dates back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians.

Modern-day New Year's customs often focus on prosperity. In Spain, people eat 12 grapes at midnight, hoping to have 12 happy months to come. The Dutch eat donuts because another year has come full circle. And many of us in the US are sure to have a bowl of black-eyed peas on the table – at least in the southern half of the country.

One of the best ways to start off the New Year is by spending more time in prayer. Look back on God's many blessings during the completed year and for God's guidance in the year to come.

Let us make our New Year's Celebration a time of prayer. Happy New Year 2009!

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE

First Presbyterian Church Newsletter

January

Borger, Texas

2009

I want to begin with a prayer for 2009.

"Father, forgive us for thinking that prayer is a waste of time, and help us to see that without prayer our work is a waste of time. Amen" (Peter Marshall, former chaplain to US Senate)

There is an old story of two men who were chopping trees in the forest. The first man set a steady pace and worked all day without stopping. The second man worked equally hard, but he took a few minutes every hour on the hour to sit down and rest. Well, at the end of the day the second man had cut and stacked twice as much wood as the first one.

The first man came to his co-worker and said, "I don't understand it. I've worked just as hard as you have and I haven't even stopped to rest. You have rested every hour during the day. How did you cut twice as much wood as I did?"

The second man said, "Well you see, you're right, I have stopped to rest. But the thing you fail to notice is that each time I sat down I sharpened my axe." To many times we get so busy we forget to sharpen our axe.

The point of the story is: if you'll sharpen the axe first you'll work better, you'll work smarter, and you'll work happier.

We sharpen our lives by sitting regularly in the presence of Christ through prayer. Only Jesus understands what the future and 2009 will bring. The Gospel tells us:

"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." - Matthew 6:6

How many times have we attempted to do something without praying first? Most of us just go on doing and occasionally praying. But, prayer is the heart of our faith – it is the heart of our existence. It is the opportunity to give thanks and ask for God's continued blessing. It is a time when we can be honest, frank, and even direct about the things that are on our minds. We can speak to God directly and know that God hears us. We also know that God may or may not respond in the way we want God to, but we do know God does respond.

During 2009, I would ask that each of us expand our prayer life – that we be intentional in our prayers and our setting aside time for prayer. Here are a few items I would ask you to include (*please note that this is not an exhaustive list nor is it in any order of priority*):

1. Presbyterian Church (USA)
2. First Presbyterian Church
3. Your Session
4. Your Pastor
5. Yourself
6. Your family
7. Your loved ones and friends
8. Those who are ill and suffering
9. Caregivers
10. Leaders of our community and our country
11. Mission
12. Those who are in need
13. Healing
14. National and international concerns

This list gives just a few ideas – we all need prayer. At the hospital I am often amazed when a patient or family member asks me if they can pray for me. It is such a humbling experience to know that someone is actually praying for you. I hope that we all pray for each other often. It's not something we have to tell each other about, but it is something that is important.

I recently came across an article written by Baptist Pastor John Piper and I think it is very appropriate when we are in conversation about our praying. Read and think.

"Prayer remains one of the great and glorious mysteries of the universe—that the all-knowing, all-wise, all-sovereign God should ordain to run his world in response to our prayers is mind-boggling. But that is the uniform witness of Scripture. God hears and answers the prayers of his people. O do not neglect this amazing way of influencing nations and movements and institutions and churches and people's hearts, especially your own."

We are blessed in so many ways and yet we do face hardships both individually and as the body of Christ. Whatever we do let us do first in prayer. Please know you are in my prayers.

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Georgia

Stated Session Meeting December 14, 2008

The Stated Session meeting was held in the church Conference Room, beginning at 11:30 am with prayer. The following were present and constituted a quorum: Moderator, the Rev. Georgia King and elders Phyllis Harmony, Harold Hebermehl, Julia Kasch, Pat Petty, and Jerry Pool. Elder Hazel Howard was absent. Treasurer Pam Nicholas was also present.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. There were no notable communications to report. The Xerox contract will expire in February, 2009 and we should begin consideration of a suitable replacement copier.

The pledges received so far for the coming year were reviewed. The due date and renewal of the Manse CD was discussed. The treasurer's reports were approved.

The salary and time arrangements for the new secretary were discussed. The Rev. King will be out the Sundays of December 28th and January 25th. It is possible that Rev. King will be on Sunday call at BSA (one per month). This will affect our Pulpit Supply needs and budgeted cost.

The Christmas Eve service communion set up was reviewed. We will need ushers for that service due to the use of candles by the congregation. For the December 28 worship service, we will have prayer, scripture reading and hymn singing.

Prior to the December 21 worship service, we will have an informal gathering, with coffee, punch and light refreshments in the Social Room, beginning at 9:30 am.

Elder Pool recommended that we replace our thermostats on each of the heating/cooling units with programmable types to better control utility costs. It will cost about \$500 for seven units. A motion to approve and implement this plan was made by Elder Petty, seconded by Elder Hebermehl. Motion passed. We expect this to be completed around the first of the year. Eric has been having some scheduling difficulties with work around the church because of new activities at his primary work. Also, the work by the Scouts in setting up the upper floor of the Education Building is progressing well.

Elder Petty reported that an individual, not a member of our congregation, inquired about using our church for a wedding next June. She was quoted \$150 for use of the sanctuary. In the event this person is serious about this use, we will need to check our policy for current relevance in terms of decorations, clean up, costs, etc.

The annual Congregational Meeting was scheduled for January 18, 2009. We will have a dinner provided (chili supper?), paid from the Kitchen Fund. Elder reports will be due January 9th for preparation of the Annual Report.

The idea of making a new picture directory was discussed. We could do this ourselves with a digital camera and an appropriate software package (to be obtained).

There was no old business discussed.

The next Stated Session meeting will be held January 11, 2009. The meeting was adjourned 12:30 pm.

The Treasurer reported the following figures for November:

Total Income	\$ 7,431.63
Total Expenses	\$ <u>8,674.29</u>
Total	\$ (1,242.66)



	Year to Date	
Total Income		\$ 79,858.78
Total Expenses		\$ <u>79,529.27</u>
Total		\$ 329.51

Care of Members and Friends

Please keep these members and friends in our prayers...



Scott Glenn
Bobbie & James Farrell
Bob & Aleyene Watkins
Pete Marsh
Leah Buckland & Family

Notes from the Music Department

Thank you, dear choir members, for all your hard work during this year's Christmas season. The music was just beautiful for all of November and December. I appreciate all your work and dedication.

Choir practice for January will be on the following nights: January 7 at 6:30 pm; January 14 at 6:30pm; January 21 at 6:30 pm; and January 28 at 6:30 pm. Session meeting for January has been tentatively scheduled for January 18 after church. This will allow us to rehearse all 4 Wednesday's in January.

Closing Response for the month of January will be "Joy to the World". This is a response we have done in the past but it is not the hymn. Words will be printed in the bulletin each Sunday.

Anthems for January will be familiar ones. I don't have any new music planned as of yet but you never know what surprises I might come up with! We will begin working on Easter music in February and will also sing one of our old anthems from many years ago.

Please keep Bob and Aleyene Watkins in your prayers and hearts. We miss Aleyene very much in choir. We also realize that she needs to be with Bob as he moves through the transition of adjusting to the nursing home life. Aleyene was always very faithful and is very much missed. And I'm sure they both could use a visit or phone call from all of us.

We also hold Mary Botkin, Scott Glenn, and Bobbie Farrell in our prayers and hearts. We pray for healing for all. We also hold all past and present choir members in our hearts. We miss you all.

May the Good Lord watch between you and me while we are absent one from the other!

Pat Petty and Choir



Now that Christmas is over, it's time to get back to the more mundane things of life. For the Session, one of those things is preparation of the 2009 church budget. A few of our members have yet to bring their pledge cards, meaning we do not have a complete idea of our expected pledge income. Would you please do so shortly so that we may have the best financial picture in time for the Congregational meeting on January 18.

