

FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY

Responding to God's Call.

May 2010 LeaderPak

Reflections on Small Church Ministry



April 25 was *Celebrate Rural Life Sunday* in the PC(USA). That title has become a misnomer. Since 50% of all our churches today have less than 100 members, the banner should actually read *Celebrate SMALL Church Life Sunday*

There is nothing wrong with being a "small church." In comparison to Goliath, David was small....but you know the rest of that story! I encourage you to go to www.pcusa.org/smallchurch and read the collection of articles about five small churches (some rural, some urban) lifted up there. SIZE doesn't have to slow you down, and SMALL is not a defining limitation.

On a personal level, I have been blessed in my ministry by the opportunity to serve just about every type of church - from associate in a large church, to senior pastor in a mid-size church.....to solo pastor in a small church. That history informed me when I led a seminar at Columbia Seminary on small church ministry

I opened by telling the students what a sharp, put-together friend told me one day when I questioned why he had accepted a call to a small church. He said "The small church is the best kept secret in our denomination". I think I understand what he meant.

(1) Administration is easier. The work always gets done right, because you get to do all of it yourself. [Okay, this one is tongue-in-cheek; but there is some truth to it. I got to personally decorate the sanctuary for Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving - and had a blast doing it.]

(2) Relations are more personal. In a large church you get acquainted with many people, but know few of them deeply; in a small church you know every member intimately. In a large church you visit people when they are sick or dying or in special need. You don't have time for more than that. In a small church you get to sit on a rocking chair on the front porch and talk about daily life.

(3) Small churches really appreciate you. They are so grateful to have you that it is almost embarrassing.

(4) You have a significant role in the community. In my small church I chaired the community clothesbank and the local Red Cross chapter. I knew the sheriff and the clerk of court and the high school principal personally, and I was a member of the

In This Issue

Reflections on Small Church Ministry

New Minister Profiles

What's on the Web?

Litany for Graduates in Worship

May 2010 Calendar

Personals

Parish Paper

Quick Links

[Special Events](#)

(School for Lay Renewal, Sabbath Retreats)

[May, 2010 Parish Paper](#)

[Join our Mailing List!](#)

volunteer fire department.

(5) Time management is far less complicated. Unless you get really derelict in your duties, no one cares if you take an afternoon off to visit your child at school....or to go hunting or shopping, or whatever. I have never felt as free - personally - as I did in my small church. You never get it all done in a large church - there is always another deadline, another committee meeting, another hospital to visit.

There are drawbacks to serving in a small church, of course; but if you like working on your own, are a self-starter, value your independence, enjoy talking to people, and can be patient - the small church is a great place to be.

New Minister Profiles

Jason Micheli is our new campus minister at *The Abbey* in Columbus.

Jason is one of those increasingly rare creatures today: a born and raised-up Presbyterian.....born in Pueblo, Colorado, and raised in First Presbyterian Church there. Jason enrolled in Princeton Seminary in 1999; and, following graduation, moved to Wisconsin to begin work on a PhD in Old Testament studies, before responding to God's call to Campus Ministry. Jason and wife Julie (also a Princeton Seminary grad) have an almost-two-year-old son, Sawyer.



Our newest minister member is Christopher Peterson, pastor at the Thomaston Presbyterian Church.



Raised in Minnesota, Christopher's life was deeply impacted by an Appalachian mission trip. After college - thinking he would eventually teach - he attended Jerusalem University and pursued a degree in Middle Eastern Culture and Religion, but was instead claimed by the call to pastoral ministry. Christopher finished his M.Div at Princeton in 1998, and served in two churches before being led to Thomaston. He and his wife, Alisa, have two children: Liam (4 and a half) and Jane (8 months).

What's on the Web?

--Rev. Nikki MacMillan

Resources for Presbyterians

The internet is filled with resources for our churches. Here are a few you might want to check out:

Visit the Flint River Presbytery website [here](#) This is the site you need to visit for all manner of Flint River information from Camp Kolomoki registration forms to a daily prayer list. There is also a button right on the front page to take you through simple steps to help you learn more about your church's neighbors using our demographic research service MissionInsite. Simply click on the MissionInsite button and follow the directions for creating a report to your specifications.

Flint River is also on Facebook. If you are on Facebook, the world's largest and fastest growing social networking site, join the Flint River Presbytery Facebook group. You'll find friends of our presbytery across the state and receive updates about upcoming presbytery events.

For a creative new approach to building disciples, visit FaithElement.com, a lectionary-based Bible study program that includes weekly discussion guides designed for youth and adults and a Bible background video. FaithElement uses movies, music, mission ideas, YouTube video, and creative prayer practices to help participants engage and apply Scripture - and it's FREE.

Learn more about Flint River Presbytery's coffee house ministry Bare Bulb Coffee at their new [website](#). This site is live but still under construction. Watch us build a website - and call disciples to ministry and mission in Houston County.

Other sites of interest:

[PC\(USA\)](#)- for all manner of information about our connectional church

[The Thoughtful Christian](#) - for inexpensive downloadable curriculum

And for a quick overview of how churches are using social media, check out this [article](#).

For more about how the internet, social media, and new technology are impacting our mission and ministry, make plans to attend the August presbytery meeting!

Litany for Graduates in Worship

by Rev. Deb Bibler

As we focus on the Holy Spirit's power and presence this Pentecost, may we also focus on the ways in which this Pentecost power can refashion and reform the lives of our graduates as they face further education or job opportunities. We invite you to be intentional and creative as you recognize the graduates in your midst, and to support them as they enter new and unknown walks of life.

A worship litany is included below for your use. Feel free to change it to best suit your congregation's particular context!

Wondrous God,
who spoke Your Son, our Savior, into being,
we praise You for the ways in which You have joined Word and flesh together.

We praise you for the lives of these various graduates,
each of whom join life and faith together in unique ways.

We praise you for the breathtaking patterns of grace that you have quietly revealed
throughout their lives, and pray that Your Word may provide fresh and freeing
patterns of thought and behavior in the years to come.

As these graduates step into new opportunities and unforeseen challenges,
may the generosity and lovingkindness of Your gospel message shape
both their immediate decisions and their ongoing actions.

May their words bear truth and joy and may their actions radiate light and love.

May the testimony of their lives speak of Your grace.

May the outlines of their lives reveal a way that has been defined by deep attentiveness to God and neighbor.
And may we learn to love them, through stumblings and success, into fresh faithfulness and rigorous discipleship.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, who makes all things possible and all things new. AMEN

May 2010 Calendar

1	10:00 am	School for Lay Renewal
4	3:30 pm	Presbytery Meeting, Fort Gaines Presbyterian Church
6	2:00 pm	CLP Ministry Team
11	2:30 pm	Resource Center Ministry Team
11	6:00 pm	CEN
12	12:00 noon	NE Cluster, Northminster
13	10:30 am	CME
13	12:00 noon	NW Cluster, Morningside
25	12:00 noon	South Cluster, 1st Thomasville
25	6:30 pm	COF
28	12:00 noon	Central Clergy Cluster
31		CLOSED - Memorial Day observed

All meetings are held at the Presbytery Office unless otherwise noted.

Personals

Betty Futrell, longtime member of Westminster (Warner Robins), and perennial member of the COF planning team, died. Her funeral was April 20.

Jeannine Little had surgery to repair her two brain aneurisms. Everything went well, and she is back home. (Jeannine is a Lay Preacher, and wife of Washington Avenue's pastor)

Pam Moye's father continues chemotherapy (Pam is an Elder at 1st Columbus, and moderator of our Commission on Mission & Evangelism)

Ed Massey (Larry's brother) is in the intensive care unit at Phoebe Putney Hospital in Albany; and

Mary Massey (Larry's wife, and another perennial COFer) has an infection in her transplanted lung, and has to return to the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville.

Visit the Prayer List on our webpage!

Parish Paper

[May, 2010 Parish Paper](#)

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