

Presbytery of the United States Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

Spring Quarter Edition

From the Editor:

The ongoing purpose of our **Presbytery Email Newsletter** is “to promote and encourage love between the brethren and to stimulate unity among the various Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) congregations that the Lord is raising up within our Presbytery”. Communication among the brethren enhances our fellowship with one another in the Biblical sense of having things in common, in this case, having common knowledge with one another that we may rejoice or weep together and support one another in prayer.

For effective circulation, it is suggested that each church organize a means by which members without email service might receive the information provided in the Presbytery Email Newsletter. If you have received an email newsletter by error or wish to be removed from our circulation list, please contact the editor, Warren Gardner, at warrengardner@windstream.net and I will promptly remove you from our recipients' list. Those wishing to be added to our list should request a new subscription by writing to the same address. Note that it is important that you keep me updated of any email address changes.

Reporting guideline: For the sake of accuracy and the appropriate release of information, all reporting will be through the ministers and elders of the congregations.

Announcement: The fifth issue of The Master's Trumpet was published in March 2009. It is available online at www.masterstrumpet.org.

In this issue, you will find:

- 1) Schedule of communion seasons within our Presbytery, (page 1)
- 2) News from each of our congregations, (pages 2-3)
- 3) News from each of our preaching stations, (pages 3-4)
- 4) 2009 Colloquium news, (pages 4- 5)
- 5) April 2009 Presbytery Meeting (pages 5-6)
- 6) 2009 Family Conference, (pages 6-7)
- 7) Ministerial Hardship Fund (page 7)
- 8) Home Missions Fund (pages 7-8)
- 9) Spanish Outreach Ministry Fund (pages 8-9)
- 10) Presbytery Website (page 9)

The following communion seasons are scheduled within our Presbytery:

Atlanta: the fourth Sabbath of January, April, July and October

Detroit: the second Sabbath of March, June, September and December

Greenville: the third Sabbath of January, April, July and October

Washington, D.C.: the second Sabbath of January, April, July and October.

FREE CHURCH ATLANTA

The Atlanta congregation has services on the Lord's Day at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. with a meal between services and desserts served following the afternoon service to encourage fellowship. A prayer meeting is held each Sabbath following the afternoon service. Services are held in our leased location at 2256 Northlake Parkway, Suites 301-302, Tucker, Georgia 30084-4034. (For directions consult mapquest.com or contact Rev Warren Gardner at 770-867-5765.)

Our new location has been a blessing for the majority of the congregation providing easy access from all points around the city. It has encouraged new visitors, and we rejoiced to recently receive and baptize Mr. Jeff Mock, of Monroe, Georgia into the membership of Christ's Church as our newest member of our congregation.

While we have been blessed with a number of visitors in our services, the change in the economy and the lack of significant numerical growth in the congregation will probably necessitate a change in the meeting venue at the end of our contract year. Please pray that we will be effective in reaching our neighborhood with the Gospel of Lord Jesus Christ and that the Lord will allow us to continue in our present location or open another location for our use.

Continuing progress is being made in our Catechism Class. Our present study from the Westminster Shorter Catechism covers the questions related to understanding our Lord's instruction on prayer. The Class meets each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Ron and Michele Haag, 2846 Castle Drive, Lawrenceville, Georgia. The Class members include adults and youth from the congregation and children from the neighborhood. Attendance varies from 8-22.

For more information, check out our website (www.freechurchatlanta.org) or contact Rev. Warren Gardner at 770-867-5765 or warrengardner@windstream.net.

GREENVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Greenville congregation has two services on the Lord's Day at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., with a fellowship lunch in between. Our mid-week prayer meeting is held each Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Over the course of the last couple of years we have engaged in open-air, evangelistic preaching and tract distribution on Main Street in downtown Greenville every Friday during the lunch hour and occasionally at special events in the city. In April, Pastor McCurley and one of our students for the ministry, Mr. Travis Fentiman, went to Clemson University to preach in the open-air and distribute tracts to the students.

We are thankful to the Lord for his blessings on our congregation over the last month. We reached a significant milestone in the election of officers on March 29, which was preceded by a fast day in the congregation on March 25. The congregation elected Dr. Philip Larson as an elder and Mr. Steven Ervin as a deacon. Both of these men were

able to attend our Presbytery's spring Colloquium held during the first week of April. Please pray for the Lord's blessing on their labors among our people in the days ahead.

We are grateful to Dr. Joel Beeke, the president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for coming to preach in our congregation on March 9. We give thanks for the Lord's rich blessing upon his ministry among us.

One precious believer in our congregation, Mrs. Kim McClintock, went to be with the Lord on Friday, April 10 at 5:30 p.m. She had a strong Christian testimony and evident love for the Savior. Her funeral was held on Tuesday, April 14, in Greer, S.C. We are thankful for the many prayers offered up on her behalf in the months prior to her departure. Please continue to remember her husband, Paul, and sons, Nathan, Daniel, and David, before the throne of grace in the days that lie ahead.

Please continue to pray that the Lord will provide our congregation with a new meeting facility that will be suitable in size, cost, and location.

We are thankful for the Lord's merciful dealings with our congregation. Please continue to join us in praying that Christ would have the preeminence among us and that his glory would be magnified in our city.

WASHINGTON CONGREGATION

A primary part of the Washington Congregation's life just now is the consciousness of love among the Lord's people, and our joy in learning from God's Word. We would seek the prayer of the Lord's people for the children growing up in the congregation, and for the Lord's blessing on the ordinary means of grace, that the Lord would use these for salvation, and for stability in his Word. We would ask prayer also for outreach efforts this spring and summer by the Saturday men's study group.

DETROIT PREACHING STATION

The Detroit Preaching Station meets for public worship at 3:30p.m. each Lord's Day in a room at Trinity Church, which is located at 10101 W. Ann Arbor, Plymouth, MI 48170. (For directions consult www.maps.google.com or contact Rev Sean Humby at 734-855-6221.) We are currently working our way through the opening chapters of the Gospel according to John, and have had clear presentations of the glory and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please pray that the Lord would bless the preaching of his word, both for the edification and encouragement of his people and for the salvation of those who are not his people. Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God". We also meet on Wednesday evenings for fellowship, prayer, sharing of testimonies and spiritual conversation.

We have had some encouragements in recent weeks with visitors occasionally attending, some for the first time. Please pray that the Lord would bless evangelistic efforts and opportunities to minister to the many needy people within the communities of this region.

We have two regular attendees of our services who are studying at the University of Michigan in nearby Ann Arbor who will be returning to their homes in Grand Rapids for the summer break. It is hoped that a Bible study will be conducted on the campus grounds when the new school year commences. May it please the Lord to provide opportunities to minister to many more students on the campus!

2 Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you

ST. LOUIS PREACHING STATION

The St. Louis Preaching Station continues to give thanks to the Lord for the sustaining grace we have received. We greatly thank all those who continue to labor in prayer on behalf of this effort to plant a church in metropolitan St. Louis. We continue to meet on each Lord's Day evening for catechism instruction, fellowship and a worship service. There have been evident signs of the Lord's gracious presence with us, for which we give thanks and seek further blessings.

As with most of our nation, St. Louis is in great spiritual darkness. As an effort to honor the Lord and call sinners to salvation, we visit surrounding neighborhoods the first Saturday of each month. In these visits we hand out informational literature, referring both to the Preaching Station and the Gospel. From this we have had the opportunity to speak with many nominal Christians as well as those who make no profession of faith in Christ, including a strict Muslim family. Most are sufficiently cordial that they will speak with us and answer questions and take the literature. But sadly we find that they frequently say that they believe God will receive them because of their good works. St. Louis is in desperate need of the Lord's sovereign grace.

Mr. Jonathan Mattull, his wife Jenny and son Benjamin, would appreciate your prayers for safe travel to Scotland on June 3, returning on July 1. As required by the Church, Mr. Mattull will be interviewed by the Training of the Ministry Committee as he pursues licensure and ordination. While in Scotland he will be preaching in different congregations, and visiting with our brethren there as well. Please remember his family as they travel with him, and remember as well the Preaching Station in St. Louis during his absence. Jonathan and his family are thankful to everyone for the church's kind support.

APRIL 2009 COLLOQUIUM

There was a most enjoyable Colloquium for office bearers in the Presbytery, and for students for the ministry. It was held on Thursday and Friday, April 2-3, 2009, at Greenville, South Carolina. The Congregation there did a wonderful work in hosting the event, and men were housed with the families of the church. There were two days of rich fellowship, with six sermons or lectures delivered, and a delightful outing to the quaint village square at Pendleton, South Carolina, where we had lunch. Another feature of the Colloquium is a time for the students to discuss with the Presbytery any questions they have regarding preparation for the ministry. Several of the Colloquium addresses may be heard online at the following address:

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/search.asp?sourceonly=true&currSection=sermons&source&keyword=greenvillefcc&keywordDesc=&subsetcat=series&subsetitem=2009+Spring+Fall+Colloquium>.

APRIL 2009 PRESBYTERY MEETING

On one afternoon of the Colloquium, the Presbytery met for about three hours, and accomplished a great deal of business. Each year at a meeting in February, the Presbytery reviews the records of each Congregation for the year past. A new year of business for the Presbytery commences with the Presbytery's first meeting subsequent to the February review of the past year.

At this meeting it was determined that the moderatorship of Presbytery would henceforth rotate annually among the ministers, in the sequence of their seniority by year of ordination, and Rev. Robert McCurley was then appointed moderator for the new presbyterial year. The Presbytery also appointed commissioners to represent the Presbytery at the General Assembly in Edinburgh, Scotland, which begins May 18. The Presbytery directed that its own minutes be sent up to the General Assembly for review and approval.

The Presbytery appointed assessor elders to augment the number of elders on each Session in the Presbytery. In this connection, the ongoing election of more ruling elders by Congregations is providing a larger man pool, so that the trend is that ministers will not be needed as much for this work as assessors.

Presbytery dues were appointed for 2009, the amounts being the same as in the previous year: \$800 from each Congregation and \$500 from each Preaching Station. This helps to cover such things as office expenses, the cost of members of Presbytery traveling to one of the Congregations each year for Presbytery visitation of that Congregation, and exploratory visits by representatives of the Presbytery when a church or group of people in some new location inquire about the possibility of becoming a part of our Presbytery. The total income of the Presbytery for 2008, including all the costs of the family conference, and two Colloquia for office bearers, was \$32,321.33, and the expenditure was \$33,825.56.

The Presbytery has begun to implement a schedule of visitation, so that each Congregation is visited once in five years. In 2008 the Washington, D.C., Congregation experienced a very fruitful and supportive visitation, which led to a number of useful recommendations from the Presbytery for the help of the work there. As the Presbytery prepares for visitation of the Atlanta Congregation later in 2009, a committee was established to think through and revise the procedures for a visitation. This committee is to report to the August meeting of Presbytery.

A major action of Presbytery came in connection with assisting our students in their preparation for the ministry. Currently Mr. Jonathan Mattull of St. Louis and Mr. Travis Fentiman of Greenville are in the process of applying to be recognized as candidates for the ministry. The Presbytery took steps to ensure that students for the ministry will be

well grounded in the principles of the church, and to this end adopted a Syllabus of Supplemental Study by Students for the Ministry, with extensive reading requirements and the preparation of six essays. The Presbytery also gave its support to proposals from the denomination's credentials committee, as it prepares a recommendation to the upcoming General Assembly about a process for bringing our American students forward for licensure and ordination.

Our students are required to visit Scotland to be interviewed by the denomination's Training of the Ministry Committee, and the Presbytery acted to provide funds for Mr. Mattull and his wife and child to travel to Scotland in June for that interview. Mr. Mattull will have a busy itinerary for that month, preaching in many of the Scottish congregations, so that he can get to know the church better, and the church can get to know him. The expenses of the Mattulls during their time in Scotland will be covered by the church in Scotland. The Presbytery also requested that the General Assembly establish the practice of covering from denominational funds the cost of American students traveling to Scotland for an interview by the denominational credentials committee.

The Presbytery also heard a report about the new outreach to Spanish-speaking people. A shipment of Reformed literature has already been sent to a Presbyterian congregation in Colombia, South America. A shipment of Spanish books is also being prepared for a professor of Hebrew at a Presbyterian seminary in Santiago, the capital of Chile.

After devotional exercises, with members of the Presbytery praying for all the Congregations and Preaching Stations, the Presbytery meeting came to a close. The next meeting is to be held on June 12. There should also be a meeting of Presbytery on the Wednesday of the family conference, and the public is welcome to attend.

2009 FAMILY CONFERENCE

It is only four months until the fifth annual family conference! There are several who regularly attend but who have not yet registered for the conference. We hope that as many as possible from throughout the Presbytery will take advantage of this optimum opportunity for getting to know people from the other Congregations, and for five days of rich blessing in the worship of God and in social fellowship.

We are delighted to have as the evening preacher this year Rev. Gavin Beers, minister of our denomination's congregation at Ayr, Scotland. Rev. Beers is a native of Ulster, and we have been greatly encouraged by his ardent evangelistic preaching. He will be speaking on "Christ on the Cross." Dr. David Murray, and three ministers of our Presbytery, will also be speaking.

The dates are August 10-14, 2009, and the location is again Rockingham County, Virginia. On-campus accommodation is available in the form of camping at the conference facility (\$23 or \$27 each night, depending on whether one has utility hookup), and a bed in a room for single men at Mountain View on campus (\$28 each

night). Other rooms on campus are already reserved. Off-campus accommodation is still available at Lost River Motel thirteen miles away), or in family cabins of various sizes at Lost River State Park twelve miles away. Please complete and send in the registration form, which is found at the conference web site, www.freechurchconference.org.

Off-campus reservations must be handled directly with each facility. This year we are particularly urging that friends consider taking lodging in the nice cabins at the Lost River State Park (from \$81 each night). We believe that once a number of the conference families discover this fine resource, it will become a very popular choice for years to come. There are virtual tours of the cabins at <http://www.lostriversp.com/accommodations.html>. For reservations, call Lost River State Park at 304-897-5372. There are also still six rooms available at the Lost River Motel (\$59 each night), thirteen miles from the conference facility. This is a popular conference accommodation, and three families have already booked to stay there. Call the motel at 304-897-6482, to make your own reservations for lodging.

There are now 161 registered for the conference. You are advised to act soon to secure accommodation in close proximity to the conference facility. For last-minute registrants, there will be motel rooms on the interstate (24 miles away) or camping on the conference campus.

MINISTERIAL HARDSHIP FUND

The Presbytery has established several funds to meet present and future needs. One is the Ministerial Hardship Fund. This fund was created to address emergency circumstances such as a minister or someone in his family having need of medical care at a cost beyond the minister's ability to cover. The underlying difficulty faced by the Presbytery is that none of our Congregations or Preaching Stations has been able to give a full wage to its minister. All our ministers and students recognize that this is the case, and are enthusiastic about serving the Lord in this Presbytery. But our ministers are often unable to afford health insurance, or are unable to obtain it because of existing health problems. By establishing this fund to address emergency situations, we are seeking to address the needs of those men who are caring for us in spiritual things. The fund is administered by a committee of eight, who review any request for help. No money has yet been donated to this fund, which was established in 2006. Donations should be payable to the Presbytery of the U.S., with a cover letter stating that the donation is for the Ministerial Hardship Fund, and the donation sent to the Presbytery treasurer, Rev. Warren E. Gardner, 1115 Jefferson Highway, Winder, GA 30680.

HOME MISSIONS FUND

This second Presbytery fund is for the support of missions work to develop Congregations and Preaching Stations in this country. Because the local giving at those worship services has not been able to provide a full wage to the minister or student for the ministry supplying the pulpit, the Home Missions Fund would make available money for his support from outside those local situations. The Presbytery would normally use

this money for augmenting the stipend of a minister or student giving regular pulpit and pastoral care for a Congregation or Preaching Station.

Individuals or Congregations may donate to this fund. Though in the past some valuable help has been given by some Congregations to ministers laboring elsewhere in the Presbytery, the creation of this fund will allow such disbursements to be administered by the Presbytery. No money has yet been donated to this fund, which was established in 2007. Donations should be payable to the Presbytery of the U.S., with a cover letter stating that the donation is for the Home Missions Fund, and the donation sent to the Presbytery treasurer, Rev. Warren E. Gardner, 1115 Jefferson Highway, Winder, GA 30680.

SPANISH OUTREACH MINISTRY

Shipments of Reformed literature to Latin America have commenced, and we are very grateful for the financial support which has made this possible. The next shipment will go to the professor of Hebrew at a Presbyterian seminary in Santiago, Chile. Juan Itura, age 42, also teaches history and geography at a university. He is a ruling elder, preparing for ordination as a minister. Mr. Itura recently held a public seminar on purity of worship. He believes that this is the first time that such teaching has ever been given in Chile. He is desirous of establishing a congregation in Santiago which will be faithful to the Scriptures in all matters of worship and doctrine, as reflected in the Westminster Standards. At his seminar, he was able to distribute copies of a metrical psalter in Spanish, which was recently completed by a minister in Spain. This psalter is set to the tunes of the Genevan psalter produced during Calvin's lifetime. During the sixteenth century, there was an attempt to prepare a Spanish-language metrical psalter, but those working on this were arrested, and prevented from bringing the effort to fruition. Now, these more than four centuries later, the opposition of the evil one has been thwarted, and the Lord has graciously provided this precious volume to his many saints who speak Spanish in places around the world. It is available for downloading from the internet, and is also being printed. This is an event of great significance, and we pray that the Lord will use this development for edification and for his praise, on a scale that surpasses all our present vision.

With the delivery of books to Chile from outside being very difficult, there are no bookstores in Chile which sell Reformed literature. Only professors have a copy of the Spanish translation of Berkhof's Systematic Theology. Students in seminary and ministers usually only have copies in photocopy, because Reformed books are so hard to obtain. However, Mr. Edgar Ibarra of our Washington Congregation works with DHL parcel delivery and is able to get secure and reliable delivery of packages to Latin America, and at discounted rates. As the Presbytery provides literature, and also personal counsel, to friends in Latin America such as Mr. Juan Itura of Chile, the prayers of the Lord's people are sought. The Lord has given us an open door to be helpful in a place of potential for much good, and where any help we provide is greatly valued.

For those who can contribute to the Presbytery's Spanish-language Missions Fund, which funds the shipment of Reformed literature to Latin America, checks should be made payable to the Presbytery of the U.S., with a cover letter stating that the donation is for the Spanish-language Missions Fund, and the donation sent to the Presbytery treasurer, Rev. Warren E. Gardner, 1115 Jefferson Highway, Winder, GA 30680. The balance in this fund is presently \$471.85.

PRESBYTERY WEB SITE

The Presbytery is grateful for the generous donations which made possible the work of a professional web designer for the creation of a Presbytery web site. This project is now fully funded. Mr. Tim Challies is well known for his Reformed blog, at <http://www.challies.com/>, and has designed the site of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, at <http://www.puritanseminary.org/>. Mr. Challies has made major progress in the construction of our Presbytery site, and we look forward to a formal launch sometime in the early summer, the Lord willing.

This new site is designed to be easy to navigate and attractive, to give a strong statement of what the Presbytery stands for, to provide access to a great deal of information about the operation of the Presbytery and its various ministries, and to provide each Congregation with a web space. The site will house the issues of The Master's Trumpet, provide a new home for the Reformed sermons and articles which were previously available on the Washington Congregation's web site, and will include a means to register for the family conference. It is hoped that the Presbytery web site will contribute to the wider spread of the gospel and edification of the Lord's people.