

MIDWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Founded 1850

MESSENGER

4635 Dallas Highway, Powder Springs, Georgia 30127
Tel. 770.422.4974 E-mail. Church.Office@MidwayPCA.org
www.MidwayPCA.org

Rev. David Hall, Senior Pastor
Rev. Marc Harrington, Assistant Pastor
Rev. Joel Smit, Assistant Pastor
Rev. Todd Allen, Pastor Emeritus

September 2011

Vol. 33 No. 9

FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR

A Growing Congregation is a Praying Congregation is a Singing Congregation

John Calvin defined a hymn as a "sung prayer." I believe that congregations with deep passion in the things of the Lord love to pray and to sing in worship. I think we are growing in this area and wanted to share with you another pastor's observations and encouragement on this.

"Singing to Build Up"

By Greg Gilbert from the 9Marks Blog
(http://www.9marks.org/blog/singing-build)

We had one of the best music days we've ever had at Third Avenue last Sunday. It was incredible--loud, heartfelt, worshipful, and exciting . . . So a couple of thoughts hit me, and I decided to share them with our church. Maybe they'll be helpful to you, too.

First, it fills my heart with joy (no kidding!) that the success or failure of our music on Sunday mornings depends on whether our congregation shows up ready to sing. It's amazing, really. When we as a church show up prepared to engage in the service, excited to worship Christ and hear from his Word, our music succeeds in a big way--the voices fill up our sanctuary like a flood, and it's beautiful to hear. When we as a church don't show up, though, when we're distracted, down, and thinking about anything and everything but the worship of God, our music is really bad. It's quiet, empty, and completely without energy. I realize it might be a strange thing to say, but I'm glad that's how it works! I actually think it's a very good thing that our congregation bears a good deal of responsibility for how our services go each and every Sunday. When I feel that kind of weight--that my attitude and state of mind affects not just me but the entire congregation--it makes me pay more attention to my heart and engage more with the service.

Second, and closely related, I think we ought to encourage every member of our churches to sing every song in the service with gusto, even if they don't particularly resonate with the song. Every Christian has a certain set of hymns and songs that deeply resonate with them--the melody, the words, an experience they had when they first heard it--and our natural tendency is to give those favorites everything we've got . . . but then sort of check out when the next song is one we don't particularly like. But here's the thing: When you sing in a congregation, you're not just singing for yourself; you're singing for every other member of the congregation, for their edification and building up in Christ, too. In I Corinthians 14:26, Paul tells us that when we come together, everything we do--including our singing--is done for each other. Singing hymns is not just an opportunity for each of us, as individuals, to worship God in our own way. It's an opportunity for the church, as a whole, to worship God together. That means that even if you don't like a particular song, it's likely that someone else in the congregation resonates with it deeply--they feel about it the same way you feel about your favorites--and so you have a responsibility to love that person by singing that song with all the heart you can muster. In other words, don't check out on songs that aren't your favorites; sing them! And sing them loud and heartily, not because you particularly like them, but because you may be helping to edify another brother or sister whose heart is engaged deeply with those songs. Worship isn't finally an individual experience; it's corporate. And everything we do--everything, Paul tells us, including our singing--should be done for the building up of the saints.

That Southern Baptist Pastor is ahead of many Presbyterians! Here's to catching up.

\*\*\*\*\*

If you'd like a copy of any of our Christian Classics series, they are available in the Book Nook, near the Narthex. Enjoy the snippet below that was cut from one sermon.

## ***Pastor cont.***

---

CUTTING FLOOR: "First, as to putting the clock back. Would you think I was joking if I said that you can put a clock back, and that if the clock is wrong it is often a very sensible thing to do? But I would rather get away from that whole idea of clocks. We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man. We have all seen this when doing arithmetic. When I have started a sum the wrong way, the sooner I admit this and go back and start over again, the faster I shall get on. There is nothing progressive about being pigheaded and refusing to admit a mistake. And I think if you look at the present state of the world, it is pretty plain that humanity has been making some big mistakes. We are on the wrong road. And if that is so, we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on." C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Christian Library Edition {Westwood, NJ: Barbour and Company, Inc., 1952, 24-25.

\*\*\*\*\*

From Pastor Bill Smith: "**Can You Go to Heaven without Being a Church Member?**"

We know the argument against the social institution of marriage: "Marriage is about love and relationship, and commitment between two people. It doesn't need society's recognition or blessing. What does a ceremony or legal piece of paper add? If we think of ourselves as married, we're married."

Then, as marriages fail and people become disillusioned, we hear a new argument: "I've tried marriage, and I've experienced failure and pain. I'm not sure I'll ever get over it. I won't go through it again." Of course, many such people don't mean they intend never to have a marriage-like relationship again. They just mean they feel justified in rejecting the institution of marriage.

It's striking how similar are the arguments we sometimes hear regarding church membership. Some say, "Being a Christian is between God and me. The church isn't an institution; it's just a way of referring to God's people in the world. I'm in the real church and I don't need my name on the roll of some congregation." Others, who have had a bad experience might say, "I was a member of the church and something bad happened (the preacher ran off with the organist, someone betrayed a confidence, people hurt my feelings), and I don't want to go through it again. So, I'll attend church, but I won't join."

This "modern" view of the church and church membership contrasts with the view at the time of the Reformation. (We go back to the Reformation, not because we believe the Reformers were infallible nor because we idealize the Reformation as though it were a golden age, but because the Reformers purposely and self-consciously examined the Bible in order to reform their views of theology, worship and government in accord with the Apostolic pattern.)

The Belgic Confession (1561) teaches:

**We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw himself to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it . . . (Article 28).**

Similarly the Second Helvetic Confession (1566) asserts:

**But as for communicating with the true church of Christ, we so highly esteem it that we say plainly that none can live before God who do not communicate with the true Church of God, but separate themselves from the same. For as without the ark of Noah there was no escaping when the world perished in the flood; even so do we believe that without Christ, who in the Church offers Himself to be enjoyed of the elect, there can be no certain salvation; and therefore we teach that such as would be saved must in no wise separate themselves from the true Church of Christ. (Chapter XVII: 11).**

Then there is the clear teaching of the Westminster Confession:

**The visible church which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, and of their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. (Chapter XXV: 2)**

How different this reformational view is from that of so many who claim to be Christians and yet who insist their relationship to God is a purely personal and private matter, and who sincerely believe that the Church is of little consequence, surely not so consequential as to have anything to do with the matter of one's salvation.

Even within denominations, which hold to one above quoted confessional statements, there are those who are not so clear as the Reformation Confessions on the matter of membership. Some in the Presbyterian Church in America believe it overly restrictive to invite to the Lord's Table only those who are baptized and communing members in good standing in some evangelical church (surely a very broad invitation). Rather they believe they should invite those who consider themselves to be Christians and qualified to come to the Table -- leaving it entirely to the individual's judgment.

But does the Bible teach church membership? If you mean, "Does the Bible teach that a church should keep an official roll or that members should be received by taking vows?" the answer is, "No, the Bible does not teach these particulars." But if you mean, "Does the Bible teach that the church itself distinguishes between those who are its members and those who are not?" the answer is definitely, "Yes.

## ***Pastor cont. / From the Music Director***

---

Jesus teaching on church discipline assumes that the church can be identified and that the church knows who its members are. Jesus said that when your brother sins against you the final step is to “tell it to the church” (Mt. 18:17). The one offended must know to whom he must go – not just a group of Christians standing on a street corner but the church. The hoped for response is that the offending brother will “listen to the church” -- which makes no sense unless the church has a recognized authority to instruct the brother. But what if he does not listen to the church? “Let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” That is, “Let him be to you as an unbeliever -- as one no longer in the church but outside.” The passage (as the similar one in I Corinthians 5:1-5) cannot be understood apart from the underlying assumption that the church is a defined and recognized assembly (2 Cor. 5:4) and that it is able to distinguish between those who are its members and those who are not.

Church membership matters. There is no other society on earth of which it is more important to be a member and no one of which it is a higher privilege to be a member. Christ died for the Church and He is her Savior, Husband, and King. The Church is His body and bride. And to the Church He has given the wonderful privilege of dispensing His grace by the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The church: Don't try to go to heaven without it.

\*\*\*\*\*

“If you ask a man under whose authority does he place himself, or to whom in his life does he answer, and he says, “I answer to God;” let it be known that he is not telling the truth. For a godly man places himself under the godly authority of the leadership of the local church—God’s Church. The man who refuses to submit to the authority of godly leadership refuses to submit to the authority of God in his life.”--a quote from the Pyromaniacs blog (8/9/11), on Christian nomadism

### ***From the Music Director...***

It is my pleasure to introduce to you our new organist, Seung Min Oh. I realize, as does Seung Min, that her name is a little difficult for us to pronounce. However, please know that Seung Min is a very gracious lady, and understands our plight! She has answered to many different pronunciations of her name, including “sung”, “sing” and Sue! Our gifted new musician will be receiving her doctorate this December, so many of our choir members have decided to call her Dr. Oh!

Seung Min grew up in Seoul, Korea. Her father and two younger sisters still live there. The Oh family is a very musical one. Both of her sisters studied music composition, in addition to sculpture. Seung Min also has four cousins who are musicians! She is also the proud Aunt of three nephews and a niece. Seung Min was originally scheduled to begin working here in July, but was delayed in Korea due to the recent passing of her mother. For this, Midway extends our deepest sympathy to Seung Min and her family.

Seung Min has an impressive resume, with degrees in music from Yonsei University, a Master of Music in Organ from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and will be receiving her Doctor of Music in Organ this December from Indiana University. She has extensive experience as a church musician, as organist and Music Director, in addition to experience working with children’s choirs. She has taught piano and organ privately and on the college level, and has an impressive list of recital appearances.

Most importantly, Sueng Min has given us a wonderful statement of her faith in Christ as her Savior. The following is a quote from Seung Min’s statement of faith:

“I always approach the choir and congregation with the perspective that music is a gift from God, that I have an opportunity to glorify God through musical gift I received and that I have the opportunity to share the gift with our congregation and throughout the church. My job is to glorify God and serve the church and the people of God for His kingdom. I would like to keep fulfilling my mission through the music until his kingdom comes.”

Please join me welcoming Seung Min Oh to the south, and to Midway.

# Announcements

## **The Focus Prayer Group**

Meets this month on the first and third Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. Please join us in the 1905 sanctuary as we pray specifically for the salvation of loved ones. If you have questions, please see Wendell Way or Scott Keesee.

## **Annual Week of Prayer and Fasting: October 10-15, 2011**

Our annual week of prayer and fasting begins October 10 and ends October 15, 2011. During that week, you are encouraged to fast one meal a day and use that time to pray. In the coming weeks, you will see bulletin announcements to help you focus your prayers. On October 14, we begin our 24-hour prayer and fast. During this time, you are encouraged if you are able to come to the 1905 sanctuary and pray for an hour. We will begin at 5 p.m. and continue through the night until 5 p.m. on Saturday. During the overnight hours, there will be a member of the staff, session, or diaconate present to pray also. Please, let us keep the chain unbroken if possible!

## **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church**

November 13, 2011. Look for details to come in October and November!

## **WEDNESDAY DINNER RESERVATIONS NEEDED**

Wednesday Fellowship dinner has resumed. You must make reservations by **noon on Tuesday** by completing a yellow reservation card from the pew rack and dropping it in the offering plate, calling the church office at 770-422-4974, or sending an email to church.kitchen@midwaypca.org. Those who were on the permanent list in the past still need to confirm their reservation. If you need to CANCEL, do so by 12:00 on Wednesday by contacting the church office or sending an email. A minimum \$10 charge will be due for reservations that are not cancelled.

### **Revised Wednesday Evening Meal and Activities Schedule**

5:30 – 6:30	Meal Served
6:00 – 6:40	Children & Youth Choirs
6:45 – 7:45	Children & Youth Activities/Studies
6:45 – 7:30	Adult Bible Study
7:00 – 8:15	Adult Choir
7:00 – 8:00	Prayer Meeting
7:45	Children & Youth are to be picked up in the <b>Fellowship Hall</b> .
7:45	Nursery age children are to be picked up in the <b>Nursery</b> .

## **WOMEN'S WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY**

The Circle of Grace will begin a 12 week study entitled "Women in the Bible" beginning Tuesday, September 6. Taught by Carol Combs, we meet in the Harvesters classroom each Tuesday at 10 a.m. Please join us and bring a friend! Childcare for infants through five years is provided. Questions about the Bible study? Contact Sandra Westerfield 770-427-2336.

## **LYDIA CIRCLE BIBLE STUDY**

Will begin its new study of Philippians on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the church conference room. This study will meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. If you have any questions contact Kathy Jackson 770-424-0740 or Joyce Talley 770-499-8145. Hope to see you there.

## **RUTH CIRCLE**

Does a once-a-month ladies Bible study and fellowship sound like just what you are looking for at this particular time in your life? If so, please join us for Ruth Circle on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> as we continue our rich study of selected Psalms.

The author of our study guide, Kathleen Nielson, encourages us to "spend time in the Psalms musing, marking, meditating, memorizing and praying."

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Sunday School Class room and those who can, go to lunch afterwards. It is a sweet time of study, prayer and fellowship. Nursery is available and all ladies are welcome!

**PCA WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**, October 7-9 at the Atlanta Galleria and Conference Center. The theme for this conference is a grand and glorious look at the full orbed grace of God in our lives -- Amazing Grace 360. Join with PCA women from around the nation to worship, learn, celebrate, anticipate & focus on His eternal grace to us and in us. More information is on the women's table or visit [www.amazinggrace360.com](http://www.amazinggrace360.com)

# Missions

## MIDWAY-SUPPORTED MISSIONARIES

Stanley and Donna Armes - MTW, South Africa  
Peter and Diane Bakelaar - MTW, Japan  
David and Stacy Bergmark MTW National Associate – Sweden  
Chris and Jen Bowen – RUF Kennesaw State University  
Roy and Kristy – Restricted, Asia  
David and Sue Cunningham - MTW, Australia  
Dan and Rebecca Gregoire – MTW, Slovakia  
Sebastian and Isabel Heck – R2G, Germany  
Tim and Lois Hunter - WBT Orlando/Nigeria  
Scott and Tracy Ketrow - CCC, Italy  
Dale and Nancy Knudson - MTW, Cambodia  
Albert & Jennifer Kona – MTA, Albania  
Endi and Kati Kovacs - CRM, Hungary  
John and Kathy Lesondak - MTW, Slovakia  
Steve and Ann Lutz – SIM, USA  
Tim and Nicole - Restricted, Europe  
David and Jill Martin - MTW, Ukraine  
Demetrios Marmaras - PEF, Greece  
Mike and Robin McMahan - MTW, Ecuador  
Bob and Patty Meredith - NAV, Kenya  
Harry and Julie Miller - PEF, Atlanta/Bulgaria  
Wayne and Amy Newsome - MTW, Japan  
Young and Soon Park - MTW, South Korea  
Jean Paul – RHI, Haiti  
Andy and Sue Peck - WBT, Orlando  
Chuck and Wyema - Restricted, Europe  
Clay and Darlene Quarterman - MTW, Ukraine  
Nathan and Clare Richardson – HCCF, Panama  
Palmer and Joanna Robertson - ABU, Uganda  
Guillermo and Jeannie Salinas - PEF, Mexico  
Roger and Dianne Smalling - MTW, Latin America  
John and Liz - Restricted, West Africa  
Jan – Restricted, Europe  
Linda Summer - PEF, The Agape Puppets  
Jim and Catalina Tate - MTW, Ecuador  
Johan and Stephanie van der Westhuizen, MTW, Chile  
Bruce and Barbara Wannemacher - MTW, South Africa  
Becky White - MTW, Taiwan  
Linda Wixon - MTW, Japan  
Steve and Kathy Womack – WBT, Waxhaw / Africa  
Pat Wood - PEF, Freedom Ministries

### Mission Organizations supported by Midway

ABU -- African Bible University  
CCC -- Campus Crusade for Christ  
CRM-- Church Resource Ministries  
MTA -- Missions to Albania  
MTW -- Mission to the World  
NAV - The Navigators  
PEF - Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship  
Restricted – due to sensitive ministry  
RHI -- Reformation Hope, Inc.  
R2G - Reformation 2 Germany  
RUF - Reformed University Fellowship  
SIM - Serving in Mission  
WBT -- Wycliffe Bible Translators

## Mission to Durrës, Albania

August 2011

*“The Apostle Paul traveled through Albania preaching the Good News. Of this he wrote in Romans 15:19 ‘...so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.’ The Illyricum that Paul wrote is known today as the country of Albania.”*

(www.missiontoalbania.com)

We want to thank each one of you who made this trip possible for us this year! Your prayers, financial giving, and collecting items at the spur of the moment before we left showed us how blessed we are to be part of this particular location of the Church, and the Reformed Church in Durrës also sends their deepest thanks.

Our first Sunday in Albania we were able to reunite with members of the church, happy to see families growing. While still small in number, the congregation is spiritually maturing and slowly increasing. We were able to give each of the ladies in the church a little gift packet of Midway Cookbooks, measuring cups, aprons, and chocolate chip cookie mixes!

Going into Monday morning we were anticipating more than 60 students for the English classes, a good increase from last year! We divided the students into four groups, two lessons in the morning, two in the evening. Our youngest students were 8 years old, the oldest in their 70s. We had high school students, university English majors, a teacher, a doctor, Italians, Miss Albania, sweet little girls, and cool teenage guys; but even with the diverse make up of the classes, through the English lessons we were able to give them a glimpse of God’s plan of redemption. We based our readings from Creation, the Fall, the Exodus, Jesus’ death, and His resurrection. We were able to spend time after classes with the intermediate and advanced students at ice cream shops and cafes. For many of us this was the highlight of our time with the students so that we could get to know them in a less formal setting.

One lady, with her two children and nieces, was very interested in the Bible and the church. Berti gave her a Bible and they were daily reading through Mark and during the week asking more questions. Even though they showed no interest in coming to church that next Sunday, please continue to pray with us that the Holy Spirit will use what they read in the Gospel to draw them unto Him.

The members of the church graciously opened up their homes to us for meals throughout the week, giving us time to be with them and also to taste some delicious Albanian food!

In the midst of its crazy driving laws (what driving laws?), dirty streets, periodic water shortages, Muslim calls to prayer, forceful beggar children, Atheistic worldview, and people with a desperate need for Jesus, Albania is ripe for harvest. Through your giving and prayers, God is using Midway PCA to help the workers in His church receive and teach the people He continues save. Please pray for the Reformed Church in Durrës and the students we met, and Lord willing, next year we will be able to return and see the results of these prayers!

~The 2011 Albania Missions team: Lexi Keese, Heidi & Phoebe Pritchett

# Report from the Diaconate

---

	July-11	Year to Date Feb 11 - Jan 12
Undesignated Re- ceipts	\$158,974.84	\$811,637.27
Over / (Under) Budget	\$19,574.84	(\$24,762.73)
Missions over and above	\$6,272.00	\$10,303.00
Ministries & Misc.	\$0.00	(\$235.90)
Expenses	\$123,032.34	\$1,011,232.59
(Over) / Under Budget	\$16,409.33	(\$174,582.59)
		Includes \$200,000 into a con- tingency fund
Cash on Hand (less restricted funds)	\$264,597.52	
Building Fund	\$4,307.00	\$59,584.00
Building Fund Since Inception		\$8,056,868.00
Daughter Church	\$22.00	\$36.00
Daughter Church (Since April 2003)		\$13,520.11

# ***Midway Presbyterian Church***

4635 Dallas Hwy

Powder Springs, GA 30127