

the LANTERN



First Presbyterian Church, Las Cruces, NM

August 2021



The InBetweeners Concert

Alex Burr

On July 23 the InBetweeners held their third monthly meeting this year as the virus lessens its hold on society. The evening meal once again was whatever the individual groups wanted to bring. Lyn and Judith Ames brought water and eating utensils in case anybody was short. They also provided a simple desert. Judith had made the usual stylish name tags for those in attendance. The general health of society and vaccinations meant fewer masks and less attention to social distancing in seating arrangements.

The first item of the evening was a bittersweet event as Jean and Don Rhodes said good-bye to the group. These long-time members are moving to Tucson to be nearer family. They have always been active in the group. Don is particularly remembered for getting up very early to provide breakfast rolls for special group breakfasts at Easter time and for yearly prayer breakfasts for the church.

The main item for the evening was a concert by three of the best musicians in the



July Concert of the InBetweeners

church; Bill Kuyper, French horn, Viki Edwards, flute, and Howard Smolleck, organ. Bill and Viki had recently returned from Portland, Oregon, where they appeared on one of a series of programs on a classical radio station in that city. Part of the program for the evening was a recording of the program they had presented in Portland

Interspaced with selections from Portland, Viki and Bill, accompanied by Howard, presented flute and French horn pieces. The concluding music consisted of a piece featuring flute, horn, and piano. It is hard to find music written for flute and French horn but they did. The two instruments, accompanied by the piano, blended very well to bring the evening to a close.



Viki Edwards
Flute



Howard Smolleck
Piano



Bill Kuyper
French horn

Recent Session Actions

Congregational Meeting after worship next week, August 1, 2021.

The Session has called for a congregational meeting following our worship service next week to receive and act on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to elect a search committee. The search committee will be seeking to fill one new staff position, that may be an associate pastor for family ministry, or a director of family ministries.

The Session has also decided to begin after worship fellowship again, starting August 1, 2021.. The fellowship time will be held outside Jones Hall by the grassy quadrangle and refreshments will be wrapped cookies and crackers rather than open platters. The Session will host the first week and the Deacons will host the second week.

The Future

Rev. Norm Story

It's been a very long and challenging journey since we began talking about Covid well over a year ago. Our church had to shut down in-person gatherings and put our family, children and youth programs essentially on hold. During that time our Christian Education Team has tried to stay in contact, but clearly we have lost momentum. The world and culture around us have changed and outreach methods that once worked are no longer as effective. Building upon our past, we need to find new ways and methods for doing ministry that connects with families, children and youth.

Ruth Hoff left our church a very generous gift from her estate. The Session has agreed that the best use of those funds is to rebuild our family, children and youth ministries. They also agree that our best plan for rebuilding is to hire a highly skilled and specialized staff person to help lead us in that important mission. Ruth's gift is large enough to provide about four years of salary and benefits for the right person, time enough to rebuild those critical ministries.

This new staff person could be an ordained Associate Pastor for family ministries or someone who is not ordained but has the necessary training, skills and experience to serve as Director of family ministries. The plan is that a Search Committee will explore both possibilities and recommend the best option and person depending on what and who they find.

Our preliminary guidelines and qualities of this new staff person include:

- over-the-top extravert, Pied-Piper type exuberance
- knowledge about Internet/social media promotion and marketing skills
- should come with new ideas for programs, mission and outreach
- be willing and able to push for dramatic changes toward growth
- a strong team player, cooperative-coordinator with staff and volunteers
- must have an appropriate education and proven track record
- must love Jesus and feel called to ministry here, in our church

The Session also stipulated that the new staff person must show some results within two years and produce significant results within three years. After four years the funding from Ruth Hoff's gift will have run out and so it will be necessary to have grown enough by then to sustain the cost and expense of their salary and benefits. That means that it's critical to find the right person who can accomplish the goal of rebuilding and expanding our mission toward family, children and youth ministries.

The Session has called for a congregational meeting following our worship service next week (August 1, 2021) to receive and act on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee to elect a search committee. The search committee will be seeking to fill one new staff position, that may be an Associate Pastor for family ministry, or a Director of family ministries. They will search for both positions simultaneously but will recommend only one, the best match.

We recognize that it's critical for the search committee to find the right person for this new staff position. The Nominating Committee has put together a team that will include members that together bring these particular skills and characteristics:

- someone familiar and very experienced with doing interviews for hiring
- someone familiar with CE, family ministry and related concerns
- someone familiar with church finance, our programs and marketing
- someone who has children or grandchildren in our church
- each member must play well with others and not a bully or curmudgeon

The Nominating Committee will recommend these people to serve on the Search Committee:

Lon Anderson,
Samantha Armendariz,
Karen Candusso,
Steve Loman,
Debra Smith,
Marsha Topley
Rebekah West.

What Is This

Here is the second example of the new feature in the Lantern. Each month a photograph of an object in our church will be published near the beginning of a specific issue. Can you identify the object and tell where it is located? The location and the context of the object will be given near the end of this issue



Y o u t h “Yard” Sale

The annual “Yard” sale in support of the youth program was held July 9 and 10 in Watkins Hall. On Friday morning, the hall was filled with clothing, furniture, electronics, and reading material. By 7:30 AM there was a crowd at the door waiting for the sale opening at 8 AM. The starting sales were brisk. By noon, most of the initial crowd was gone and well over \$1000 of items were sold.

W a t k i n s Hall was far from empty. Saturday continued the sale until 1 PM so that by the end of that day more than \$2000 had been collected for the youth program.



Deacons Greeting Card Ministry

Gracia Class
Lynne Carver

If you have received a birthday card that is signed "From your friends at First Presbyterian Church" it is because of the Deacons' Greeting Card and Visitation ministry. We are also having a rose delivered to those in the hospital, when not interrupted by Coronavirus restrictions.

It is our hope and prayer that these small remembrances will lift your spirits and bring a smile to your heart. We hope that each recipient can feel the Christian love and concern that accompanies these gestures.

If you haven't received a card, but would like one, please check with Linda Ramirez at the church office (575) 526-5559, and make sure that she has your birthday information in the church records. This ministry is a pleasure and a joy for us, and we don't want to overlook anyone!

What Is This

The photograph shown earlier in this issue is part of a larger object which has quite an interesting history

It is a small part located to the right of the center of a large batik panel hung on the south wall of the west wing of the sanctuary. It was given to the church by a group of New Mexico State University students. It all started about 15 years ago when one Sunday a tall black man clothed in a bright blue flowing garment showed up for the regular Sunday service. He turned out to be a NMSU graduate student named Ebenezer Tumban. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister located in Cameroon. He brought other Cameroonian students who were welcomed to our church. Over the years this one act of one student created many other acts. It even played a part in the creation of the present college age group.



The Cover

This cover cross is rather unusual. As far as I know, it has no connection with a church. It was on the rear window of a car which was stopped at a light in front of me. It has other than Christian symbols as part of it. But the fact that it was there, shows that Christianity still plays a part in the thinking of our society.



Photographs provided by Alex Burr

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Congregational Meeting
After service August 1

Vision Statement

To be a place where Christian love is modeled

Mission Statement

To be a place where Christian love is modeled through:

1. Understanding, celebrating, and sharing God's Word.
2. Following obediently where God is leading us
3. Leading, nurturing, and serving our community for Christ