



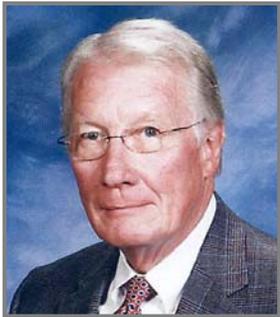
# White Rock Presbyterian Church

# Overlook

An informative newsletter published by the White Rock Presbyterian Church

September 2012

## From the Pastor's Desk



Here is a scary question for you, right off the Huffington Post page of the Internet.

What would happen if everybody in the world gathered in one place and all jumped up and down at the same time?

Some possible answers:

1. There would a giant tsunami as a result of a giant earthquake and we would all drown.
2. The earth would be knocked off its axis and we would either freeze or burn to death.
3. The earth would move out of its orbit closer to the sun and upset the whole solar system and we would all drift off into outer space.
4. All of the above.
5. Basically nothing.

If you picked #5, it's your lucky number.

According to Michael Stevens, the host of a hit online science series called Vsauce, if every single person alive right now stood shoulder-to-shoulder and all jumped together, not much would happen, not even a shudder. Why? Because the earth is so huge that the combined force exerted by everyone across the globe (about seven billion people) in a single concentrated jump would only move the earth by 1/100th of the width of a single hydrogen atom. (According to the NASA, Earth has a mass of about  $5.972 \times 10^{24}$  kilograms, which seems pretty heavy to me.)

And here we thought we were in charge, that we could not only change the world if we wanted to but we could also move it. It goes to show that our collective mass compared to the mass of the planet on which we live is very insignificant.

I am reminded of the Old Testament verse from Psalm 8: "When I survey the moon and the stars, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" The answer could be, "not much", especially if we are all silly enough to want to travel to somewhere on earth that would fit us all in one place so we could jump high and often enough to literally change the way the world works.

And yet, is that not what we all try to do by ourselves sometimes—to change the way our world works, apart from the way that God intends for it to be? When we are challenged, put upon, and generally flummoxed by the vagaries of life, isn't it tempting to try to "work out our own salvation" by turning to our natural proclivity to plan, strategize, and thus convince ourselves that our intended means of escape is a surefire thing? That is the line of attack that every political campaign employs, and it is a surefire way to lose.

Let us consider another option. If we are going to move at all to make a change in our lives, let it not be a jump up where the only place we can go is back down. Let us be more daring. Don't just jump and then land on solid ground. Take a leap—a leap of faith—that God will do one of two things, or perhaps both. God will give you a safe place to land, or he will teach you how to fly. Either way, life will change. And if it changes with God's blessing...well then, maybe the earth would move in the right direction.

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## WRPC Contact Information

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Office Hours for Gillian Erickson  
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## Letter from the Editor



My family is a collection of Olympics junkies. Throughout the middle of August the Olympics coverage was on day and night and, in some cases, had to be recorded so we wouldn't miss anything. This was not a problem for me since the coverage

was far better than anything else on TV, even with more than 40 channels to choose from. But it did prompt some thinking about how this got started and what it might mean today.

It all began in ancient Greece with the Panhellenic Games, which was a series of four annual events held at different locations within the Greek city states. There were the Pythian games, held at Delphi in honor of Apollo, the Nemean games, held at Nemea in honor of Zeus, the Isthmian games, held at Corinth in honor of Poseidon, and the Olympic games, held at Olympia in honor of Zeus. The most important were the Olympic games, which naturally occurred once every four years. The four year cycle was known as an Olympiad and served as a unit of time for the Greeks. These games served as both religious and athletic festivals. Competition was for glory and to honor the gods; the only prizes awarded were typically laurel wreaths for the victors. The ancient Olympics ran from approximately 776 B.C. to 393 A.D., when they were abolished by the

emperor Theodosius I, who sought to eliminate all pagan cults and practices from the empire.

The first of the modern Olympic Games held under the auspices of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) took place in the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens in 1896. Two hundred forty-one athletes from 14 nations competed in 43 events. While there was some sentiment to keep the games in Athens in perpetuity, the IOC declined and scheduled the 1900 games for Paris. From this modest beginning the modern Olympic movement has grown into the athletic extravaganzas that we see today.

The ancient Olympics were of great religious importance, with sporting events and ritual sacrifices honoring Zeus and other divine heroes. (The famous statue of Zeus by Phidias, which stood in his temple at Olympia, was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.) However, the modern Olympics are devoid of religious significance, except possibly to individual athletes. Furthermore, the modern games have become so grossly over commercialized that any spiritual significance is lost in all the hype and glitter.

One interesting attempt to analyze some of the motives behind Olympic competition is the movie, *Chariots of Fire*, which was released in 1981. The movie was nominated for seven Academy Awards and won four, including Best Picture. It is a fictionalized account of two athletes in the 1924 Olympics, Harold Abrahams (Ben Cross), an English Jew who competed to overcome prejudice, and Eric Liddell (Ian Charleson), a devout Scottish Christian who ran for the glory of God. The story is based on historic events but some liberties were taken with the screen play. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend it.

I am sure there are as many personal motives for Olympic competition as there are athletes competing. But I think that one can make too much of this. Whatever the modern Olympics lack in religious and human significance they more than make up for by simply being great entertainment. Maybe we should just enjoy them for that and be content. My favorite event was the beach volleyball. What was yours?

Dick Heaton

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*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.  
But the greatest of these is love.*

*1 Corinthians 13:13*

## Notes on the “Interim Process”

Since the beginning of Lent in February, the adult Sunday School has been focusing on our current journey through the “Interim Process” with its five identifiable steps: 1) Coming to terms with history, 2) Seeking a new identity, 3) Changes in leadership, 4) Rethinking denominational linkages, and 5) Commitment to new leadership and a new future. Through Lent we focused on the first step, considering our history since our establishment in 1966. We considered some of the transitions through which we have come, celebrating some of the high points and trying to learn from some of the low points. You may remember a congregational profile questionnaire that was distributed, and the results tabulated and shared. Hopefully this led to some level of understanding about where we are at the moment.

Since Easter we have been working on the second step - Seeking a new identity. We spent some time in “The Wilderness,” explored what constitutes a Jeremiah Moment, talked a little about the “Cycles of Generations,” and considered “Pictures of the Promised Land.” Most recently, the discussion has turned to our efforts to envision the new directions in which we would like to take the ministry of White Rock Presbyterian Church. In one session we identified some possible “norms” that might both inform and guide some of our future discussions. In selecting new mission directions we might:

1. Do something different in Jesus’ name.
  - Something not otherwise provided in White Rock or Los Alamos
  - Something that we are uniquely capable of doing
  - Something that we can do significantly better than others
2. Do one thing, at a time, and do it very well
  - “One thing” may have some branches
  - “One thing” should provide some sustenance for the congregation
3. Recognize that times change—old patterns may not serve in new situations
4. Appeal to different target groups
5. Emphasize local mission

What do you think? Come, join the discussion (most) Sundays after worship and fellowship time. Talk to one of the elders. Talk to the pastor. Let’s hear what you are thinking.

Bob Reinovsky

## Session News

The FOCUS topic for the Session meeting on August 19 was “New Model/New Identity” for White Rock Presbyterian Church—the same FOCUS topic dealt with during the July 15 meeting. In these discussions the Session is digesting the material collected during several weeks of congregation input (some brainstorming at Sunday morning gatherings, some carefully thought out written communications received outside of Sunday mornings, and some thoughtful conversations with Session members) related to the current step in our Interim Process: Discovering a New Identity.

The Session’s first response to this input is a heartfelt “thank you” to all who contributed. Your participation is appreciated, necessary, and a key contribution to the Interim Process.

One more key input will be received by the Session in the next two weeks. That is an “Interim Perspective” document that Dr. Harry will provide. This will be a summary of Dr. Harry’s professional observations (remember he’s done this a few times, unlike most of us) on what we’ve learned, the options that have been proposed, and how we can progress.

Next the Session will prepare a short paper proposing a new model and new identity for WRPC to be shared with the congregation (probably in September) for reactions, comments, and suggested modifications. With this critiqued “new identity” document in hand, we will be near the point of asking the Church Nominating Committee to recommend members for the Pastor Nominating Committee—a key step on the path to calling a new pastor.

George Callaghan

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

*John 13:34-35*

## Equipping/Sunday School

This year, our precious children will be cared for in the following ways:

- Pull-out lessons during first and third Sunday worship services for grades Pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup>. Our curriculum is called "One Room Sunday School" and the fall lessons center on Old Testament lessons about Moses, the Exodus, and the Promised Land. Jennifer Holmes, Joyce Haven and Terri Creager will share the teaching responsibilities, but we'd like more volunteers. There is an easy-to-use planning and activity book to use.
- Special holiday lessons and crafts to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas, Advent, Easter, Pentecost, and other holy days. This could be an opportunity for a volunteer to work with our children on a one-time basis. If you have a good idea for a holiday craft or lesson, please volunteer!
- Illuminations, especially appropriate for children, during regular Sunday worship services on second Sundays of the month. The messages will be in coordination with the liturgy and be presented by volunteering adults and teens from the congregation. Volunteers needed!
- Children's bulletins and crayons will be available every Sunday.
- Jr./Sr. High will continue to meet during the Sunday School hour after church. Ken Holmes will lead this group with a study of New Testament Heroes, using the very popular re:form Ancestors curriculum. The lessons include teen-tested DVD clips, internet sources, activities, and discussion. Co-Leaders and substitutes needed!
- Nursery staffed by adult volunteers will be available every Sunday for babies and toddlers. Attendants needed!
- We hope to frequently highlight our children's activities and interests in the bulletin and calendar so that our church family can be aware and talk with them about what's going on in their lives. Let Jennifer know about any events in the lives of our children and youth that we can celebrate!

Please give feedback, ideas, and volunteer offers to Jennifer Holmes or Joyce Haven about any of these planned activities. Thank you to all who can help with our children's programs. Sign-up clipboards are coming soon!

Jennifer Holmes

## PW News

PW Purpose: "Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible Study,
- to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace,
- and to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom."

PW was eager to welcome September with our usual activities. However, several ladies will be traveling so our First Wednesday potluck luncheon will be October 3 at the church. If you are interested in Thursday Circle/Bible Study, please contact Selma for the latest schedule. We look forward to the New Horizons study plan, "Dispatches to God's Household: The General Epistles," to be led once again by our knowledgeable Selma Reinovsky. THANK YOU, Selma!!

Joyce Berzins

## September 8 Church Garage Sale Fundraiser and Navajo Taco Sale

The Garage Sale will be held from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. and Tacos will be available from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Proceeds will go to ARTA.

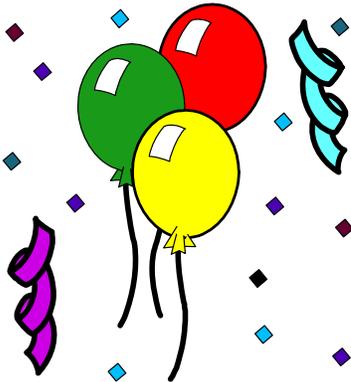
You can leave your donations either in Room 5 in the main building or in Memorial Hall at the south end. Don't forget to pick up a donation receipt for your taxes. During the week, when the building is open you are also welcome to bring your items. However, please do not leave any items outside.

## Journeys in Faith

The Journeys in Faith dialog group has been reading and discussing a book by Keith Ward entitled, "The Big Questions in Science and Religion." Ward, a professor of philosophy and comparative religions and an ordained clergyman in the Church of England, is able to stretch our imaginations in areas many of us had not previously considered. He explores the origin and ultimate fate of the universe as viewed by ancients and modern folks of many religions. We discussed creation and evolution and are currently exploring miracles. There's no such thing as being too late to join in so come meet with us on Thursday evenings.

Sumner Barr

## September Birthdays



Vickie Teel	10
Kathleen Fergus	12
Karen Chronis	16
David Haven	17
Rev. Dr. Harry Cole	20
Alexandra Edelmann	28

## Treasury Notes

Pledged and Nonpledged giving during the summer lagged a bit from the amount budgeted, but Budget expenses were also down. With the ending of traditional vacation time and the resumption of regular fall activities, we are

looking forward to increased giving to meet anticipated expenses.

Our January through July Budget Income breakdown and Expense summary is:

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income:			
Pledged:	55,441.75	60,048.31	-4,606.56
Non-pledged:	5,366.54	3,129.00	2,237.54
Facility:	620.15	1,337.00	-716.85
Interest:	512.30	553.00	-40.70
Applied Surplus:	6,302.94	6,302.94	0.00
Income Total	68,243.68	71,370.25	-3,126.57
Expense Total	69,628.15	71,370.25	-1,742.10
Shortfall:	1,384.47		

Of the actual \$69,628.15 spent January through July, we have paid \$53,836.40 in fixed costs for our church staff, utilities, and insurance. The remainder of expenses has been for mission, church program expense, office supplies, janitorial supplies, maintenance, and repairs.

We are using \$10,805.00 from the 2011 Budget Surplus in this year's Budget Income to meet expenses. The other half of the 2011 Budget Surplus will be used as income for our 2013 Budget.

Your pledged or non-pledged gifts are so important to our church. Thank you for your continued and faithful financial support.

Susan Buxton

## Facilities News Our Backyard Critters

We have several species of skink lizards living on our church property. One of the older ones is a Great Plains Skink and probably a male. You might have seen it pausing near the tractor under the portico or speedily darting away in serpentine fashion through the ground cover or even under the sidewalk next to the rock garden.

This is the largest of the skinks in our area. The back scales are smooth, shiny, tightly overlapping, and have black edges. The scales on its sides run diagonally. The short limbs and the side of the broad head were tinted a light salmon color in the spring when it was probably looking

for a mate. It has lost and regenerated its tail at least twice.

In April we noticed some five-lined skinks burrowing under the sidewalk near the Pastor's parking spot. They may have been excavating a cool, protected spot in which to lay their eggs. In early summer the females lay a clutch of 12 eggs, on average. The females watch over the eggs until they hatch in late summer, clean the young when they hatch, and protect them from predators - an unusual behavior for lizards. The hatchlings have bright blue tails, but you will still notice the bluish tails on the young when they leave their burrows. Some skinks can live up to six years.

Skinks eat ants, spiders, grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, caterpillars, and roaches. In turn, skinks are eaten by hawks, some snakes, and even dogs and cats. Interestingly, skinks chew their food before they swallow.

The various skinks on our property have provided fun for our curious children and grandchildren to watch and chase. Please caution your young-ones from trying to catch a skink, however. At worst, the kids might find they have only a wiggly tail in hand. The skink's tail can break off easily but can later regenerate to a shorter length and slightly different scale pattern than the original. At worst, the skinks do not hesitate to bite with their powerful jaws. The firmly gripping lizard jaws, combined with a trashing lizard body, and the probably wildly flailing little human hand, can result in a painful bite.



Various species of skinks lived in all of the lands described in the Bible. Leviticus 11:29 lists skinks, in various

translations, among the creatures as unclean (impure) for eating or even for touching when they are dead. Although various rationales have been suggested for the prohibition of eating or of touching particular animals that are listed in the Bible's Old Testament books Leviticus and Deuteronomy, none is explicit. Perhaps the powerful little jaws are caution enough for us to avoid touching them.

Susan Buxton

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### *Simple Gifts*

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,  
'tis the gift to come down where you ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.*

*When true simplicity is gained,  
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.  
To turn, turn will be our delight,  
'Til by turning, turning we come round right.*

*Elder Joseph Brackett, Jr.  
(Shaker - 1848)*

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