



THE MUSTARD SEED

Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree... *Matthew 13:32*

Presbyterian Church of Ruston PCUSA

November 2017

SESSION NOTES

The session reviewed the Duplicate Bridge group and voted to continue their bi-monthly bridge games at the church on the first and third Thursdays.

Approved a request from the Ad Hoc committee to purchase a parlor couch from Bodie's Furniture for \$1,398.91, using all monies in the old Parlor/Old Fellowship Hall Fund (359.15) and the balance from the Library Fund (1,039.76).

Approved the 2018 challenge budget.

Approved changing the date of the November session meeting from November 20 to November 13.

THANK YOU

Thank you so much to our friends at the Presbyterian Church of Ruston for your continued support of Pine Hills Advocate Center. It means so much to our program to have the support of local churches. Your interest and generosity is greatly appreciated. Please remember our families we serve. They need our prayers as they travel the road to recovery.

God Bless

Julie Summersgill



REMINDER

We're still collecting:

Box Tops for Education,
Labels for Education &
Community Coffee.

The collection boxes are on the table near the kitchen.

Memorial

Mary Lou Bollier

STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

The following *Minute For Stewardship* was given by Ruth Walpole on Sunday, October 22.

When Chris asked me to talk about stewardship, I thought: What do I say to a congregation that I feel has a history of being generous with their time, talents, and assets? Siri was no help!

Then, I remembered a devotional in *These Days* that I read last August. It was written by T. James Dixon and was entitled *With God, "Nothing But" Becomes "Something Much."* When I read it, I thought, "This is a very good lesson on stewardship." It was based on the Matthew scripture about Jesus feeding the 5,000. The crowds had followed Jesus, and when it grew late in the day, the disciples had wanted to send the crowd away to the village to buy food.

Jesus answered, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." Jesus said, "Bring them here to me." He ordered the crowds to sit on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowd. All ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces - twelve baskets full.

They had nothing but 2 fish and 5 loaves, yet 5,000 men, besides women and children, were fed. The "nothing but" became "something much."

On September 13, 1988 (29 years ago), the members of the University Church of Ruston lined up on the south side and First Church member lined up on the north side of the front entrance of this building. We met at the door, entered together, and became a merged church with the name "The Presbyterian Church of Ruston."

At the time of the merger University Church was still in debt from adding on to their building but did own a manse. This church building needed quite a few costly repairs that had not been done for lack of funds. Neither of the churches had a pastor. However, we did have some very good leaders and committed people. In my opinion, with the help of many that have joined us along the way, we have taken our "nothing but" and with God's help have made it "Something Much" which means that we have the church as it is today. Since the merger, we have had some difficult times. Things haven't always gone smoothly, but we have accomplished many things.

Time nor memory permits me to try to list all of these accomplishments, but a few that come to mind are made needed building repairs, added a new addition to the our building, established an endowment fund, paid for and helped with the construction of a Habitat House, helped with many community causes, participated with "Living Waters" in installing a pure water well, and supported and sent workers to Mexico. We are presently debt free.

These brief statements support the facts that we have a history of taking our "nothing but," giving it to God and letting him make it into "something much."

Yet, we hear comments such as "If we had more income, we could..." and "If we had more members, we could..." I urge each of us to continue in our tradition and not to stunt our vision and dreams by focusing on the "nothing but" but taking our "nothing but: and giving it to God so that he can turn it into "something much." In a few weeks you will have an opportunity to do this by making a pledge of time, talent, and money to our church for 2018.

A Collection of Native American Items

The articles in the exhibit in the library consist of items collected over the last sixty years. They are mostly from the Southwest United States with a few items from the Northwest. The collection was started when I was a student at the University of New Mexico and expanded through the years. What is displayed here is only a small portion of my original collection as I have given many pieces to my oldest son Gordon.

Among the items here are Navajo blankets and rugs, Navaho pottery and baskets, pottery from several pueblos including Casas Grandes pueblo in Old Mexico.

Among the pottery pieces on the second shelf are a Santa Clara blackware with the typical cut out design, a wedding jar of Teseque Poster Paint polychrome from the 1940's. This ware was particularly made for the tourist trade. Also a small Jemez polychrome jar, a Jemez polychrome Owl, a Casas Grandes polychrome piece and two Navajo pieces, one a modern piece and one a traditional jar. In the bottom section the first shelf holds a Casas Grandes polychrome bowl, a Casas Grandes blackware bowl and a Santo Domingo bowl. The bottom shelf displays a Jemez black on red jar.

The Navajo weavings are all but one at least 60 years old. The one on the stand is a Tec Nos Pas. It was originally used as a rug in a ranch in the Durango, Colorado area. The hanging backdrop is the newest weaving I have dating from the 1990's and is a Yei hanging. Yei are Navajo gods. On the shelf below is a Two Grey Hills saddle blanket from probably around 1940, and below that a New Crystal rug dating from the 1930's. The red blanket dates from 1896 and was made in the Wingate, Az area. This item is a blanket, not a rug, and I sleep under it when it gets really cold. The names of the rugs come from the trading posts in the areas where they were made. Traders would have their favorite styles of blankets and rug designs and pay extra for them. Thus the Navajo women would weave what was wanted to make more money and thus one can tell where weaving comes from.

Also displayed are several Hopi kachina dolls. All of these but one were made for the tourist or collectors trade. The very crude looking one is over 100 years old and was made for a child to play with and help learn the Hopi gods. These dolls are generally made from Cottonwood wood.

Among the baskets the two largest are Navajo wedding baskets. Porridge of cornmeal would be placed in the basket and then eaten by the bride and groom in during the wedding ceremony. The baskets were sometimes made by the Navajo but many were constructed by the Ute for the Navajo. The faded basket is probably around 100 years old and is probably of Ute construction. The two other wedding baskets (big & tiny) date from the late 1990's and were made by Navajos Mary Chief and Kee Bensite. On that same shelf is a potter figure called a singer. This one was made by a Santo Domingo potter and painted to look like Brittanys for me. You can tell the pups are less than 3 days old because their tails (except for the natural bobs) do not have their tails docked yet.

The Navajo water jug on the bottom shelf, a basket covered with pine rosin, was made by Sadie Rock. This is a traditional type of Navajo jug used for carrying liquids.

The very small, very finely woven baskets are from Alaska and the Northwest US. All three of these date from the 1990's. The flute is also from the Northwest and was made around 2000. The thin drum is from Idaho and the fat one from Taos Pueblo. The rattle is from the 4 corners area and is a tourist piece although rattles like this are used in ceremonies in the Southwest.

Advent

Advent, from the Latin word that means "coming," is a season in the church year that focuses on waiting. As early as the fourth century, Christians fasted during this season and ended their fast with celebrations of the arrival of the wise men or the baptism of Jesus.

Many of us probably recognize Advent because the sanctuary gets decorated for Christmas, and each Sunday we light a purple candle (one Sunday is pink). We see garland around the doors, wreaths on the doors, and candles in the windows.

Why have we lost this season of Advent? Maybe it is because our calendars and rhythm of life are run by the push of consumerism. After all, we use the microwave to warm things that were once warmed on the stove or in the oven. We use credit cards and debit cards because it is faster at the store than writing a check.

It's obvious in our world that we don't like to wait. We see Christmas decorations creeping into stores by September, and full bore Christmas items by Halloween. Waiting goes against most everything we encounter in our world today. Advent is sort of an awkward intrusion in our fast paced society. Advent links our hearts with ancient prophets who looked for a long-promised Messiah but passed away long before his arrival. In the process, Advent reminds us that we too are waiting.

Advent reminds us that time is far too precious to be wasted even when that time is spent waiting. Advent is a proclamation of the Gospel through the discipline of waiting.

During this Advent season we are preparing to acknowledge Christ's presence among us, with us, and for us, Emmanuel. That takes preparation, and that takes waiting.

To signify the beginning of Advent, we use the first Sunday of Advent for the "Hanging of the Greens." Some say it is based on the English tradition of decorating the home for Advent and Christmas with greens such as wreaths, garlands, a Christmas tree, and evergreens. In a church setting, it readies the sanctuary and church members for the season. This year the first Sunday of Advent is not the Sunday following Thanksgiving but is the first Sunday of December. So, during worship on Sunday, December 3rd, we will celebrate the beginning of Advent with the Hanging of the Greens.