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Majesty and Tragedy in Oklahoma

[The day after a rare EF5 tornado tore through Moore, Oklahoma, I read the following blog of Rev. Dr. Eric Barreto, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. It was most helpful to me in addressing my great grief. I share it with you in hopes that it will bring you comfort as well. Blessings, Betty]

In churches around the world, Psalm 8's resounding praise of God will be read this Sunday [as one of the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary]: "*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*" Women and men will confess that these are the words of God. But we will do so with grief, with deep questions about God and the world God has crafted and continues to sustain.

As we have learned anew in the last few hours, tornadoes are indiscriminate terrors. On Monday afternoon, Moore, Oklahoma experienced anew the ferocity of a storm that can appear almost without warning...the tragedy only heightened by the destruction of the security of an elementary school.

Can we still read Psalm 8 in the light of all this? "*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.*" And from those heavens descended a deadly cloud. "*Out of the mouths of babes and infants ...*" The children of Plaza Towers Elementary? "*What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?*" Indeed that is the question that troubles the heart of the faithful in times like these. Can we still praise God? If so, how do we start? Can we possibly understand what happened in Moore, Okla.?

Don't trust anyone who claims to comprehend the meaning of this storm. Don't trust anyone who points with absolute certainty to a single cause for this storm. Don't trust anyone who treats a tornado as anything but indiscriminate and cruel. These tragedies are not punishments or object lessons. Such natural forces do not reach their conclusion with a pat moral or a simple "they lived happily ever after."

Instead of seeking unavailing answers, we turn to one another...The outpouring of support is already tangible. The faithful have and will respond not with easy answers but with a word of hope and a helpful hand. **As we have learned anew in the last few hours, tornadoes are indiscriminate terrors, but they cannot match the reservoirs of compassion we tap in moments like these.**

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Instead of seeking unavailing answers, we start where the psalmist started. We start with a deep-seated, persistent hope that God is trustworthy and true, that God is worthy of our praise. We would be sorely mistaken to chalk up the psalmist's words to mere naivete, to count the poetry of Psalm 8 among the saccharine sentences of a greeting card, to deem praise of God the outgrowth of an easy life. The wisdom of the Psalms are hard-won. They exhibit not just the heights of fortune but the depths of despair. Alongside words of praise, the Psalms lament, they pray, they cry out, they rejoice, they rage, and, yes, they praise. Psalm 8 stands alongside a collection of other songs representing the vast expanse of human emotion and faith. We cannot understand Psalm 8 unless we read with it the 23rd and the 137th, the 22nd and the 30th... Psalm 8 moves from the highest heavens down to the earth. At every point, humans praise God's holy name. The psalmist continues to reflect on the luminous bodies that populate the skies, causing him to wonder why God is concerned with us, mere specks of dust, while these great bodies grace the farther reaches of space.

And yet God is concerned. In fact, God has granted us a share in God's glory and a share in God's dominion over the world. We may be mere specks in the universe, but we are specks imbued with God's love. We may stand at the mercy of winds and rain, but we find shelter in God's care. It is thus more than appropriate for the psalm to begin and close in the same way: "*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*" For the same reason, it is more than appropriate for us to begin and end this week uttering the very same words.

All our questions and doubts will be welcomed in a psalm that declares God's goodness. All our hope will be welcomed by a God who mourns alongside us, a God who creates but never deserts us, who is enthroned high above but always at our side.

Congratulations Graduates!

We are proud of our graduates and look forward to celebrating them in morning worship on June 2.



Nina Achidi graduates from Southwestern Oklahoma State University with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Child Development. Applying to NC masters programs in Counseling and Psychology.

Evan Barnette graduates from Wake Tech Community College with an AA in Arts. She is looking to continue towards her Bachelor's degree in Supply Chain Management.

Valerie Guzzo graduates from Broughton High School. She will be attending North Carolina State University in the fall, with a First Year College major.

Graham Howell graduates from the NC School of Science and Math. He will attend Appalachian State University.

Zachary Howell graduates from NCSU with a BA major in Sociology and minors in Philosophy and Music.

Ned Johnson graduates from Garner Magnet High School and plans to study mechanical engineering.

Steven Kotnik graduates from NCSU with a BS in Agricultural Business Management.

Sujin Matthews graduates with a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Organ. The degree is from the Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Jacob Milchuck graduates from Athens Drive High School. He will attend Furman University in Greenville, SC.

Katie Parker graduates with honors from NC State University with a BA in Elementary Education. She plans to be an Elementary or Middle School Teacher.

Mary Grayson Parker graduates from Athens Drive High School. She will attend NCSU, in the College of Design, majoring in Design Studies.

Haiti Mission Trip 2013

Ki jan gwo se toujou kenbe pawòl ou. How great is Thy faithfulness! And the Holy Spirit continues to light WBPC on fire by sending another mission team to the Yahve Jire Children's Foundation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. **Kathy Johnson** will again lead this faithful group of disciples. Returning to Haiti with Kathy will be **Joe Burmester, Ed Johnson, Kate Trimble, John Bayne, Susan Cummings, and Ron Pittman**. New travelers from WBPC will be **Jennifer Pittman, Mary Williams-Kotnik, Adam Bryan, Nathan Cummings, and Walt Clapp**. **Harry Beshgatoorian** will be joining us from Discovery Presbyterian Church in Clayton. **Scott and Claudia Sheppard** and **Donna and Alexandra Parker** will be joining us from United Church of Chapel Hill. Please be in prayer for them as they all prepare for their journey.

The trip is June 29 – July 7. As before, we will be taking needed supplies to the director, Chedlin Justinvil. The 25 children are growing so fast, they are in need of new underclothing, shorts, jeans and tee shirts for playing. This year, the team will be taking items to help start a sewing center so some of the older youth can learn a new vocation. One of the staff members is a seamstress. We will also be taking pharmacy OTC items and clothing for the poorest children at Hope Village. Thank you all for your contribution of these supplies.

The Team's Biblical theme this year comes from Luke 21:1-4, The Widow's offering. Chak nan nou gen kado yo ofri. Each of us has gifts to offer. While in Haiti, the mission team will be building closets for the new dormitory, building a chicken coop & compost bin, and planting the citrus trees purchased by the NHP International Hunger Grant we were awarded in March. We will also be taking funds raised by our very own 2nd and 3rd grade Sunday School classes to purchase goats and chickens. A special event is planned this year for a Family Day Picnic. Hopefully, with our assistance, many of the children's families will be able to attend and can visit and play with together for the first time in years. The Team will also be taking a field trip with the older kids to Henche, Haiti in the Central Plateau region to visit Mark Hair, Presbyterian Missionary in Haiti. They will be accompanied by Suzette Goss-Geffard, Facilitator of Presbyterian Response in Haiti. Se gwo toujou kenbe pawòl ou, Seyè m'. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Dates to mark on your calendars:

June 1, 6:30PM – 8:30PM -Team Haiti Italian Dinner Fundraiser

June 16, 10:30AM worship service presentation by Elementary Sunday School classes

June 23, 10:30AM and 5:00PM worship services – Commissioning of 2013 Team Haiti

June 29, 4:00AM Team departs for Haiti

July 7, 11:30PM Team returns from Haiti

Yahve Jire Supply Collection

This is it! On June 9, the clothes line is coming down and the overflowing bins will be removed, and all will be packed in the suitcases traveling to Haiti. Please if you have not donated, consider helping out this great WBPC ministry. It is always such a joy to see the kids when we unpack the suitcases in Haiti. Let the children know that all of us at WBPC love and care for them like our own. **We have 3 remaining children/staff members to be chosen for the purchase of undergarments at the Yahve Jire orphanage. A full list of other supplies that the Haiti Mission Team would like to take is available near the collection bins in our narthex and fellowship hall.** Remember, these items are all tax deductible. If you need a tax deduction letter, please see Julie Butcher or Suzanne Smith.



"Lunching Ladies" in the Summertime!

Calling all WBPC ladies to join us for lunch and fellowship at the Briggs Restaurant by the Harris Teeter on Tryon Road at 11:00 a.m. on June 11, July 9, and August 13. This is a great way to keep in touch during the summer, so please mark your calendars and come for fun! Please call Marcia Bennett, 919-851-3992, or email: sen1969@hotmail.com to reserve a seat. Car-pooling available.



50+ On Friday, June 21, 50+ will travel to Pittsboro. After lunch at the S&T soda shop (think really good ice cream) we'll have a guided tour of the historic and recently restored Chatham County Courthouse. We will leave the church parking lot at 10:30AM and return mid-afternoon.



Thank You Men of the Church!

We have enjoyed a number of wonderful breakfast meals prepared by the MOC. Thank you to **Ron Pittman** and **Andy Kotnik** for planning, purchasing, and cooking these meals. We also appreciate those men who have gotten up early and helped prepare breakfast and leave the kitchen neat and clean after breakfast. Those helping with breakfast include: **Mark Howell, Brian Whitfield, Eric Baxter, Jimmy Wade, Art Chard** and **Jason Kreykes**. We apologize if we failed to list others that have helped. We also appreciate a neighborhood volunteer Susan Sternberger who was very faithful in helping with breakfast. Not only did the men always leave the kitchen clean, Ron Pittman and Jimmy Wade saw that the kitchen was painted so that the walls are shiny clean! We also appreciate the Coffee Corner hosted by **Walt Clapp** on non-breakfast mornings.



Children's Chapel Resumes in the Fall

Greetings from Children's Chapel! We started the year with stories from the New Testament that included Jesus' baptism, his temptation in the wilderness and transfiguration and his appearances after the crucifixion. The children stayed with their parents as usual for Communion Sundays but also for Easter Sunday and again on Youth Sunday so that they could experience the leadership and energy of our amazing youth. They are learning so much about the Bible and about our liturgical calendar and colors. Ask them about the church holidays! Ask them what the color purple means! Ask them which stories they have enjoyed the most and what they like to do the most during 'Response Time'! You'll be surprised at how much they know. Children's Chapel will return in September. We have so many wonderful members working as a story teller, greeter and in materials and room preparation. If you would like to get involved, contact Judy Shelton. This requires very little time and the experience will bring you closer to these 4-8 year olds.

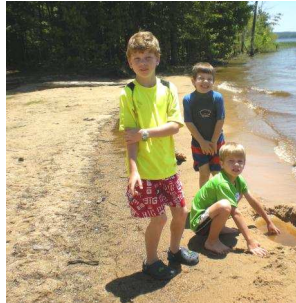
Day At The Lake : Saturday, June 22—10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Don't miss a fun time with your church family. Day at the Lake is a great time of family and church fun and fellowship. Invite friends to join us for this fun event. Make you way to Falls Lake, Sandling Beach, Shelter # 3. Plan to come and bring family members of all ages for a fun time of boating, swimming, eating, hiking, biking, and playing games. Fishing is also possible but a fishing license is required. There is a nature hiking trail near Shelter # 3 and there is also a playground nearby.

The group will gather around 10:00 a.m.; from 10:30 to 11:30 fun group activities will take place under the picnic shelter. Betty Connette will lead these fun activities. From 11:30-12:30 will be free time. The Fellowship Committee will provide lunch of hamburgers, hotdogs, with lots of fixings at 12:30. From 1:30 - 3:00 will be free time to enjoy the lake and sharing with friends. The shelter is wheelchair accessible. Water and lemonade will be provided. Families are asked to bring non-alcoholic beverages for their family and cookies or fruit to share. There is no charge for the meal but Falls Lake charges \$6.00 per car to enter the shelter area. The shelter has a nice parking lot and bathroom facilities are nearby. There is no refrigeration provided so bring coolers as needed. Bring life jackets, suntan lotion, lawn chairs, insect repellent, and sand and water toys for children.

Please indicate on the friendship pads at church or notify the church office by Wednesday June 19 if you plan to attend so that the committee can make food plans.

To get to Falls Lake, Sandling Beach, Shelter #3, take Creedmoor Road (NC 50) north towards Creedmoor. Sandling Beach is located on NC 50 three miles north of NC 98. The Lake is approximately 10 miles north of Raleigh and approximately 18 miles from the church. Plan to carpool. There is a \$6.00 per car fee to enter the park.



A Warm Welcome to Our New Members!

Arman and Susan Assa live in Cary but grew up in Raleigh and met at Athens Drive High School. Susan is the oldest daughter of members Frank and Marcia Bennett. Susan has been a lifelong member of WBPC, and Arman and his family have been attending special services and Christmas Eve services for many years. The couple was married by Betty Connette in a Persian-Presbyterian ceremony in 2006. Arman is employed by Red Hat. They have long felt a part of the church family and appreciate the welcoming, inclusive, and compassionate nature of WBPC.

Leslie Adams lives in Raleigh about a 15 minute walk from WBPC. He moved to Raleigh from Charlotte in 2002. At the time of the move his life was a bit directionless despite being involved with a local church. In 2003 he became ill and learned he was HIV positive. He describes himself as “unique in my own way and trying to live life the way God intended me to.” Leslie participates in both the morning and afternoon services and is a member of the @TheTable Praise Team. Leslie looks forward to being active with Grounds and Maintenance work areas.

Janet Cherry lives in Cary and maintains an in home piano studio. Many recognize Janet as the WBPC Director of Music/Organist, a position she has held since 2004. However, her association with WBPC dates back to the 1980's when she moved to Raleigh. She is the Chapel Organist at St. Timothy's Episcopal School, plays for weddings, teaches organ at Meredith College, and teaches piano at her home. Her other interests include kayaking, hiking, travel and reading.

Justin and Gwen Orilio live in Garner. Allisen Fischer is Gwen's sister. The Fischer Family was instrumental in introducing the Orilios to WBPC. Justin and Gwen are teachers with the Johnson County School System. Justin teaches 8th grade Science while Gwen teaches high school Mathematics. At the time that they joined our church family they were expecting their first child so are probably new parents as you read this.

Beth and Erin Bennett are Mother and Daughter who looked for a church family together. Beth lives in Garner and Erin lives in Raleigh near WBPC. Beth is employed at James C Greene Co. and Erin is a teacher at Garner High School. Both reached a point in life where they wanted to again become involved with a church. They visited several churches and just “loved Western Blvd. where they felt welcomed but not pressured.”

Steven and Susan McLaughlin have been coming to Raleigh for a number of years now to visit their three children and their families, who live in the area; Allisen, Kevin, Kenlee, William, and Lachlen Fischer; Gwen and Justin Orilio, and David McLaughlin. Upon retiring from teaching and from public works administration, Sue and Steve decided that they had had enough of the Central NY winters, and were ready to become snowbirds in the area they had explored and enjoyed while visiting the Fischers. This move has allowed them to spend six months during the winter with their southern family, and six months during the summer with their northern family, which includes daughter, Kristen and her husband, Mike, along with their two children, Kari and Brooks. Attending Sunday services and family baptisms at WBPC with the Fischers, brought Sue and Steve to our church family.

Thank You to Our Many Musicians

Summer is almost here, and our choirs will soon be taking some well-earned vacation from their rehearsals. I rejoice that we have such talented and hardworking church members who share their musical gifts with us in worship. When you see any of these good Christian folk, please remember to express your thanks and appreciation as well.

Chancel Choir

Anne Baxter, Margaret Cox, Lisa Lentz, Peggy Smith, Christine Thomson, Nancy Wade, Jean Chard, Mary Williams-Kotnik, Dorcas Miller, Margaret Pittman, Keith Cassel, Tom Yorke, Joe Sturdivant, Lewis Ware, and Phil Westerman.

Chancel Ringers

Keith Cassel, Susan Cummings, Allisen Fischer, April Ruble, Janet Westerman, Phyllis Westerman Fann, Chris Whitehurst, and Jane Whitehurst.

We have room in the chancel for more singers, and we have more bells that can be rung. If you would like to join our merry band of musicians, contact Janet Cherry at janet@wbpresbyterian.org



Summer @TheTable

5:00 p.m. Sundays

Western Blvd Presbyterian Church

4900 Kaplan Drive, Raleigh

www.wbpresbyterian.org

Yes, you can still head to the beach or mountains for the weekend and make it back in time for worship. You'll enjoy the relaxed, casual coffee-house atmosphere after that long drive home!

Returning to @TheTable this summer:

Theme Sundays: June 23 and July 14

Jazz Vespers: June 30 and July 28 - *Where jazz meets the Spirit!*

A wonderfully eclectic mix of prayer, poetry, ambient art, and live jazz! Join us in this prayerful wondering about the mysteries of life and the love of God. Specialty coffees served.



Other special services and activities:

June 23: Community-Wide Softball @ 6:15 p.m. & Pre-Game Worship @ 5:00 p.m.

August 4: A joyful feast of the people of God... *Holy Communion* celebrated amidst a covered-dish dinner (much like the way Jesus celebrated the sacrament with his disciples in the midst of a meal)

All other Sundays you are welcome to join us @TheTable for a Spirit-filled worship experience. [There will be no afternoon worship on July 7. Please join us in morning worship at 10:30 a.m. that Sunday...or any Sunday!]

WBPC Reaches Out

Western Boulevard Presbyterian Church supports many outreach activities in our community and around the world. Each month we provide 25 basic food bags to the Urban Ministries Food Pantry in Raleigh. In 2012 your donations of food and money allowed us to purchase over 4,125 pounds of food putting us in the two ton club (see the certificate at <http://wbpresbyterian.com/wp-content/uploads/TwoTonClub2012.pdf>). Every month we also send financial support to Mark Hare and Jenny Bent who serve the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., as missionaries in Haiti. For the past decade we have also supported our members attending seminary. Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte has a program whereby the seminary provides a third of the student's tuition if the student's church agrees to provide a matching amount. These are only a few of the organizations, people, and activities supported by Western Boulevard. For more details see the thank you letters on the web page. You can find them under the heading "Thank You Messages" under Outreach Ministries on the left hand side of the page. Thank you for your generosity which makes all of our outreach possible!

Food Bag Challenge Items of the Week

(Can't bring a whole bag? Bring just one item each week in June!)



- June 2 - 2 cans beans (any kind)
- June 9 - 1lb dried beans (small bag)
- June 16 - 1 can carrots
- June 23 - 1 box cereal
- June 30 - powdered milk packets

Happy Birthday

Michael McClellan	1
Kaitlyn Townsend	1
Eli Howell	4
Kate Trimble	4
Sue Creighton	5
Shirley Griffith	5
Sarah Lindsay	5
Nick Clifford	7
Morgen Hall	10
Juliette Ndepkeu	10
Steven McLaughlin	13
Jack Gebbie	16
Annie Woodruff	18
John Aldridge	19
Susan Cummings	19
Jack Reynolds	19
Barbara Tierney	19
Bill Smith	20
Linda Pressley	21
T.C. Lindsay	22
Oliver Milchuck	23
Joe Sturdivant	23
Aaron Cummings	24
Catherine Kimes	26
Margaret Pittman	27
Brenda Byers	27

WBPC Financial Report

	<u>APRIL 2013</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Pledges	\$ 30,185.20	112,754.70
Open	2,739.45	7,706.58
Church School	89.00	420.60
Total Offering	33,013.65	120,881.88
Prior Receipts		10,221.52
Expenses	<u>30,895.40</u>	<u>125,168.61</u>
Net Total	\$ 2,118.25	5,934.79

PRAYER CONCERNS

MEMBERS: Joyce Barbour, George Blum, Nita Brinkley, Pat Byers, Kaye Byrd, Michele Clark, Isaiah Grady, Richard Lentz, Sarah Lindsay, John McClellan, Willagene Minnis, Gene Reese, Mary Jane Roberts, Dot and Jimmie Smith

FAMILY/FRIENDS: Chris Alderson (brother of Todd Alderson), Thomas Crowder (son of Mary Crowder), Richie Doyle (friend of WBPC), Sandy Fisher (neighbor of the Lindsay's) Thomas E. Grady (father of Bruce Grady), Ruth Larew (aunt of Lewis Ware), Kenny Lowery (son of Daisy Lowery), Charles Madson (brother-in-law of Janis Guzzo), Patsy O'Brien (sister of Nancy Wade), Sally Readinger (mother of Becky Burmester), Pat Reynolds (aunt of Lynn Bell), Hazel Smith (mother of Jimmie Smith), Lauren Snyder (granddaughter of LouGene and Jim Hemphill), Valeria Tyndall Taylor (cousin of Mary Williams-Kotnik), Grayson Vickers (great-grandson of Daisy Lowery), Helen Yilling (mother of Mike McIntire)

ABBOTSWOOD: Margaret Pittman

UNIHEALTH/THE OAKS: Betsy Roberts

THE COVINGTON: Annie Woodruff

BRIGHTON GARDENS: Jo Gilmore

Congratulations to Brad and Amy Ammartek upon the birth of their daughter, Airada, born April 22. Brad does a beautiful job as our church contract custodian, and is a friend to us as well!

Youth News

June 1: Youth baby-sit for Haiti Trip Dinner

June 2: Regular Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

June 9: Year End Potluck!



Summer Sunday School 2013

This summer we want our regular teachers to have a break, but not our kids! So, we need volunteers for the two children's classes. Curriculum is provided and prep time is minimal, so please show your love for our children and future leaders by getting to know them better this summer. Sign up lists will be distributed shortly, so please be on the look-out. Please contact Kate Trimble (baynejj@bellsouth.net) if you have any questions.

Endowment Fund Requests

The WBPC Endowment Fund currently has \$3,000 available for utilization to support the benevolent, education, and mission work of the church. These funds cannot be used for the operation of the church or its regularly budgeted program. Requests for these monies should be made by June 16, 2013. If you would like an Endowment Fund Request form or have any questions, please contact Phil Westerman (Email: pwesterman@nc.rr.com; Phone: 919-851-1332).