



THE SPIRE



Centenary United Methodist Church, 1501 Rivermont Avenue Lynchburg, VA 24503
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September 2017

Moving From Maintenance To Mission

A recent church meeting brought forth heartfelt letters from two Centenary members with one issuing a challenge. Please read them in their entirety, then consider how you can help move our church forward.

God Moves in Mysterious Ways

By Barbara S. Morris, *Longtime member and leader*

I have a story to tell. I have hesitated to tell it because I did not know how to do it. As the title suggests, I finally accepted the fact that I am supposed to tell it...so here goes.

My family and I have been members of Centenary for over 50 years! Centenary is a very important part of my life. I was very active for many years... starting with teaching 2nd grade Sunday School...then Circle chairman, UMW chairman, Missions chairman, all the way to Council on Ministries chairman. Our children grew up involved in many Centenary activities. All of this was very special to me. I worked with and enjoyed so many wonderful people. I still have close friends that are members. In other words, Centenary has been very special to me for a very long time!

We now have moved away from Lynchburg to Penhook Virginia, so we have not been active in Centenary. We have continued to support our church prayerfully and financially. I have not lost my interest and have tried to keep up through emails, The Spire and friends. I am so pleased to see the programs and activities, but also I see the struggles and I have wanted to try to help...but honestly, could not figure out what I could do.

So, God took over..... I received an email message about the Tuesday night meeting of all committees to work on solutions and plans for Centenary. I immediately got this desire to go see what was going on and if I could be of help in any way. My first email to see if it was OK was not answered immediately, so I almost gave up...I had asked my dear friend Dawn if I could spend the night with her if I came. Well, she did not let me give up. She called Kathleen and between the two of them, I was going to the meeting!

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Property Chair Offers Straight Facts, Hard Numbers

By Mike Reeves, *Chair Property Committee*

Dear Centenary Members and Friends,

HAVE YOU NOTICED that the church is getting a facelift? After many years of deferred maintenance, we are finally getting the church painted! And it looks wonderful! In June, a non-member who loves the beauty of our church was so impressed that she sent us a check for \$300 toward the work! Clearly, the appearance of our building is the outward image of our church.

Thanks to everyone for your continuing contributions of time and money to maintain and improve Centenary. I earnestly believe that a good facility is a key factor in sustaining the church and growing membership, so that we can better serve humanity and make Christian disciples.

We are benefactors and stewards of a beautiful facility and community landmark that has stood on Rivermont Avenue for nearly a century as a proud beacon of our faith and the 200-year plus legacy of our congregation. While the old buildings are sturdy, many things have been neglected in recent decades. It's taking time, but your Property Committee and Trustees aren't sitting idly by and letting things fall apart. In a future communication, I will summarize all the things we have accomplished in the past few years. As you will see, we've done a lot... but there's still plenty left to do.

Earlier this year, we had accumulated gifts amounting to just under \$17,000 toward painting the

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I've Seen Fire and I've Seen Rain

(from a Gordon Lightfoot song)

Two stories are playing in my mind together. My extended family and I have been worried. My niece, Marsha and family live in Houston where the nation's weather news has been focused—incredible amounts of water coming fast over low-lying coastal plains, the result of hurricane Harvey. We've received word that Marsha and family are ok for now. They have food and still have electricity and are offering shelter to others. An estimated 30,000 are displaced so far, and as reported Monday, August 28, there will be an estimated 450,000 seeking post flood assistance. I just got an email photo taken over the backs of the pets (two dogs, a cat and two more rescue cats) who are looking out the door in fascination at the flooded yard and street. It looks kind of like what Noah saw when he opened the door and looked over the shoulders of ancestral cats and dogs after it rained cats and dogs for 40 days. In coastal Texas two feet of rain has fallen in two days and now the tropical storm is backing off a bit, but the prediction is that it will pick up more moisture in the Gulf of Mexico and head back toward Houston and Galveston on Wednesday bringing as much as another two feet of rain. That's one story; now the second.

A week ago I was one of hundreds of thousands who headed off to a viewing spot where the rare solar eclipse would be total. I watched the Sun, our local medium sized star through filtered glasses and filtered telescopes. The shadow began around 1:00 and took about an hour and a half to reach totality, which lasted about two and a half minutes. Just in the last seconds before totality the moon-shadow blocked all but one intense bright spot of sunlight on the left side and a thin ring of light around the rest of the moon. It really did look like the eclipse websites described in advance—a diamond ring; but so much greater, so much brighter, larger, failing description. Afterward, Wailer Giles, thinking about the diamond ring, observed that it was as though God is still wooing us, still ready to claim His bride. Yes, still offering grace upon grace, free for the taking. It was there to be experienced as pure gift. Then at totality, the air finished cooling, the colors around us changed to twilight, and it looked like sunset on the horizon all 360 degrees around us. The afternoon August crickets and grasshoppers went silent and the night insects raised their songs. At the moment of darkness everyone removed their protective glasses at the same time. Dominating the sky was a black circular disk where the Sun had been a moment before. The SUN!—a near million mile wide nuclear furnace—had been there moments before. Now we had a black disk surrounded by the usually invisible corona shining at a few million degrees Kelvin. We all shared it: a collective gasp, applause, laughter, giddy awe. We all saw it. We all knew a transcendent moment together. From small children to senior citizens, from the scientifically sophisticated to the least learned, we knew for a moment something that defied explanation. This perfectly sized moon, the perfect shepherd of our cleansing tides, the reflected comforting light of our nights, 2159 miles wide, circling less than a quarter-million miles above, perfectly covers our star for a moment every now and then. At this brief geological instant of human flourishing on our 4½ billion-year-old planet, our little moon perfectly covers a star, 93,000,000 miles away, 864,576 miles across, creating an event that makes us inexplicably joyful. We understand the science of it, the mathematics of it, but we don't really understand.

Nat King Cole, a famous singer from a bygone time achieved his first recorded hit in 1948 with a song called *Nature Boy*, by Eden Ahbez. It goes like this. *There was a boy, A very strange enchanted boy; They say he wandered very far, very far over land and sea; A little shy and sad of eye, but very wise was he. And then one day, A magic day he passed my way, And while we spoke of many things—fools and kings, this he said to me. "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love, and be loved in return. The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return."* Oh, may we learn. The majestic loving creator of stars and moons and people is the one who comes to Houston, too.

Nature's power on our little planet and beyond grips us with awe. Yes, sometimes there's destruction. In Houston, stories of human resilience and generosity will soon displace the fearsome immediacy of the live coverage of the storm. No doubt we'll have an opportunity, through the work of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), to be of help. As usual, UMCOR staff will be among the first on the scene offering hope and help and blessing in the name of Jesus. Opportunities for grace and goodness and kindness will demonstrate the power of love. And we will be in awe of the power of "Christ in [people], the hope of Glory." In both stories, Houston and the celestial, God is present and is not silent.

As Saint Bonaventure said, "Christ is the one whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." --Alan of Lille, *Regulae Theologicae*, Reg. 7, as quoted by Bonaventure, translated by Ewert Cousins, *The Soul's Journey into God, Classics of Western Spirituality* (Paulist Press: 1978), 100. ~ Doug

Much Honored Guest for JIFF

By Ida Powell, *Spire Contributor*

Lynchburg native James A. Webster left town for Boston years ago, where he graduated from Northeastern University. Soon



thereafter he worked in management at Boston Edison Company, after which he established his own computer company. Upon retirement in 2006 he returned to Lynchburg to be near family and care for his aging mother.

In both Boston and Lynchburg Jim's passion for serving his community has led many to call him a "professional volunteer." Based on his exemplary service, Boston's mayor declared Jim Webster Appreciation Day in February, 1994. Other accolades, to name a few, came from Boston police, City Council, Massachusetts governor, and its House of Representatives.

Back home in Lynchburg, Jim offered leadership in 2007 with the City's Dialogue on Race and Racism. He also served on the Interfaith Outreach Association and Adult Care Center Boards. Currently he serves on the Salvation Army and Park View Community Mission Boards, as well as participation in the Bridges Out of Poverty Committee. Jim received the 2015 Humanitarian Award presented by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, then in 2017 the Mayor and Vice Mayor's award for Excellence in Community Service.

Jim's volunteerism is seen in his direct service to others, always ready to lend a hand when the need arises. Thus when invited to speak to Centenary's neighborhood children at JIFF on September 14, his immediate response was "I'll be glad to do so!"

JIFF has begun! Join the fun any Thursday night 5:30 – 7:00pm. Contact Paula Howell for more information. 434-665-8130 or paulahowell44@gmail.com

Sager Brown Mission Trip

By Paula Howell, *Team Leader*

Sager Brown, Baldwin, LA here we come. Centenary UMC is sending a team to work at the UMCOR Relief Depot as well as the neighboring community from October 14-22, 2017.

We ask you for your prayers as well as any support you may give. Keep these members in your thoughts: Paula and Carl Howell, Marty, Melissa, Lexi & Bryan Waugh, Reba Gurdal, Garland Harper, Melva, Belva & Ileda Shelor, Renee & Randy Minnix, Don Younger, Carole Humphreys, Karen White.

These members of the team have worked hard and all Volunteers In Mission pay their own way to wherever they go. Thank you for all of your support.

Trivia Night Raises Funds

By Chris Howell, *Quizmaster*

Sunday evening, August 27, a horde of trivia lovers piled into the fellowship hall for a great time and raised over \$400 for the mission trip to UMCOR.

The seven teams (South Park, The Prepareds, Bayou Buddies, Diamondz in the Ruff, The Hallelujah Chorus, Marty and the Smarties and Motley Crew) competed in three challenging rounds of questions. The categories ranged from Animal Groups (did you know that a group of crows is called a murder?) to Music (were you aware that Charles Wesley wrote 8,989 hymns?) to Food (would you be surprised to find out the the fast food chain with the most worldwide locations is Subway? 44,882).

Some of the more unique trivia questions were about UMCOR (can you name the seven parts of a health kit?) and the great state of Louisiana (whose state tree is the bald cypress and state bird is the brown pelican). Congratulations to the winning team – Diamondz in the Ruff!!



The mission team is grateful for your support!

Mysterious Ways (continued)

It was great to see many friends and meet so many new ones. I felt very optimistic about the meeting. Well, the meeting was not what I thought it would be and to be honest, I was a little disappointed. However, after the guest speaker finished, one final report was given. It was Mike Reeves (someone I had never met) and he was reporting on the need for money to finish painting our beautiful church (at the time, \$30,000!). Now, I have always believed that the “programs” of a church should be first and the “buildings” second, but I could feel the need for getting the painting out of the way so we could go forward with our missions. Then he told about the broken window in the steeple and the cost to repair it. He said it had been covered with plywood and was dark inside! That’s when I got my “God Nudge”! I have always thought the steeple (SPIRE) was a church’s special connection to Heaven and God. (Our newsletter, The Spire, is our church’s connection to us). Now the window was covered with plywood and the inside dark. I had to do something...so I went over to Mike and gave him a check to replace it. Now, I am not one to write checks without really thinking about it for a while...(Hey, I use coupons!). So, yes it WAS a God Nudge!

On the way home with Dawn, we both were a little teary eyed talking about this. She told me she also felt that this was the reason I went to the meeting. I even think it was the reason Dawn worked to get me there. We talked about it and both feel that we hope that this might inSPIRE others to try to give as much as they can to get the building painted and OFF the “bucket list”, so we can move forward in our missions and services for God.

Yes, God works in mysterious ways...He inSPIRES us!! Love to all of you, *Barbara Morris*

P.S. Leonard (Skeeter) And I have gotten another GOD Nudge: **Our CHALLENGE to YOU! WE WILL MATCH DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR ANY CONTRIBUTION TO THE PAINT FUND (UP TO \$10,000) GIVEN FROM SEPT. 1 through DEC. 31, 2017. WE HOPE THIS WILL INSPIRE YOU!**

Stuffed Animals Delivered

Another great year of gathering teddy bears and other stuffed animals has been completed with the annual end of summer delivery to Gleaning for the World. The elementary



Sunday school class, led by Betty Wooldridge and Garland Harper, has collected/organized/delivered stuffed animals for GFTW for several years. The collection will be used all over the world for kids who need something to cuddle and love. The following letters were written by the students:



** On Friday, August 11, Taylor, Braeden, Callen, Turner, Ella, Mrs. Betty and Mr. Garland went to Gleaning for the World. We delivered 333 stuffed animals and 333 dollars*

to cover the shipping cost. The stuffed animals go to children that are in orphanages and disasters – even as close as Appomattox! Thank you for all your help! We are already collecting for next year! Love, Ella and Turner

** I loved it and it was awesome. Thank you for everything. I had a great time. Thank you for Dairy Queen. I loved giving stuffed animals to Gleaning for the World. I love you Mrs. Betty. I love you Mr. Garland. Love, Callen*

** Going to Gleaning for the World was fun. I liked how we got to put the animals in the box. Then we went to go get lunch at Dairy Queen. Gleaning for the World means they give animals to children that lost theirs in a big storm or doesn't have any. I hope to go next year. ~ Taylor*

** It was fun! My favorite part was when we took a picture at Gleaning for the World. I got to hold a British bear with my friend. After that we went to DQ for lunch! I can't wait to go again!*

~ Braeden



Property Facts (continued)

exterior of the church. At the recommendation of the Trustees, the Church Council voted to commit \$15,000 of that accumulation to get started on the painting. The initial phase was recently completed by Fauber Enterprises of Lynchburg. Pete Fauber has done several jobs for us before and has provided quality service.

By eliminating some planned work such as (not) removing the storm windows on the education building, we were able to reduce the cost of painting the entire exterior of the church from over \$72,000 to \$57,000. Now we need to complete the job, which will cost an additional \$42,000.

Before it could be painted, it was necessary to repair the ceiling of the portico over the front porch of the Sanctuary. We committed \$2,100 from maintenance funds to repair the ceiling along with the painting, making the total paid to Fauber \$17,100 for the initial contract.

DID YOU KNOW that our steeple hosts a cellular telephone site? It's not visible from the outside, but renting space in the tower is a significant source of income for the church. After a careful engineering study, nTelos installed new equipment in the steeple last year. Since access to the steeple is via a spiral stairway that is too narrow to accommodate the new equipment, it was necessary to remove the ornate circular window in the gable of the front portico so equipment could be passed through the opening.

Unfortunately, age and weather had taken their toll on the mahogany window and it disintegrated when being removed. Thanks to Carl Howell for promptly making a plywood insert to cover the opening. With the cover in place the steeple isn't open to weather and pigeons, but we need to replace the window to preserve the architectural integrity of our building and meet Lynchburg Historic Preservation requirements. With a generous gift from Barbara Morris, we have contracted with Grayson Ferguson Woodworking of Lynchburg to reproduce the custom 38-inch diameter window. Please see Barbara's inspiring letter in this issue of The Spire.

HOLEY CEILING! In addition to the portico ceiling, a couple of repairs are needed to our interior ceilings: there's a large hole in the ceiling over the back balcony and some water damage to a small area of the ceiling over the choir loft. The amount needed to make these two repairs is \$2,600.

CENTENARY NEEDS YOUR HELP...As of August 22, the balance in our painting fund is \$3,576. We need to refill the coffers to complete this important maintenance of our building.

With money still coming in, the Capital Campaign fund has a current balance of \$17,428. While painting was not included in the improvements listed during the campaign, the Capital Campaign Committee and Trustees have recommended that this balance be applied toward completion of the exterior painting and interior plaster repairs. This approach received broad consensus at the special Church Council meeting on August 8th, and a \$21,000 contract for a second increment of the exterior painting was signed on August 21, with a 50% down payment of \$10,500. This work will complete the Marshall Street and Alley Sides of the building, leaving the back for a third increment. Here's a summary:

Complete exterior painting 42,000	Painting Fund Balance 3,576
Repair interior plaster 2,600	Capital Campaign Fund Balance 17,428
Replace circular window 1,795	Designated gift for circular window 1,795
Total Needed \$46,395	Total Funds Available \$22,799

New Funds Needed \$23,596

I am confident that, together, we can raise this money. Please prayerfully consider what your contribution should be to make it happen!

~ In His service, *Mike Reeves*

To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:21-22, tev)

Benefits of Being in Choir

Been thinking about joining the choir? Fall practices will be getting underway on September 7 and it is a great time to give it a try! The choir meets Thursday evenings at 7pm in the Layne Choir Room for about an hour. A recent article in the *Sunday Advocate* illustrates the benefits of being a choir member.

John Wesley's "Directions for Singing" in the hymnal state: "Sing all... Sing lustily and with good courage... Sing in time... Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing... So shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven."

Rewards in heaven? Sounds like a good enough reason to sing in a church choir. The benefit of singing with and caring for others goes beyond church walls, as many community choirs will attest. In these days of an increasingly polarized culture, music can be a common bond between peoples. "Through music, we can build community," said Dr. Jonathan Palant, Minister of Music at Kessler Park UMC in Dallas, TX.

"By singing in a choir, regardless where (church, community, university, secondary school, etc.), music becomes the conduit that brings us together in a very safe and equal environment," said Palant. "We come together in song; everything else is irrelevant. We come together in worship, in song, in prayer, to learn and to be better citizens of this world.

Choral singing also appears to have good health benefits. Preliminary results in several worldwide studies suggest that community choral singing does indeed provide a better quality of life for participants.

Increased lung capacity and greater oxygenation of the blood resulting in improved alertness are all associated with singing. Singing is also good for the brain, especially when memorization is involved. "Singing is of great interest to neuroscientists as it would seem that there is more of the brain given over to the processing of music than almost any other activity," says Dr. Graham Welch, professor at the Institute of Education in London.

Spiritual AND health benefits? Sounds like a win-win situation! See you on Thursdays this fall!

VBS Here...and Over There

By Ida Powell, *Spire Contributor*

Centenary's Vacation Bible School in June used the Abundance Orchard VBS materials produced by the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA). Several dozen children and their leaders learned Biblical principles of caring for their neighbors. With help from additional congregation members, they also prepared thousands of mesh bags to be used in gleaning produce.



Recent news from SoSA reports that another church more than 8,000 miles away in Africa also used the same materials. Waigolo, pastor of St. Mark's Church in Uganda, reports 400 children and 78

adults used the Abundance Orchard materials in which Bible stories taught about gleaning to feed hungry people right in their own community. Pastor Waigolo downloaded material from the internet to use with his congregation and village. Thus hundreds of children and adults have heard the Gospel in a new way – and now have eyes wide open, to look for opportunities to share food with hungry neighbors.

May we who live so far away from these brothers and sisters in Christ also commit to sharing both the Gospel and food with those hungry for it in our own community.



2017 Operating Budget Through August 20

Receipts:

Offering	116,990
Loose Plate Offering	678
Church School Offering	1,153
Miscellaneous Income	414
Easter/Christmas Offering	982
Shortfall	20
From Memorials	3,883
Total Receipts.....	124,120

Expenses:

Support Staff Expense	53,004
Pastor Expense	45,890
Trustees	44,787
Apportionments	4,388
Office - Admin	5,608
Programs/Worship	5,295
Total Expenses.....	158,972

Benevolence Receipts 2017

Sager Brown	1,070
Fellowship Fund	710
JIFF	2,245
Pennies with a Purpose	220
Local Benevolences	93
Operation Teddy Bear	209
Lambuth Clarke Scholarship	1,182
UMCOR	275
TOTAL \$	6,004

Stewardship-August 2017

	Operating	Painting	Other
August 6	3,619	330	206
August 13	3,398	25	2,392
August 20	3,062	325	304

MEMORIALS



In Memory of Faye Eagle

John & Jacqueline Novak

In Memory of Lewis Moorman

Claudia Mann

John Snead

Ernestine Dodl

Frances Butler

Virginia Saville

In Memory of Susan McCann

Virginia Saville

In Memory of Kitty Probst

Ida & Bill Powell

Lloyd Jones

Ivy-Lynchburg Properties

Centenary Breakfast

If you have not been joining your Church Family on the second Tuesday of each month at 8:30am at Famous Anthony's on Wards Road please plan to do so. You will enjoy a good breakfast and great fellowship! September 12, October 10, November 14 and December 12 are the next few dates.



JIFF Starts New Year

JIFF started for the new school year on August 17 with hot dogs in the back field, registering about fifteen kids. The first regular night on August 24 we registered about six more and had a great night with the kids!

We have had some response from the appeal to our congregation for more hands on deck! I thank them very much and look forward to their service. We always need more hands so call Paula Howell (434-665-8138).

Again this year our own Ida Powell is finding many community volunteers to come and speak to the kids and encourage them in life decisions. In September we are looking forward to hearing from Mr. James Webster.

The media room still needs more chairs - if you find some during the end-of-season sales, just drop them off on the third floor. Thank you!



Submissions to *The Spire* are welcome! Email to centenaryspire@hotmail.com by the 20th of each month.

Lectionary Readings for September 2017

September 3: Exodus 3:1-15, Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

September 10: Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 149; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

September 17: Exodus 14:19-31; Psalm 114; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

September 24: Exodus 16:2-15; Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45; Phillipians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

**Centenary United Methodist Church
1501 Rivermont Avenue
Lynchburg, VA 24503**

**Non-Profit Organization
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Return Service Requested



September 2017

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day Church Office Closed	5 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH)	6	7 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	8	9
10 5 pm Youth Group 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH)	11	12 8:30 am Centenary Breakfast @ Famous Anthony's	13 10:30 am Frances Allen Circle (P)	14 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	15	16
17 Pennies with a Purpose	18 Meals on Wheels	19 Meals on Wheels 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH)	20 Meals on Wheels October SPIRE Deadline Email: centenaryspire@ hotmail.com	21 Meals on Wheels 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	22 Meals on Wheels	23
24 12:15 pm Stephen Ministers 5 pm Youth Group 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH)	25	26	27	28 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir	29	30

Each Sunday:

9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Time 3rd Floor 11:00 am Worship in Sanctuary