New Summer Schedule

About a year ago we had a LAMP Class during the Sunday Adult Christian Education & Fellowship hour on Christian Education. One of the lectures we listened to was by the Children’s Ministry Pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church (which is where John Piper used to be the pastor). Bethlehem Baptist Church is a large church, and the Children’s Ministry Pastor said that he had to recruit 800 volunteers each year just to staff their Children’s Ministry program! One of the things he mentioned was that the church did not schedule any ministry for their children during the summer (other than for their worship services). That got our class talking and me thinking: Is that something we should consider for our church?

Earlier this year I met with Ethan Hayman (Youth Ministry), Wendy McLeod (Children’s Ministry) and Ed Jordan (Adult CE&F). Our goal was “to consider the advantages and disadvantages of having the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church take a summer break from all ministries. The exception to this would be the Worship Service, Childcare during the Worship Service, and Children’s Church during the Worship Service.” We considered advantages and disadvantages of a summer break, and then made a proposal to the Session, which was approved. (Continued page 2)
Advantages of a Summer Break

The following were considered advantages to taking a summer break:

- Volunteers commit to fall and spring, knowing they have the summer off.
- It is easier for volunteers to plan vacations because they do not have to serve.
- It gives ministries extra planning time.
- It enables ministries to do training prior to the fall semester.
- It makes Sunday School kick off the start of the ministry year.
- It helps prevent burnout.
- It will free up volunteers for VBS.
- Participation in Children’s Sunday School during the summer is often quite low and sporadically allocated between different age groups, making it hard to staff and plan, making it difficult to comply with the Child Protection Policy, and sometimes wasting a teacher’s preparation on an empty classroom.
- The usual Adult CE&F curriculum (the Ligonier Conference videos) could be recommended as a self-study course during the summer or incorporated into an extra class offering during the year.

Disadvantages of a Summer Break

The following were considered disadvantages to taking a summer break:

- The youth and parents are free in the summer. So, the summer is actually a good time for youth to be involved in activities and ministry.
- Some people may feel that there is a break in the teaching.
- The Great Commission curriculum is year-round, and will need to be adjusted.

Proposal to the Session

The following proposal was approved by the Session: “That the various ministries of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church take a break over the summer.”

The exception to this would be the Worship Service, Childcare during the Worship Service, and Children’s Church during the Worship Service. This also does not preclude any group from meeting, if they so desire. An example is that the Youth may have fellowship meetings during the week. Also, a number of Growth Groups often have summer picnics, and that would be encouraged.

New Summer Schedule

The summer break would be the Sundays between Memorial Day and Labor Day. That is, the Memorial Day Sunday will be the last Sunday of the spring semester, and the Labor Day Sunday will be the kick off for the fall semester.

We hope this new schedule will enable members to have a good break over the summer, and come back to the fall with renewed energy to serve and be involved in our church.
Is It Really Us Against Them?

You have probably noticed that we are entering into a season of politics. With the election coming up at the end of this year, and the final candidates getting closer to being chosen, we are about to enter into the political ads season. It will be difficult to leave the house or watch TV without seeing bumper stickers or ads. As Christians, we have to ask ourselves, what is our role and responsibility during this time of year. First and foremost, vote. It is important that you express your opinion and vote. However, beyond that, is there a Christian way to vote? Are you sinning if you vote a certain way? What about the people who vote differently than you? These are very difficult questions. Our number one goal should be to glorify the Lord and represent Christ in all aspects of life, including politics. So, how do we act when people disagree with us, particularly on volatile issues of politics? Scott Sauls, a PCA pastor in Nashville, TN, has written a book called *Jesus Outside the Lines* that is designed to address those very questions. His goal in writing the book is to hold firmly to our beliefs without perpetuating division. The book itself is a wonderful reminder of how great Christ is and how we can get so laser focused on things of this world and the stances that we take, that we forget about the joy and beauty that Christ brings. The book addresses many topics, politics being just one of those. Since we are entering into the politics season and since politics has a propensity to be as divisive, if not more so, than religion, I thought it would be refreshing to look at what Scott Sauls has to say in the first chapter of *Jesus Outside the Lines*, which is about politics.

Before starting, Sauls talks in the introduction about why he wrote the book. He was tired of taking sides. By taking sides, there always seemed to be gossip, negative stereotypes, labels, caricatures, critiques, condemnation, and all the other destructive and negative things that are often associated with taking sides. Instead, he encourages us to seek the truths of the Bible and the grace that it gives. “When the grace of Jesus sinks in, we will be among the least offended and most loving people in the world.” “Are we known by what we are for instead of what we are against? Are we less concerned about defending our rights – for Jesus laid down his rights – and more concerned about joining Jesus in his mission of loving people, places, and things to life?”

So with the stage set for seeking God’s glory through Christ’s example, let’s look at what Sauls has to say about exemplifying Christ in the midst of politics and the many opinions that come along with it.

The first thing that Sauls establishes in this chapter is that the Bible is in favor of government. God established the nuclear family, the church and the government to help “resist decay in society and promote its flourishing.” He also reminds the reader that no human system is perfect, because no human system is fully focused on God. Therefore, there will always be things to affirm and critique about every human system, including the political left and the political right. (Continued page 4)
Sauls even points out that of the 12 disciples, Simon was a zealot (worked against the government) and Matthew was a tax collector (worked for the government). Yet, Matthew goes out of his way to show that he and Simon were friends. We should always be seeking God’s glory and the advancement of the gospel above ALL other loyalties and opinions. “Our loyalty to Jesus and his kingdom must always exceed our loyalty to an earthly agenda, whether political or otherwise. We should feel “at home” with people who share our faith, but not our politics even more than we do with people who share our politics, but not our faith.”

Wow – that is a difficult statement. Do we feel as comfortable or more comfortable around fellow believers who disagree with us politically? Are we able to let our love of Christ overcome our passion for the issues in a political season? If not, are we truly seeking after Christ, or have we let our worldly beliefs take a higher priority? Sauls gives an interesting example of how this can play out. He says that a friend of his told the story of a Bible study during the 1992 presidential elections. One of the group members came into the Bible study excited because they had seen a bumper sticker out in the parking lot for the “other party.” They were excited because to them, it showed that the church was reaching the non-Christians. However, one of the other group members spoke up and said that it was their car. Sauls points out that if a zealot and tax collector can share faith when sitting on opposing sides, we must do the same. “It is wrong to question someone’s faith because they don’t vote like we do. Yes, wrong.” Have you ever found yourself doing the same thing? Do we get so wrapped up in our ideas and opinions that we lose sight of Jesus?

Wow, those are some challenging questions. I know that it is easy for us to get passionate about all kinds of things, and that we rightfully seek to advance the kingdom and statutes of God. However, we must make sure that at the same time we are fulfilling our responsibility to participate in government and vote, that we also use that opportunity as a chance to advance the gospel rather than hinder it. We must make sure that we are seeking after the advance of the kingdom of God. We must seek to be like Matthew and Simon – when we differ with other believers, it should not hinder or prevent us from fellowshipping and working together for the advancement of the gospel. Let’s spend this political season with a passion for the advancement of the gospel and the love of Christ and trust in our sovereign God to work out his plans in his timing. Let us strive to be known for what we are for – the gospel of grace – instead of what we are against.

3 Sauls, 7
4 Sauls, 13
Before I let you in on the “inside scoop at TBPC,” I would like to thank everyone for my warm welcome as Office Administrator at TBPC. Melissa Noel did a superb job in preparing extraordinary documentation for a smooth transition for me and I am eternally grateful to her! I am happy to be serving our church in this capacity.

When I came to work at TBPC, there were many things happening during the week of which I was not aware. First, our church body is showered with prayer. The staff come together daily at 8:00 a.m. for a time of prayer. Then, every Monday, there is a weekly staff meeting and a time of prayer for the church members and visitors. Fill out your Welcome Card and let us know how we can pray for you (in respect for your privacy, please indicate if you would like it posted in the Intercessor/website/email).

I knew TBPC was filled with people who love and serve well with their time and talents on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, but nothing prepared me for the numerous volunteers who give during the work day. New Tampa Christian Academy and the English as a Second Language program are two examples.

One person you may not even know is our Custodian, Chris Christopher. Wow, the work he does for the church! He is our “Johnny on the spot!” He is constantly cleaning, repairing, setting up/taking down chairs and tables, filling kitchen supplies, and oh so much more. Please take a moment to send him a note of thanks (387christo@gmail.com) for caring so much for our church body in a special way.

There are also many “silent volunteers.” What is a “silent volunteer?” Someone who works diligently behind the scenes! You may have visited our website www.tampabaypresbyterian.org at some point and taken for granted the information being magically available for you. Perhaps you give to the Deacons Fund and don’t realize the impact your gifts have on people in need inside and outside of our church. Another area one may not think about is volunteering in the church office when I am out of the office or have an abundance of things to get done in a short time. Additionally, volunteers help the office by stuffing the bulletins or filling seat pockets with pens and Welcome Cards. Lastly, consider the time and efforts spent by many in order to make the Trumpet a worthwhile read!

Please pray fervently for the people volunteering and those who will be participating in events. And, consider how you might be able to serve the church and our surrounding community. Finally, thank each person who gives of their time as we sometimes forget to say “thank you!”
On March 13, 2016 the Women’s Ministry held its monthly 15 minute meeting to follow up on its current projects. So, ladies, have your calendar handy so you can save the dates.

**Sister to Sister:** April 23, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Deborah Donaldson’s home. The theme will be Renew, Refresh, and Restore. We will each bring a dish to share. Nancy Kirkpatrick is the Sister to Sister coordinator and may be contacted if you have any questions.

**Christianity Explored:** April 29, 2016 we will provide a dinner for the Christianity Explored attendees by preparing, set up, and clean up. The dinner theme will be Italian. Melissa Nichols is the contact point for this community outreach event.

**Purses with a Purpose:** We are busy collecting gently used purses to fill with toothbrushes, female hygiene products (individually wrapped) and travel size hairbrushes, combs, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, body wash, safety pins, sewing kit, small mirror, Q-tips, dental floss, tissues (small packs), gum and mints. Closer to Mother’s Day we will donate them to the Sunrise of Pasco County, Inc. Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Center. Jess Hensley is the point of contact for this community service project. She may be reached at jlh12c@my.fsu.edu.

Note: We have had many purse donations already (keep them coming!) Let’s not forget that we need to have stuff to fill them with. So, continue bringing in purses, but don’t forget to swing through and grab some travel toiletries and feminine hygiene products whenever you do your grocery shopping!

All women in the church are invited to participate in our activities. To keep up to date on what is happening, check out our bulletin board located across the hall from the women’s restroom, announcements in the bulletin, the monthly event brochure or plan on attending our monthly 15 minute meeting after service on the second Sunday of each month.

**Who’s that girl?**

A monthly game to get to know the women of TBPres ….

- This woman is a blue ribbon painter, whose daughter is named after both of her parents.
- This woman spent her weekends in college traveling with Disco Bill and his Disco on Wheels.
- This woman’s hobbies include digging through the vintage lace bin at the flea market, stocking up on Mod Podge, and turning trash into treasures.

Who’s that girl? Check the Women’s Ministry bulletin board for the answers!
April Birthdays

| April 1 | Mia Jeffries       | April 15 | Maddison Jeffries |
|         | April 1           |          | Jack McNulty      |
| April 4 | Joanne Vanderbrug | April 20 | Gabriel McNulty   |
| April 6 | Autar Kaw         | April 22 | Bob Guest         |
| April 6 | Tim Bayley        | April 26 | Sage Campbell     |
| April 7 | Ginny Becker      | April 27 | James Nichols     |
| April 8 | Tracy Justice     | April 27 | Heather Tomasello |
| April 8 | Shawn Nobles      | April 29 | Yong Bowman       |
| April 13| Marie Fishburn    | April 30 | Caleb Massie      |
By the time you read this, the Music Ministry’s presentation of That First Easter will be a great memory. I can say now, 22 hours, 1 minute and 52 seconds before it even happens that it will be wonderful and powerful. No, I don’t have a crystal ball, but I do have a strong level of trust in my Savior. He already knows who will be in every seat tomorrow night – he has already put in motion what needs to happen in order to get whom he wants in those seats.

Actually, his hand has been in this every step of the way. Back at the beginning of December when you were listening to Christmas music, I was listening to Easter Cantata packages from music publishers. It’s a process that involves a lot of listening, analyzing music complexity, more listening, mind changing and prayer…lots of prayer. It’s pretty incredible how God pulls together the circumstances to show us exactly the music he wants presented.

Only this time, it wasn’t happening. There was something insufficient about every package. I even sent one CD to Caroline to see what she thought and she came back and said, “I’m surprised you sent this to me – it’s okay, but it didn’t knock my socks off and I know you had to have reservations also.” As is usually the case, she was right….but I was feeling desperate a week before Christmas with no decision. Caroline said, “Debi, God will show us. He always does.” And then he did!

He reminded me of a book I had previously purchased and how much I loved the songs in it. Listening to those CDs one day in the car, it hit me that a certain song would be great for Easter, then another, then another and the seed began to grow.

I called Doug Knox, an incredible wordsmith, and asked how he felt about collaborating on a project with me. I had this crazy idea to create our own Easter musical. Gave him a CD with the songs I had picked to see what he thought and was thrilled to get his text saying he was hooked and already had ideas brewing. From there it all started falling into place and rather than tiring of the music after many, many rehearsals, the Choir and I actually got more excited as time passed. After the last rehearsal, some shared the specific parts that spoke to them in a special way. You see, God ministers to Choir members as much as he ministers to those hearing the final product.

Often during the Easter season, the focus is limited to the crucifixion and then the resurrection. Those were important events for sure, but long before that, people waited anxiously and faithfully for a Savior and then celebrated the birth of a King. That First Easter included those early elements, but it also included an "after Easter" component. In some ways, celebrating the Resurrection is the beginning for us. We were instructed to GO and TELL.

The last song in That First Easter is titled “Rise & Sing.” Allow me to offer this translation…”Rise” means STAND UP. Be visible, talk to people, don’t wait for them to come to you and ask. “Sing” means to SPEAK UP. Talk about Jesus and what he has done in your life, be a light.

Easter and being a Christian is NOT a spectator sport. Trust Him for the opportunities and the words, then…..Rise & Sing.

Can you name this tune ? . .
...when we see you we find strength to face the day....in Your presence all our fears are washed away.

Contact Debi Hensley at dbh@macfar.com
The Missions Committee offers the second in a series of interviews with TBPC members who have been on previous trips to Cherokee. The goal is to share perspectives from a diverse, cross-section of people so we can share a multi-generational perspective and hopefully inspire others to go as well. This month, we’ve summarized responses the Atkinson family gave to questions posed by Bill Jeffries.

Q: What were your expectations before going to Cherokee?
A: We had no idea how God would use us, but knew we would be stretched out of our comfort zones. There were prayers that no one would get hurt!

Q: How did the trip compare to your expectations?
A: It exceeded all expectations. It was a really good trip and we were amazed at how God used us. We were thankful that we were able to contribute.

Q: What did you like most about the trip?
A: The “community” that our team formed and the satisfaction of working just for God; doing God’s work for his glory. Pierce especially liked the work with the children.

Q: Has the trip changed your thinking concerning missions work?
A: Yes, we got to see that God has a bigger plan and that there are more important things than just personal interests. Also, how important it is to be involved in missions all the time, even if all we can do is pray.

Q: How has God used your trip in your life?
A: He gave us a bigger perspective of his priorities and opened our eyes to how he perfectly places us exactly where we need to be. How we could stretch out of our comfort zones to be understanding about serving others. (Continued page 12)
The visible construction on the West Wing Expansion is complete and all parts of the structure are now in use by many of our ministries. What remains now are some additional furnishings and decorating touches to make the rooms more user friendly. We hope to have the installation of our required fire hydrant complete in the next 30 days. Outside we will be slightly moving part of the fence on the South side of the property to make a straight line from Bruce B Downs back to the playground area. Part of that area will get new sod. New plants will be planted around the building extension.

Here is a picture of where we stand financially as of February 29, 2016:

**West Wing Spending**
- Direct construction costs $503,336.80
- Temp moving and furnishings $39,844.38
  **Total to date = $543,181.18**

**Funding Sources**
- BHG FHG I $331,930.75
- BHG FHG II $62,831.41
- Pilot Bank Mortgage $290,205.50
  **Total Funding = $684,967.65**

**Cash Status**
- Total Funding $684,967.65
- Total Expansion Cost ($543,181.18)
- Mortgage Payments (July – Feb) ($24,887.52)
  **Current BHG, FHG cash on hand February 29, 2016 = $116,898.95**

**Mortgage Balance Projection**
- Mortgage Balance, February 29, 2016, $272,603.97
- Principal Payment March 21, 2016, ($60,000.00)
  **Mortgage Balance March 21, 2016 = $202,603.97**

Monthly giving to BHG, FHG II (By His Grace, For His Glory) is averaging well above our monthly mortgage payment of $3,110.94. Additional payments to the mortgage principal will be made as BHG, FHG giving allows. Watch the bulletin for updates on our progress.
The English as a Second Language (ESL) “Easter Words & Symbols” party was an ordinary English class with an extraordinary message. Our leader, Heather Tomasello, explained to the students that Easter is the most important holiday to Christians. We celebrate it to remember the day that our Lord Jesus Christ came back to life. He died on the cross but came back to life on the third day. The students were taught in English why we celebrate Easter. Words such as Cross, He is Risen, Lily/Lilies, Eggs, Color/Dye Eggs, Egg Hunt, Easter Basket, Easter Bunny, and Jelly Beans, were defined for them. The “fun factor” then kicked in and we all dyed Easter eggs. Many were quite creative – who knew that it would take twelve adults over an hour to dye two dozen eggs! It was a pleasure to see the students having a great time bantering in their broken English and a good bit of Español and Arabic. We teachers have to continually remind ourselves that this type of activity motivates students to persist in the language learning not only because they need it, but also because they enjoy it.

So you may be wondering why I titled this article with the children’s fable The Fox and the Hedgehog. When the philosopher Isaiah Berlin wrote this essay he never meant it very seriously. He meant it as a kind of enjoyable intellectual game. The title is a reference to a fragment attributed to the ancient Greek poet Archilochus, “a fox knows many things but a hedgehog knows one big thing.” According to these texts everyone is divided into two categories: hedgehogs, who view the world through the lens of a single defining idea, and foxes who draw on a variety of experiences.

Since the ESL students come from a multitude of faith backgrounds, or no religious background, we have a golden opportunity to share the Gospel through the customs surrounding Easter. We talked about how Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. A lily blooms in the spring and its white color symbolizes purity. And, early Christians in Mesopotamia stained eggs red in memory of the blood of Christ shed while he was on the cross. Most importantly, we were able to give to the ESL students that “one big thing” – the single defining idea we can share with them to remember at Easter – why Jesus came to die so we might live in and for God’s glory. (Continued page 12)
English as a Second Language (ESL) Program Continued from page 11

Heather Tomasello created the ESL program five years ago with six students and Shawn Nobles as a volunteer teacher. Over time, it has expanded to 3 levels and over 40 students enrolled. Heather is stepping down as coordinator to fulfill new callings. And, we are grateful for her service. This leaves an opportunity and a need for an ESL coordinator in order for the program to continue.

Please join us as we pray for teachers, volunteers, and especially for a coordinator for this amazing ministry to folks outside our church family. The role of coordinator has administrative elements with a weekly time commitment of two to four hours. Teachers and volunteers can expect a similar time commitment to prepare for each class. If you would like further information, please contact Heather Tomasello (heather.tomasello78@gmail.com).

ESL meets during the school year from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Tuesday mornings at TBPC. Nursery is provided with reservations. The cost to students is $40 for books and materials.

Cherokee Mission Experience Continued from page 9

Q: How has this trip impacted your thinking since coming back?
A: It strengthened our faith that God uses all people for his glory and by having a better understanding of God’s perspective about things, including reminders not to "sweat the small stuff."

Q: What would you say to someone considering going on the upcoming Mission trip to Cherokee?
A: If you’re on the fence: Go! Make the commitment, because it's a cool thing to feel the hand of God on you. Do it!

Q: Do you plan on going back?
A: Yes! Lord willing, any and every year we’re able!