



The newsletter of
Presbyterian Elders In Prayer

PRAYERPOWER

Vol. IV No. 4

James 5:14-15

Aug., Sept., Oct. 2010

From the Executive Director:

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.” (Galatians 6:6-10)

The General Assembly in Minneapolis provided many delights that I expected; reconnecting with long-time friends and making some new friends, sipping cups of delicious coffee at the “Just Coffee” area, finding just the book I’d been looking for at the Cokesbury area, and participating in lively discussions with people in the exhibit hall. There were times, also expected, when I was deeply troubled by discussions and decisions being made. During one particularly troubling time, I felt led to slip away to a quiet place to simply be alone with the Lord and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because the convention center was so large, I quickly found a quiet place. When I opened my Bible to the reading planned for the day, Galatians 6 spoke very clearly.

The whole chapter was helpful, with Paul’s encouragement to bear each other’s burdens, and correct one another with gentleness and humility. But the words beginning with verse 6 made my heart pound. ***“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow...”*** I thought about what was being “sown” by groups, individuals, and the Assembly as a whole. Were we sowing to the Spirit...or were we sowing to the flesh? One thing is certain: God is not mocked, and we will reap what we sow...the church will reap what the church sows. With the sights and sounds of the hoopla of Presbyterians in the distance, Paul’s words were not very comforting.

The next words did bring some comfort and hope. By God’s grace, we can choose to sow to the Spirit. I thought of the ministry of Presbyterian Elders in Prayer. In our own small way, we seek to help people “sow to the Spirit”. Prayer is a primary way of sowing to the Spirit. The Word became personal for this servant of PEP: ***“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.”*** The quiet time began with my soul so troubled about the church...but ended with a deeper commitment to continuing to serve in PEP’s ministry, trusting God to bring a godly harvest.

Not long after I returned home I received a confirmation of sorts. I believe it is for all of us who pray for the church. I read an email and had a follow up conversation with a soft spoken, deeply faithful servant of Jesus Christ. Convicted by the need to pray for our particular Presbyterian family not only in the days immediately leading up to GA and during GA, but in the 2 years preceding the next GA, he has committed himself to fast from four meals each week and go into deeper prayer for the PCUSA. I believe PEP should issue the call to join him in that commitment.

I'd like to share a few of his words with you: "Believing that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, I am convinced that smart people without the fear of the Lord can only do unwise things. I am going to pray for those who don't have the fear of the Lord, not against them! I am going to pray for a change of heart. I will pray that God in His grace will bring the fear of the Lord on the denomination in a much greater measure, in whatever way he chooses... I don't want to be an optimist or a pessimist, a glass-half-full or half-empty guy. Just a realist. But realism makes me think about what God can do, and on that I will plead, in great hope. I will pray for an outpouring of a spirit of prayer, for starters."

Will you join him, and PEP, in prayer and in whatever form of fasting the Lord leads you to understand? If you do, send an email to PEP by way of our website (www.presbypray.org) and share insights the Holy Spirit gives you during your times of prayer. I'll share updates and more words of encouragement in our PEP newsletters in upcoming months.

Keep strong in prayer and in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And when you have opportunities, work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

In Jesus' love and service,

Rev. Melany Hamilton
Executive Director of PEP

CAN YOU SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY?

Since 1982, many people have given financial support to Presbyterian Elders in Prayer. We believe we've been good stewards of the gifts we've received, and we have given thanks to God for all of them. When our board met during GA, we dreamed of a future when we take a "step up" and increase PEP's ministry throughout the family of Presbyterians. We want to offer elder training seminars and prayer retreats for Sessions. We want to increase the distribution of our newsletters and prayer guides. We will need your help to do these things. If you have never given financial support to Presbyterian Elders in Prayer, please consider doing so now. And if you are a regular supporter, THANK YOU! Gifts can be sent to our treasurer, Fred Schinkel, at 5100 159th Terrace, Overland Park, KS 66085.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.presbypray.org – Would you be interested in receiving PEP's newsletter by email? It would help PEP cut mailing costs, and you'd receive the newsletter faster! If you'd like to switch from regular mail to email, contact Grant Thompson at grant@placeforgace.com.

WORDS OF WISDOM from Eugene Peterson, Earth and Altar:

Be still and know. Civilization is littered with unsolved problems, baffling impasses. The best minds of the world are at the end of their tether. The most knowledgeable observers of our condition are badly frightened. The most relevant contribution that Christians make at these points of impasse is the act of prayer — determined, repeated, leisurely meetings with the personal and living God. New life is conceived in these meetings.

MANY THANKS TO:

Our wonderful friends from Literacy and Evangelism International. They shared booth space and split the cost with PEP at the recent General Assembly exhibit hall. It was good stewardship and good fellowship.

Congregations who helped prepare extra copies of the PEP prayer guides leading up to and during the General Assembly, and who supported PEP board members with time and resources to attend GA: First Presbyterian in Rochelle, IL; First Presbyterian in Belvidere, IL; First Presbyterian in Dixon, IL. Thank you for your help...and for your faithful, praying elders! A personal “thank you” to my 2 favorite techies: Grant Thompson from FPC in Rochelle, who takes care of our email list, and Alex Hauck (also from Rochelle) who takes care of the PEP website. Another patient and skilled helper is Karen McClenthen from FPC in Belvidere. She prepares our quarterly newsletters for mailing and emailing. The pre-GA newsletter was much longer than usual, and we are grateful for Karen’s gracious use of her time.

PEP board members who took time out of their busy summer schedules to work in the PEP booth in the exhibit hall: Margaret Hoogsteen, Bob Kopp, Joe Pallikkathayil, Fred Schinkel and our former Exec. Director, Merrilyn Slack-Schinkel, as well as the current Exec., Melany Hamilton. Margaret, Bob, Joe, Fred, and Merrilyn have been attending GA gatherings for many, many years. The Lord knows and appreciates their faithful witness, and so do the rest of us.

2010 AUGUST PRAYER GUIDE

Aug. 1-7 Colossians 3:1-11 - *“Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.”* Lord God, forgive us. We have not “put to death” those worldly things within us. We have wallowed in impurity, greed, and evil desires. We have lied to one another, and have refused to put away anger, wrath, malice, slander and filthy language. The body of Christ does not look or act like Jesus. Throughout this week, draw us to repentance...for our own sins, and for the sins of our congregations, our denominations, and the church around the world. Forgive us, renew us...help us to walk with Your Holy Spirit.

Aug. 8-14 Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 - *“Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”* We thank You, Jesus, for the gift of faith. This week, help us to remember that You are at work in our lives and in the churches, even when we cannot see or understand how You are working. We pray for greater faith, not in ourselves and our efforts, but in You and Your grace. May we be like Abraham and Sarah (in their better moments) and believe that You ARE at work in our lives and even in our local churches, in the churches within our communities, in our own denomination and in all others. Prompt our hearts to pray for Your Church daily.

Aug. 15-21 Hebrews 11:29-12:2 - *“The world was not worthy of them.”* Holy God, our lives are often quite easy when we compare ourselves to the lives of Your faithful ones in ages past. But we know You have many faithful ones who are being persecuted even now. We know many of Your children suffer greatly from natural disasters as well as human disasters. On this week, when so many are planning a last week of summer vacation, bring to our mind, our hearts, and our prayers the names and faces of Your children who are suffering. May we not only pray for them, but find ways to reach out to those who are within our reach. And Jesus, forgive us for all the times we have forgotten those You love so dearly.

Aug. 22-28 Hebrews 12:18-29 - *“See that you do not reject the One who speaks; for if they did not escape when they rejected Him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven.”* Lord God, we love the youth in our lives. We enjoy them. We are proud of them. We would do just about anything to help them live happy and successful lives. Each year at this time we watch our children and grandchildren, and the youth from our congregations prepare for college. We watch others who are beginning a new job. And we wonder...have we given them what is most important? Have we shown them how to live in respect for the living Word of God. Have we taught them to hold onto their Savior when the world around them shakes? Tender our hearts to pray for individual young people each day this week. We pray for their faith, their character, and their service to Jesus.

Aug. 29-Sept. 4 Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 - *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* Jesus, another summer is drawing to a close, and life will return to “normal” ... In most of our congregations, Sunday School will resume, the choirs will practice again, and committees will search for new programs to help our congregations be better than the year before. Presbyteries will meet, many asking, “What do we do next?” Help us to remember that seasons may change, but You do not. Each day this week, prompt us to pray for Your will to be known and done. Help us to trust our churches and the Church to Your care and guidance. Lead us to Your Word, and may we be blessed by its power.

2010 SEPTEMBER PRAYER GUIDE

Sept. 5-11 Philemon 1:21 - *“I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints.”* Lord Jesus, we confess that we have seldom been known for our love and faith toward You and Your faithful followers. More often we are known for our doubt, our disobedience, and our irritation with the saints. Forgive us. During this week, help us to pray for people we’ve never prayed for in the past. Help us to pray for Your saints in other churches, Your saints who serve in our presbyteries, synods, and at the denominational level. May they feel an extra measure of Your love and Your presence with them as we lift them up in prayer this week.

Sept. 12-18 I Timothy 1:12-17 - *“This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - and I am the worst of them.”* Lord God, we pray for the honesty and humility of Paul. May each one of us understand the depth of our need for our Savior...and may each one of us gladly give testimony to the life-changing grace of Jesus Christ. This week, help us to pray for those who need the forgiveness, the mercy of Christ...but don’t know it, or know it and resist it. As we lift them up in prayer, may we also reach out in kindness.

Sept. 19-25 I Timothy 2:1-7 - *“...I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”* Lord God, help us to pray like that this week. Help us to remember those who lead our government and to pray for them. Why is it so easy to complain and to blame, and so hard to pray for the people who lead us? Help us to pray for those who lead other governments as well. May godliness and dignity be our goals in every part of our lives, including secular and church politics.

Sept. 26-Oct. 2 I Timothy 6:6-19 - *“But godliness with contentment is a great gain.”* O God of mercy, You have poured so many good things into our lives. We give You thanks. We also ask Your forgiveness for the sins of greed, ingratitude, and the worship of money. Show us how to live with an attitude of gratitude and with hearts that are generous toward those who have so much less. We pray that You will show us this very week how to live with “godliness and contentment”. May our prayers bring a smile to Your face, and may our deeds bring glory to Your kingdom.

2010 OCTOBER PRAYER GUIDE

Oct. 3-9 II Timothy 1:1-14 - *“For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.”* O God who calls us to discipleship, we lift up those disciples who find themselves suffering and even imprisoned for their faith and their faithfulness. We commit ourselves to praying for persecuted Christians on every continent this week. We know there are persecuted Christians all around this world...help us to care more, to pray more. And we pray that they will not live with fear, but with the spirit of power, love, and sound judgment. Even though we are not persecuted for our faith, we pray that for ourselves as well: may Your Holy Spirit give to each of us and all of our congregations a spirit of power, love, and sound judgment.

Oct. 10-16 II Timothy 2:8-15 - *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth.”* Lord, we cannot understand ourselves. We talk about evangelism, but rarely share our faith with those who do not know You. We talk about the importance of teaching the truth but hold back because we aren’t sure our words will be well received. We have received so much from You – our very salvation! – and yet we keep our mouths closed. Forgive us. Fill the Church and the churches with the fire of Your Holy Spirit, so that we can be diligent to present ourselves approved by God...

Oct. 17-23 II Timothy 3:14-4:5 - *“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing those from whom you learned, and that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”* Jesus, our perfect and eternal Rabbi, we thank You for those dear teachers who understood the sacredness of Your Word, and passed it on to us with great love and faithfulness. This week we pray for the current and future generations of teachers within Your Church and the individual churches. We pray that all those called to teach will be filled with great love for You, and with great love for the children of all ages they are called to teach. Encourage them, and help them to remember the holiness of their calling.

Oct. 24-30 II Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18 - *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”* We thank You, Holy Spirit, for the words You inspired Paul to write to Timothy. Those holy words inspire us, give us perspective, and encourage us again and again. This week we pray for leaders in our churches, leaders in the other churches in our communities, and leaders in the various denominations. May they be encouraged in their ministries. May they be strengthened in their faith. May they persevere in obedience to You. Comfort them when they are weary. Speak tender words to them, reminding them of the crown of righteousness they will receive from Christ when they enter the fullness of His kingdom.