



THE *Good News* LETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

Purpose Statement Revised

The Session recently revised the church purpose statement to make it more “user friendly.” In its revised form, it connects with the purposes of the church and our committee structure as follows:

The people of Fort Square:

- Love God—in Worship and Discipleship
- Love One Another—in Fellowship and Service (Ministry)
- Love the World—through Evangelism and Missions

Not only does the purpose give answer to Jesus’s Greatest Commandments—that is, we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves—but also to the Great Commission command to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Purpose statements, however, are only as good as how we use them. In other words, do we as individual believers fulfill the purpose to love God, love one another, and love the world? Furthermore, does the way we do church here reflect those values? Are we willing to re-adjust our lives, both individual and corporate, so that we may better fulfill the church’s purpose?

continued on page 3

Report From the General Assembly

*By James D. Berkley
Director, Presbyterian Action*

The 218th General Assembly last week in San Jose was a shock; there is no getting around that. I still feel a deep, sad ache about what transpired.

In quick succession and with almost a sense of indifference, the Assembly systematically set out to remove moral standards Presbyterians had always upheld. Relying on feelings and experiences, while neglecting Scripture, it attempted to reverse Christian morality, so that sin would ostensibly be approved and the defense of moral purity would be thwarted at every turn. In a headlong rush toward someone’s idea of social relevance (in a culture of extreme moral anarchy), the Assembly did all of the following:

- It began the process to remove the term “homosexual perversion” from the Heidelberg Catechism. Two-thirds of the 173 presbyteries would need to agree for this to be final.
- It made null and void every authoritative interpretation about homosexuality by any other General Assembly to this point, including the classic statement from 1978 commended

by General Assembly again in 2006.

- It voted to remove from our Book of Order the “fidelity and chastity” language about ordination standards, replacing this clear counsel with pious-sounding, yet extremely pliable wording. This amendment requires ratification by a majority of the 173 presbyteries to be final.
- It overturned and replaced an authoritative interpretation of the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (the Bush ruling), which had ruled out the “local option” that was allowing ordinations of persons unwilling to live by national standards for ordination.

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

General Assembly Report	1–2
Lifelong Learning	3
Breakfast With the Garretts	3
Marriage Seminar	4
VBS Report	4
Your Mission Dollars	5
MOPS Fall Programs	6
Blessed Are the Meek	6
f ² Youth	7

All of these actions—achieved in short order and with strangely perfunctory debate by a General Assembly with an overwhelming liberal/progressive voting majority—served one purpose: to cast aside biblical morality to allow the ordination of unrepentant persons who are either unfaithful in a marriage between a man and a woman or not chaste in singleness. The decisions were a sad, shocking sight to behold, a deeply troubling episode in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

It must be said that many faithful commissioners and

advisory delegates worked with tremendous courage and skill to try to forestall these drastic results, but the votes were simply not there to be gained. We all owe a debt of gratitude to these committed Presbyterians, who were closest to the defeats and are likely the most greatly affected by them. Theirs was a hard task with little reward.

Now that the initial shock has washed across our emotions, it is time to initiate a righteous and tenacious response. These dishonorable decisions shall not stand! God must yet have the final word.

Consider this:

- The constitutional amendment to remove “fidelity and chastity” can be thoroughly trounced by the presbyteries, thus retaining our ordination standard.
- The amendment to the Heidelberg Catechism can also be soundly defeated by the presbyteries, telling the moral relativists among us that Presbyterians still intend to profess God’s Word.
- The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission could overlay a new authoritative interpretation of its own across this General Assembly’s recent authoritative interpretation, which would reverse the legal situation to where it was before the Assembly’s action.

- General Assembly in 2010 could be just as thorough in restoring our standards and implementing a sound new authoritative interpretation as the 2008 Assembly was intent on destroying our standards. Perhaps 2008 was a demographic anomaly, skewed inordinately toward a progressive viewpoint.

All of this is to say that it ain’t over ’til it’s over! We have arduous work ahead of us to restore what is imperiled in church standards. But there is a path ahead of us toward a renewed sense of purpose and righteousness.

Now is the time we see what stuff we are made of! James wrote:

“Blessed is anyone who endures temptation [or trials]. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

So we need to “endure temptation” and “stand the test” in this situation, because that will show that we love the Lord. Blessed are we! We get to stand beside all those saints throughout history who have steadfastly stood for what is right. This is our time, our task, our test. I am privileged and thankful to have you standing beside me.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Youth Ministries:
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Pastor: Richard F. Brondyke
Secretary: Ana Varela
Parish Associate:
Rev. Martha Spear
Interim Minister of Music:
Charles Daniel
Interim Contemporary Leader:
Jeine Kamberidis
Youth Minister: Jon Wilson
Sexton: Bob Perch

Sunday Schedule
8:30 am Contemporary service
9:30 am Sunday school
11 am Traditional service

First Alpha Meeting, Wednesday, September 24

Bring a Friend!

Questions? Call 617-696-3701

To be purpose-driven means that we are willing to ask hard questions about whether we are fulfilling what God has called us to do. I would like to challenge each of you to evaluate your personal lives in the next month and ask whether or not you are fulfilling God's purposes for your life? Further, I would challenge all of us involved in leadership in this body to be willing to ask whether or not we are doing what God wants, according to His purpose for us.

Let's be a people of purpose!

LIFELONG LEARNING

My 86-year-old mother attends an Academy of Lifelong Learning—what a great title to remind us that our education does not stop somehow when we get out of high school or college. Growing people are always reading, learning, studying, seeking to learn more.

In a similar way, Christians should be involved in life-long learning. Nowhere does the Scripture say that we should no longer "grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ" because we have passed to new era of life.

We will have an excellent offering of classes to keep you growing! Watch for details in the bulletin on Sunday mornings.

- Adult Bible class on the Book of James with Arthur Spear
- Christian life and fellowship class book study with David Dingley and Randy Nielsen
- Single parents classes with Peggy MacLeod and June Newman
- Young adults classes with Candice Wilson
- New Christian class with Glenn Comiso
- Women's spiritual formation Class taught by Rev. Martha Spear, using *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts* by C. Peter Wagner

NEW MEMBERS SEMINARS

Church membership is an important step for anyone who feels called to be a part of Fort Square. This means that you are affirming God's call for commitment and ministry in the local church body. Membership affirms commitment to the Lordship of Christ, an affirmation of the Fort Square statement of faith and a

willingness to submit to the leadership of the church. If is from the official church membership roll that our leaders are elected and business pertaining to the church is conducted. We encourage you to become an official member so that you can actively participate in the business of the church. Membership is not a burden, but a God-given privilege to be part of His vision for Fort Square.

Save the date now for Fort Square membership classes:

- Seminar 101: Interested in finding out more about Fort Square, our history and background, what we stand for, what makes us tick? Join us October 19, 3 pm–7 pm.
- Seminar 201: Focused on Christian growth, this seminar will help new members reach a solid footing in Christian discipleship, Nov. 2, 3 pm.
- Seminar 101 A: Ready to join? This class will help you prepare a statement of faith and testimony, Nov. 23, 3 pm.

*2008 Respect Life Walk
Sunday, October 5, 2:30 pm
Boston Common Bandstand*

The money collected funds pro-life organizations, crisis pregnancy centers, counselling services, women's shelters, and educational programs.

We need you!

*Info: June Newman
781-849-3226*

Breakfast with the Garretts!

Put September 7 on your calendar! That is the day when return to the fall schedule with Contemporary Worship at 8:30 am, Christian Education at 9:45 am, Traditional Worship 11:00 am. Let's plan to turn out for a great Sunday!

On that day, we will be having our "Welcome Back" breakfast during the Christian Education hour for adults. In

addition to a preview of our adult classes, we will be having special guests that day, the Garretts, our missionaries to Senegal. We hope you plan to join us hear this couple elaborate on what they have to share during our morning services about their work taking the gospel to a very unreached people in the west African nation of Senegal.

BUILDING A LASTING MARRIAGE

Learn how to build a lasting marriage when we host a marriage seminar with William Batson, marriage and family life expert, Saturday, November 1, 9 am–4 pm, at Fort Square.

In “Building a Marriage That Lasts,” Batson uses expertise and common sense to show how a few indispensable tools can help any couple build a satisfying, fun, loving, and lasting marriage. Couples attending this conference will learn how to:

Turn bad talk into love talk;

Make personality differences work;

Practice the Principle of Satisfaction in your sex life;

Defeat the enemy of every marriage—selfishness;

Turn stormy times into opportunities to love each other more;

Keep conflicts from turning into all-out fights.

COSTS

\$35 per couple for those married or engaged

\$10 for day for babysitting and childcare

Contact the church office to register or for brochures with which to invite others.

God Is Good All the Time

I’m happy with my progress, but it’s been very slow. I’m still at physical therapy five days a week for 1 ½+ hours each day until at least the end of October. I can do most things, and things I can’t do, I avoid.

I’d like to thank everyone for your continued prayers for my healing.

—*Bob Knowlton*

Report From the Rainforest

The setting was exotic and colorful with brightly-plumed parrots in the trees, and, if you looked carefully, you might spy a green lizard moving about. This was no a tropical destination—it was VBS 2008!

During the VBS Rainforest Adventure, tour guides led groups to each activity station for games, songs, and stories. At the Snack Shack, the cuisine served would have made the Phantom Gourmet envious: English muffin pizzas, pigs in a blanket, fresh fruit, and ice cream cone cupcakes topped with animal crackers. Music

pumped up everyone’s spirits. The craft activities would have impressed even Martha Stewart. A master storyteller presented interactive Bible lessons, and kids had a chance to practice their memory work and Bible lessons at the snack and craft stations.

Marie Schlansker and Jonathan Wilson led the Rainforest Adventure, assisted by a wonderful staff of volunteers. If you missed VBS 2008, come join us in 2009 for our next exciting adventure—it could change your life!

—*Barbara Stickney*

Music-Making at Fort Square

A large crowd turned out in spite of threatening weather for the Fort Square Musicale on Sunday, 10 August. The program featured a variety of performers, praising God for the gift of music:

“Simple Gifts,” Flute Trio (Clare Nielsen, Meredith Lowmaster, Leann Davis Alspaugh)

“I Never Shall Forget the Day,” Lois Marshall and Derelyn Kahler

Selections from the Bach’s Goldberg Variations, Karen Madsen

“O Bless the Lord, my Soul” (from *Godspell*), Meredith Lowmaster and Charles Daniel

Haydn’s Andante, Teah Serani

“More of You,” Mary Megias and Derelyn Kahler

Johannes Pache’s Serenade, quintet with Katie Daniel, Rachel O’Connor, Leanne O’Connor, Nancy O’Connor, Charles Daniel

Jules Massenet’s Elegy, Alfred Mosko

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” Jane Ping and Karen Madsen

“Last Night I Dreamed of Heaven,” Steve Cronin

“Lead Me to the Cross,” Annika Nielsen

Following the Musicale, the audience and performers enjoyed a delicious dessert reception and a good time of fellowship.

—*Leann Davis Alspaugh*

Where Do Your Mission Dollars Go?

As I write this article, I ask myself what is happening in the mission endeavors we at Fort Square support? Does God hear our prayers? How is God using what we give to help bring about His kingdom? Is our money really doing any good? Maybe some of you have these same questions running through your minds, especially as you try to decide how much of your God-given resources to allocate to missions giving at Fort Square. Let me try and answer that with some quotes and statistical data from just a few of the missions we support.

Glad Tidings India

Why India? In this country of one billion inhabitants, 80% of are Hindu, 13% Muslim, 2% Sikh, and 3% Christian. This is a part of the world where the vast majority of people do not know Christ or His love. How can we not help?

A gift of \$100 a month over one year will print 400 Bibles and provide six sewing machines for village women so that they can start a tailoring business and provide food for their children.

Glad Tidings reports that they have gone from 10 believers to 600 members and 400 school children in 10 years. Hundreds of Church Planters are waiting to be trained.

Presbyterians Pro-Life

Presbyterians Pro-Life is convinced that a return to the Biblical teaching concerning

the sacred value of the family is essential to recovering respect for the sacred value of individual human lives. God has ordained the family, the basic social unit of all human institutions, to propagate, protect, and nurture human life.

PPL also aids crisis pregnancies: "If you're pregnant and afraid, we want to help you. You aren't alone. There are people nearby with open hearts and open homes who want to stand with you all the way through this crisis. Do you feel you can't possibly continue this pregnancy yet, deep inside, wish you could? Would it help to talk to someone who cares about you and your baby? You can talk to us. We're ready to listen and help—if you'll just call. We'll put you in touch with a Christian woman from a nearby church to whom you can talk, someone who understands what you're going through."

Teen Challenge

Teen Challenge is a 15- to 21-month Christian residential drug recovery program that is part of a network of ten Teen Challenge centers across New England and one in New Jersey. The program has a strong faith-based approach and offers spiritual, academic, and vocational training that equips individuals to return to society as respon-

sible citizens. A number of our graduates have experienced complete recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. They

have told us that the key to their success was developing a personal relationship with God and putting into practice all

that they had learned while in the program. Fort Square's support is focused on the Men's Center in Brockton.

The above is just the tip of the iceberg and, yes, God does hear our prayers. So much more is being done for God's kingdom, and the most astounding part is that God wants you and me to be involved. For this work to continue we must be involved. Please remember to pray for these and other missions we support. Pray for them by name. Stay informed; keep an eye on our church missions bulletin board, and our church missions page on our Web site. Read the missions announcements in our bulletin. Give of your hard-earned money, not out of guilt, but out of love and joy, knowing that the money you give is vital to the work of His kingdom both here and around the world.

—For the Missions Committee,
Elder Art Spear

MISSIONS REPORT

MOPS Announces Fall Programs

We're really excited about the start of our fall MOPS program! We begin September 9 with a presentation by a member of the Quincy Police Department on "stranger danger." He will be bringing fingerprint identification kits so our kids can be extra safe.

At the end of the month, we'll be talking about going "green" and protecting our environment. In October, we'll be addressing issues for mothers who work outside the home and the emotional wrestling that comes with making that decision. On October 28, Eric Mello, a financial planner who is also a Christian actively involved in South Shore Baptist Church, will be teaching us how to manage our resources more effectively.

Due to the Veterans' Day holiday, we will not meet on

November 11, however, we plan to gather along the parade route and go for coffee together afterward.

Our Thanksgiving program will be very special as the husband of one of our MOPS moms will be sharing his experiences in the military, telling us of all the good things our military is doing, especially in Iraq. It will be uplifting to hear of these positive stories.

Then at Christmastime, we'll be having a party for our families with some special entertainment in drama or music, or if we're very fortunate, both! We always look forward to sharing the holiday together.

We will be supporting Operation Christmas Child again this year, so soon we'll be sharing the list of items needed to fill the shoeboxes to send to needy children overseas. You can all

help by saving your shoeboxes as you buy those new school shoes, as we'll be filling them in October this year.

We have been very blessed to have June Newman join our MOPS steering team as a MOPS mentor. Cathy Maxfield, Madeline Paz, and Kimberly Symolone join our team as well. They have been wonderful and welcome additions.

We hope you'll encourage your friends who are young mothers to come to our programs. We meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 9:30 am–11:30 am. Mothers of preschoolers or mothers-to-be are welcome to attend. Spread the word—we look forward to a wonderful year ahead.

—*Martha Spear*

Blessed Are the Meek

[Editor's note: Bert Nogler continues his study of the Beatitudes, as begun in previous issues of The Good News Letter.]

Meekness is the opposite of being out of control, it is not weakness, but supreme self-control empowered by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23, Rom. 8:4). This meekness or gentleness is a humble and kindly attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, having no desire for revenge or retribution. It is to submit ourselves quietly to God, to His word, His disciplines, and His directions

toward all men (Titus 3:1–2).

The meek can be provoked without being inflamed and can respond with silence or a soft answer. The meek can remain cool when others are hot. The meek are easily pacified and would rather forgive many injuries than revenge just one.

The meek are happy even in this world, because, like Jesus in Matthew 11:29, they are gentle and humble in heart.

The meek have a comfortable enjoyment of themselves, their friends, and their God, and so they are fit for any relationship,

condition, or situation—really, uniquely fit to live or die.

"They shall inherit the earth" can be found in Psalm 37:11. This is the only temporal (pertaining to earthly life) promise in the New Testament. Not that all the meek will have a lot of earthly treasures, but that they will have a quality of life that can only come from the knowledge and relationship of our living Lord and Savior. May the quality of His life overflow in your lives.

—*Bert Nogler*

f² youth

by Jon Wilson

It is one thing to hear someone say that “God is bigger than all of us and is actively working in this world right now!” It is another thing entirely to experience that truth for first-hand, and that is exactly what happened this past summer to the youth of our church.

Rebuilding in Bay St. Louis
Fifteen teens and four leaders kicked off the summer with a mission trip to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, for a week of serving God and those whose lives were ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. During our time there, we saw God working in the lives of these people, showed God’s love to those in need through our work, felt God’s peace during the heat of the long, hard work days, heard God’s encouragement through the thanks of the homeowners, and tasted what it felt like to be in true fellowship with real friends. Nothing compares, we discovered, to experiencing God with all five senses, acutely sensing where God is working wherever we found ourselves. By the end of the week, we each knew without a doubt that God is indeed actively at work in this broken world right now—and we can either get out of His way and let Him work without us, or answer His call for us and hop on for the best ride of our lives as He works through us.

Inside/Out Soulfest

Fourteen high schoolers thought the ride Jesus was going to take them on was worth giving up another four days of their summer to join with thousands of other believers at the Inside/Out Soulfest at Gunstock Mountain in New Hampshire. Although it rained every day, our spirits weren’t dampened, nor were our voices quieted, as we worshiped our Lord with 15,000 new friends. We discovered new Christian bands, learned about the difficulties of camping on the side of a mountain, and grew in our understanding of how much bigger God is than just what happens in our youth group.

Oasis at Camp Monadnock

At Camp Monadnock, seven youths in Oasis experienced for the first time what it means to worship God full-time with 300 other kids their age, including a dynamic speaker explaining truths some had never heard before. They had so much fun that they can’t wait to go back again next year. What a great introduction for them to learn how to live for Christ as a teen!

Mark Your Calendars!

Odyssey (high school) begins
Sunday, Sept 14, 6–8pm.

Oasis (middle school) kicks off
Friday, Sept 12, 7–9pm.

TNT (third–fifth grade) ignites
the third Sunday of every month,
starting Sept 21, 2–4pm.

Thanks for Your Support

All of what we did for God, and what God did in our lives, was made possible because of the amazing support of you, the church. You answered our call at fundraisers and generously supported our trips, and we thank you. Due to the overwhelming response, we will most definitely be running Rock for Restoration again next year, so you can look forward to joining us for that in the spring!

Softball Team Hits Home Run

The Fort Square softball team had a wonderful inaugural year. We finished the regular season 5–4 and made the playoffs. We did not win the championship trophy, but we must have won the award for having the most fun throughout the year. It was a great time of fellowship and we can’t wait to be involved again next year. If you think you are the missing piece that will get us over the hump and bring the title to Fort Square, or if you just want to join us for more fun next year, be on the look-out for sign-ups in early spring 2009.

Summer Report

FALL WORSHIP SCHEDULE RETURNS
SEPTEMBER 7 

Contemporary Worship 8:30 am

Christian Education 9:45 am

Traditional Worship 11:00 am

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