

Steeple Views

First Presbyterian Church
209 Union Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

Pastor Larry Roff

www.1stpreschurch.org

518 374-4546

October 2011

Pastor's Points

Senior Pastor Larry Roff

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

7 – Faithfulness



Each of these qualities of spiritual health that Paul lists in Galatians 5 has its perfect demonstration in Christ. The best example we have of what *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control* look like comes from seeing these exhibited in the person of Jesus. If He lives in us, people should be able to see each of these traits in us ... including this one: faithfulness.

The Bible has much to say about faithfulness as an attribute of God, an attribute on which we have come to depend. Put simply, it means that God will keep His word to us, following through on all His promises – and also His warnings! He has bound Himself to His covenant people with a pledge of loyalty. We can count on Him not breaking that bond. The Biblical words for faithfulness convey the idea of stability and firmness.

This is a common theme in Scripture. Moses wrote, *Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments* (Gen. 24:27; Exod. 34:6). That theme is especially noteworthy in the Psalms. *All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness* (Ps. 25:10). One of the best known expressions of this is found in Lamentations 3:22-23, the passage that supplies the text for the beloved hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.” It is God’s faithfulness which becomes the basis for our appeals to Him in prayer.

What makes God’s faithfulness to us so amazing is that we are not faithful to Him. We repeatedly turn away from Him to follow the idols of the culture around us. But He remains faithful to us, despite that. In Hosea His faithfulness is taught eloquently in the metaphor of a

husband who continues to be faithful to his wife even when she is unfaithful to him. *And I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice; in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness* (Hos. 2:19). Paul counted on this when he wrote in 2 Tim. 2:13, *If we are faithless, He remains faithful – for He cannot deny Himself.*

When we consider faithfulness as an attribute of God reflected in us, we think of it in our relationship both to Him and to one another. A Christian who is cultivating the spiritual fruit of faithfulness will be increasingly consistent in his or her loyalty to God doing those things which please Him. It is in this sense that we read Paul’s challenges to Christians in his epistles, calling us to show our faithfulness to God by walking in the Spirit, forsaking sin, and pursuing holiness.

Faithfulness will also be evident in our dealings with one another. Our loyalty to our brothers and sisters in Christ will show itself in our respect for one another, the way we bear one another’s burdens, the way we pray for and encourage one another, and the way we serve one another with our spiritual gifts. Can your brothers and sisters in Christ count on your being faithful to them?

Blessings!
Pastor Roff

Church Website

www.1stpreschurch.org

Visit often!

Session Report - Submitted by Philip Schiesswohl

At the regular September Session meeting the Session received the treasurers' reports through August 2011:

Church Support (35 weeks, through August):

regular giving \$294,971.89 (91.9% of budget)
budgeted needs \$320,952.69

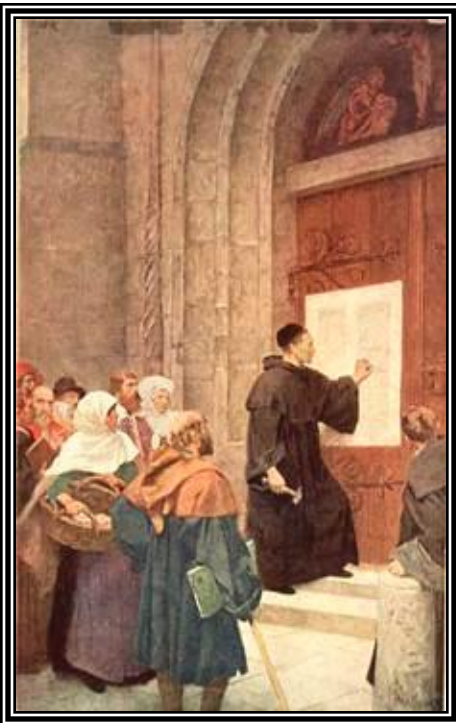
Missions (35 weeks, through August):

regular giving \$222,203.59 (89.5% of budget)
budgeted needs \$248,163.46

In other business session:

1. Transferred Helen George to the Church Triumphant as of 24 August 2011.
2. Issued the call for the annual meeting for Thursday, 10 November 2011 at 7 PM.
3. Accepted the final distribution of the Harold Shakeshaft trust in the amount of \$7959.23 and designated it as follows: 50 percent for missions, 25 percent for the stained glass window fund and 25 percent for capital improvement projects.
4. Approved covering up to \$600 of the expenses for the 10 September EE workshop from the Belak Fund.
5. Approved the retired missionary budget for 2012.
6. Approved the missions budget for 2012.

Reformation Sunday Festival Service



Painted by Hugo Vogel (1855-1934)
end of C19th

October 31 is Reformation Day celebrating that date in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his *95 Theses* to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. This was the spark that reignited the passion for a pure gospel that had nearly disappeared during the years of medieval formalism, superstition, and tradition. We will again host a festival service in our sanctuary at 6:00 pm on Sunday evening, October 30, with members and ministers from several area churches joining us.

A special focus of this year's service will be the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the printing of the King James Version of the Bible. This was an extraordinarily powerful event not only for the Christian church, but for all of Western civilization. It was this translation, more than any other, which catapulted the Bible in the language of the people into popular usage.

Festival Service
First Presbyterian Church
October 30, 2011
6:00 pm



Leaf from 1611
printing of the King
James Bible



What Should Christians Think About ... Church Membership

Pastor Larry

"I was wondering ..."

(Don't forget to submit questions you'd like to have answered in this column.)

Is church membership Biblical? Isn't it enough just to believe in Jesus?

The answers are "Yes" to the first, and "No" to the second. This is important in our day because it's not unusual to find churches that don't even offer membership as an option. And we encounter people who may have attended a church for many years, but have no interest in ever joining. Church membership is not a requirement for salvation, but it is certainly a mark of faithfulness on the part of a believer.

At the heart of this question is the important Biblical principle that when God saves us, He doesn't deal with us as individuals in isolation from one another. Our salvation involves our being adopted as children of God, and by virtue of that we become family members with one another. Church membership ratifies that connection.

Believers in the Old Testament were part of a covenant community in which they "belonged" to one another as well as to the Lord. Believers in the New Testament were "numbered" as part of the church in Acts. That obviously implies that there was some clear recognition of who was and who was not included.

When people join a local church, they take vows that they will be faithful to that fellowship and will do their part to advance the spiritual health and witness of that local congregation. In this regard, it is somewhat like marriage; formal vows seal the relationship and produce a sense of obligation to maintain the relationship even in difficult times.

Membership vows also include the very important dynamic of placing one's self under the oversight (discipline) of church leaders who can hold us accountable to maintain a life of holiness in conformity with the gospel. As members, we welcome this oversight that helps us see and address those deficiencies in our own lives to which we may be blind.

As a corollary to that, when we enter into membership with others in a church, we take on the responsibility of helping our brothers and sisters grow in Christ. This helps set us free from innate selfish tendencies to think only of ourselves.

DOLLARS and SENSE

submitted by Bob Holt,
Church Treasurer



At two thirds of the way through 2011, it's time for an update on First Pres finances. As of the end of August:

- Giving is 93 % of Budget and about the same as 2010
- Spending is 98 % of Budget and 2.5 % above 2010
- 2011 Cash-flow is -\$16,578
- The August 31 balance for the Church Support account is \$99,014.

These statistics are common for this time of year, just coming out of the summer slump, but as activities resume their normal pace, I am hoping giving will also resume. The challenges of these uncertain economic times should cause us both as individuals and a church to seek our great God in prayer for His answers. Let's join together with God to see His hand at work within our midst.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name."

Ps 100:4

Questions or comments may be sent to Bob Holt at bobbevholz@msn.com



Submitted by
Adrienne Polenz

Women's Ministries

Ladies of First Pres enjoyed the several occasions for getting together this summer planned by the leadership of Women's Ministries.

On two evenings they went to outdoor concerts at Freedom Park in Scotia. We had a brief devotional then we sat back and were entertained by the Scotia Glenville Community Band and Bopitude, a jazz group. We ended each evening enjoying a Jumpin Jack's ice cream cone.



On July 23rd a group of us met at Lakeside Farms for a great breakfast and a wonderful time of fellowship. Then in July and again in August, Betty Warden graciously offered the use of her pool. Moms and kids had fun splashing around the pool, and those who didn't swim relaxed in Betty's screened porch, chatting and sipping lemonade.

Women's Ministries wants to plan things *you* will enjoy, so if any ladies have ideas about some activities that the women of First Presbyterian might enjoy, please contact Adrienne Polenz at 346-3154.



Missionary Conference Schedule



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16

- 8:45 AM Adult Sunday School: Sanctuary
Russ & Mirelle Livingston
- 10:00 AM Morning Worship
Message: Dr. TE Koshy Report: Dan McBride
- 11:30 AM Luncheon (Mekeel Hall)
- 6:00 PM Evening Worship: Sanctuary
Message: Dr. TE Koshy Report: The Smiths
Reception to follow in Mekeel Hall

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17

- 7:00 PM Focus Groups: Mekeel Hall
 - Connecting with 21st Century Students – Dr. Terry Morrison, et al.
 - Culture and Culture Shock in Missions - various missionaries

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

- 11:30 AM Women's Luncheon: Mekeel Hall
Speakers: Jody Collinge, Raquel Sotelo
- 7:00 PM Home Groups

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

- 5:45 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
- 7:00 PM Prayer Meeting
Message: Ed Holtz Report: The Holzmanns
Kids' Zone: Dan McBride

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20 - 7:00 PM, Home Groups

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 - Free day for Missionaries

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22

- 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast: Mekeel Hall
Speakers: Mark Smith, Dan McBride
- 5:45 PM Family Dinner, Short Term Mission Trip Presentations
Mekeel Hall
Kenya Team: Rowland Elwell, Doug & Nancy Bodenstab
Ecuador Team: David & Sandra Geisinger, Andrew Fincke, Dan Nauman, Philip Schiesswohl.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23

- 8:15 AM Coffee & Refreshments: Mekeel Hall
- 8:45 AM Sunday School
Pre-School/Elementary: Candice Holtz, The Sotelos
Youth: Jody Collinge (Turnbull House)
Adult: Mark & Babe Smith (Mekeel Hall)
- 10:00 AM Morning Worship
Message: Dr. Terry Morrison
Report: Jody Collinge
- 6:00 PM Evening Worship (Sanctuary)
Message: Dr. T. Morrison Report: The Sotelos
Reception to follow in Mekeel Hall



Missions Committee Update

Submitted by Philip Schiesswohl, Missions Committee

Thank You

In the last newsletter we reported that we gave \$1000 to help **Bill Wright** purchase a computer and design software as he transitions to ITEC (International Technical Electrical and Construction). Bill writes: "Thanks for the gift to buy Auto Cad. It is purchased and running on my computer."

Evie Ant returned to Tororo in September after spending two months at the Follett Missionary Guest House. She writes:

"THANKS FOR:

- Your support and prayers
- Use of FMGH
- Hospitality
- Being available
- Securing and offering transportation

EVERYTHING!

By 8:15 on the 18th I should be back in Tororo with joy and strength after my home visit."

SOS from Down Under

Steve and B Rarig sent a rare SOS this summer that they were now in red ink, and MTW was not able to send full support in August. Two churches reduced support significantly, one family dropped a big chunk of support, and the US dollar lost 10% all in a period of about five months. The Missions Committee approved a one-time gift of \$1000 from the contingency line of the budget. Steve wrote: "Thanks so much for the additional dosh, mate. It will indeed help! We can economize some of this problem, but that will mean some trade offs which are better than the alternative. You guys really are awesome."

Financial Support Loading...

With only one month left to raise support, **Alex and Laura Crum's** support is now up to 91%; they need full support by the beginning of November. Alex will be attending a Seed Company retreat in October. Please pray that they would hear the Lord as they prepare for all the changes coming their way, and that God would provide full financial support before their deadline.

Caleb LaRue will be added as one of our missionaries next year. He is currently at 56% of needed support, and needs to be at 70% before he can increase his time on campus to more than one hour per week. At the presbytery meeting in September, the New York Presbytery also committed to support Caleb.

Missionary Conference

The 62nd Annual Missionary Conference will be October 16 - 23. Look for the brochure in the bulletin. A copy of the schedule is provided on the previous page.

2012 Budgets

The Missions Committee recommended two budgets to Session. The first is for the distribution of the interest from the *Retired Missionaries Fund*. Session approved a 2012 budget of \$12,000. Dr. & Mrs. William Barnett, Mr. & Mrs. Warren Davis, Mr. Charles Lamb, Mrs. Tal McNutt, Mrs. Ladson Saylor and Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Vishanoff will each receive \$2,000.

The Missions Budget for 2012, which will be presented for ratification at the annual meeting in November, is \$368,700, the same as last year with the following changes:

- Karen Kirchner – reduced by \$2400 to zero while she is in the US completing a Masters in Public Health
- Rick & Priscilla Mellen – reduced by \$2400 to zero due to retirement
- Caleb LaRue – IVCF Union – added for \$2400
- The Friendship Center – increased from \$3000 to \$4000
- General Contingency – increased by \$1400

Giving

Missions giving through August decreased to 89.5 percent of the budget. The financial pressures during the current economic situation continue to have a significant impact on our missionaries forcing them to cope with significantly reduced financial support. Missionaries will only be able to remain on the field if we continue to care for them and give sacrificially to their support.



Retired Missionary Notes
on Page 8

Goodbye, Irene Picnic

This article, used by permission, was written by Paul Merrill and originally appeared on the website FOX23NEWS.com on 9/18/2011

Twenty-two days ago, they were strangers. Then, Tropical Storm Irene came, creating bonds that these flood victims will never forget.

"I just wanted to come and say thank you," Donna LaGone tells FOX23 News. During the storm, Donna and her husband slept in their car outside of their Stockade home in case they needed to escape the rising floodwaters. She explains, "It came up to my driveway - the crack in my driveway it came up to it and stopped." [But] the LaGones didn't totally escape Irene's wrath. Wind ripped the back porch of their North Street home and rain poured into their kitchen.

Help came from people Donna had never met

Donna says, "My flood damage didn't come from the bottom; it came from the top." Help came from people Donna had never met.

Rev. Larry Roff has been the pastor at Schenectady's First Presbyterian Church for two years. "I came from South Florida to get away from hurricanes," he jokes.

After Irene, Rev. Roff and his parishioners took to the Stockade streets. He tells FOX23 News, "We started going down in those days immediately after [the storm] and we were taking food to them several times a day, meeting them, talking with them on the streets, weeping with them over their loss."

Now that the floodwaters have receded, the church is celebrating new beginnings.

The annual church picnic was originally scheduled for August 28th - the day that Tropical Storm Irene hit. The rescheduled picnic was held in the church parking lot to make it easier for the flood victims to attend.

Rev. Roff says, "They're not members of our church, but they're our neighbors."

Many of those neighbors are now friends and everyone is stronger because of what they've experienced.

Donna says surviving the storm has reinforced her list of what she needs if she ever finds herself in trouble:

"I want to be, one, with a New Yorker and, two, with a Schenectadian. Three: with a Stockadian."

Stockade Residents Give Thanks

A few donations were received from non-First Pres people as their way of saying thanks for our help in the Stockade. Here are two brief notes.

*"Thank you for
your good work
helping the
Stockade residents.
God bless you."*

*"Just a thank you
for helping the
residents
of the
Stockade area."*





Family Snapshots



Stockade resident Donna LaGone talking to FOX23 news



Satisfied balloon character recipient



Patriotic face painting



Grilling up a storm



Bird family members share some music



Honored guests – first responders and Stockade residents – line up to enjoy a feast provided by First Pres members



Presbytery Report

New York Presbytery met last month in Ithaca. New Life Presbyterian Church, the host church, proclaims the gospel to the Cornell University community.

These three news items are worthy of special note.

- A recently planted congregation in Canton (near Potsdam) has been welcomed into the Presbytery. Their membership voted to transfer from a different denomination to affiliate with the PCA. Last year a Baptist congregation in Cortland

similarly joined our denomination. Each is led by an experienced and energetic PCA pastor.

- When the Susquehanna overran its banks, our church in the Binghamton area (Vestal) experienced severe flooding, the most serious damage to any PCA church building since Katrina hit New Orleans and the Gulf coast. This congregation needs our prayers and assistance as the members face huge repair bills and a prolonged time before they can again use their facility.

- As we have been praying for open doors to connect with the Inter Varsity work down the street at Union College, we have enjoyed getting to know many of the students. IV staff minister at Union and at Skidmore, Caleb LaRue, is a PCA minister and member of our Presbytery. Presbytery voted to contribute to his financial support, as has our Session, making him the newest missionary we support here at First Pres.

Retired Missionary Notes

Steve and Dinny Vishanoff write:

"Dinny's long task of translating and correcting and recorrecting is done: she sent off her (French to English) translation of "The Doctrine of Scripture," a course prepared for believers who come from a Muslim background.

"The unfolding of events in North Africa and the Middle East is a fascinating scene, deserving of our prayer to the God who holds all things in His hands."

Steve and Dinny Vishanoff



Evelyn McNutt writes:

"In July, I did get to Rumney Bible Conference for a couple of weeks. Marcy joined me for a week. Great times together! She played her flute for some of the evening services. God has blessed her with a special talent which she has developed more over the years.

"I was asked to speak on a Friday evening to give a 'history' of our years with HTR [Happy T Ranch] and RBC (1957-1979). Many people have no idea how HTR became part of the New England Fellowship of Evangelicals, Inc. Everyone seemed to enjoy the session for I was kept going for 1 1/4 hrs! So much to tell, and yet still more untold!"

Evelyn McNutt

Kids' Zone

Welcome kids!!

6:30 pm - Wednesday nights
ages 4 (pre-school) through 6th grade

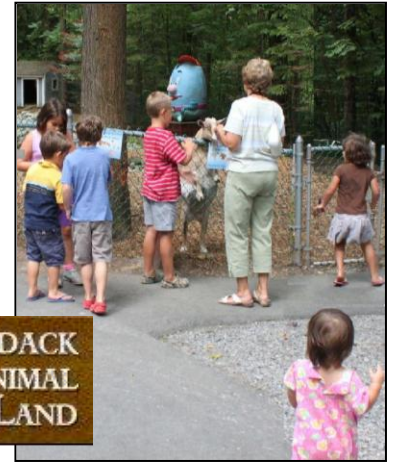
Moms and kids had a fun time on a trip to Adirondack Animal Land this summer. They especially loved the safari ride and feeding the animals.

Kids Zone Teachers

- Dave and Tammy Mills - 4,5 & 6 year olds
- Lindy Gower - 2nd through 6th grades
(church volunteers will lead some fun activities)

Games, crafts, activities, Bible

Calendars with the dates of Kids Zone for the year are available in the entryways of all buildings.

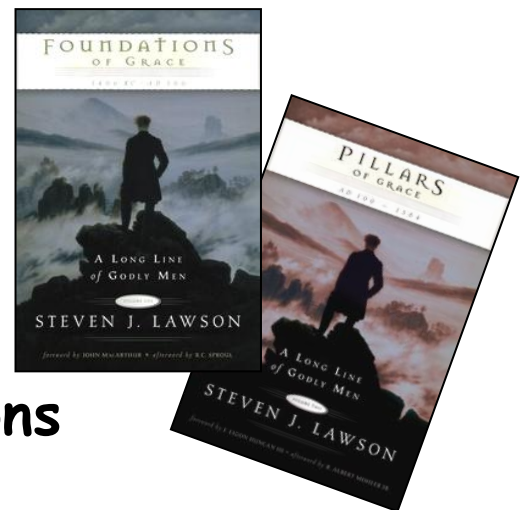


Fall Sunday School - 9:30 to 10:40

Did You Know?

4 & 5 year olds - Heather & Rowland Elwell
1st & 2nd grade - Nancy Bodenstab
3rd & 4th grade - Kathleen Mancuso
5th & 6th grade - Beth Jackson
Elementary Superintendent - Terry Leib

Pray for these Teachers and the Children



Pastor's Reading Recommendations

Read any good books lately?

Steven Lawson is in the process of writing a monumental five-volume work that is almost certain to become a classic in Christian literature. The first two volumes are now in print: *Foundations of Grace* and *Pillars of Grace*. Lawson is senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, AL. He is the author of several books and is in demand as a popular conference speaker.

These newest books deal with what we call the Doctrines of Grace. Beginning with the effect of sin on the human heart, these doctrines go on to identify the work of each person of the Trinity in our salvation. The Father planned it before creation; the Son accomplished it on Calvary; the Spirit applied it in our regeneration. The study concludes with the assurance that salvation cannot be taken from us. These doctrines of sovereign grace are not new. However, Lawson not only defines these five doctrines, but demonstrates how they have been taught in every era.

(continued, Page 10)

October Birthdays and Anniversaries *

* Don't forget your missionaries! Check your Missionaries Handbook to find their birthdays.



2	Liz Nelson
3	Gen Schaperjahn, Glenn Tabolt Anniv: Bob & Bev Holt, David & Tammy Mills
4	Anniv: Jared & Melissa Pott
6	Vickie Shatley
8	Anniv: Tim & Cathy Kahler
9	Anniv: Bill & Helen Challener
10	Bill McIntosh
11	Rowland Eckerson, Julia Floreen
12	Alex Culora
14	Anniv: David & Cindy Battiste
15	Craig Williams

16	Denise Sankowski Anniv: Fred & Mildred Lewis
17	Judy Norris
18	John Lewis, Steve Naylor
19	Pam Rice, Walt Sankowski Anniv: Eric & Yvonne Eriksen
22	David Battiste, David Vincent
25	Sam Taft
26	John Morris, Betty Warden Anniv: Walt & Denise Sankowski
27	Barb Gower, Bob Haldeman, Dottie Kline
29	Chip Derrick, Jim Hannah, Carm Mertens
30	Scott Battiste
31	Nancy Scribner

Reading Recommendations (continued from Page 9)

In the first volume (*Foundations*), Lawson begins with the books of Moses to show these truths in the earliest revelation in Genesis. Then continuing through the Biblical writings of Samuel, David, Isaiah, and even into the New Testament, his account is thrilling as he unfolds the beauties of the atonement that Paul and Peter and John – and Jesus – taught. Volume two (*Pillars*) does the same thing as he leads us through narrations about the great figures in church history up to the time of the Reformation (Ambrose, Augustine, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, and many more). Subsequent volumes will follow the truths into the present.

In page after page of Bible exposition, we read how these five Doctrines of Grace were prominent themes in the teaching of each inspired writer, and then we see the same through the ages of church history. Salvation is a gloriously God-centered work in which He is truly sovereign. In the forward to *Pillars* Ligon Duncan writes of Lawson:

He traverses the rich and varied terrain of the Bible to introduce readers to the one true God and His sovereign, saving love from the whole of Scripture. He shows not only that the doctrines of grace are unassailably biblical, but that they are joy-giving, life-changing, Christ-exalting, God-glorifying, missions-motivating, evangelism-encouraging, and discipleship-promoting truths.

The church today needs more of this kind of substantial “meat” to strengthen our solidity in resisting a simplistic, man-centered understanding of the faith, and also to embolden our confidence in the power of God’s gospel as we challenge the spiritual deadness in our culture.



*Alicia Bowles
and
Stephen Jacques*

*were married on
Friday, September 23,
here at First
Presbyterian Church*

introducing...

the newest fellowship group at First Pres

Prime Timers

Those of us who exchanged the stresses of child rearing and daily work schedules for quieter pursuits and freer hours often find that the activities are too quiet and the schedule too free. And that's where Prime Timers comes in.

Why the name Prime Timers? According to Webster, the word "prime" has a number of definitions which apply to us:

- first in time; an original (For us, anyway)
- first in importance (Well, maybe not first but at least important!)
- The best or most vigorous period (of life)

But most importantly we have the life experiences and a deep commitment to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which we can share with our church, families, friends, neighbors, and the world.

Prime Timers, under the leadership of Dick Rose, has a goal of providing opportunities for the seniors (roughly defined as age 55 or over) of First Pres



Berkshire Scenic Railroad

to gather for fun -- and usually food -- about once a month. We have use of Mekeel Hall the third Friday of the month unless an off-premise activity dictates a different date. The first event was lunch in Mekeel Hall after the 11:00 service on September 25. Over fifty people quickly signed up to eat sloppy joe and hear details of the October trip to ride on the Berkshire Scenic Railroad. Our next get-together will probably be the Friday, November 18. Check the *Steeple News* and church bulletins for information about future events because it would be awful if you missed out on something fun that the Prime Timers are doing.

Prime Timers in not intended to be a club that you join or don't join. It's a program designed for fun for seniors who vary widely in their age, interests, abilities, available time, and definition of fun. All events are open to any seniors and their guests, and no one should feel compelled to attend an event unless it sounds to you like a good time. Future events will vary trying to make

sure that there's something for everyone in this new adventure. Check the *Steeple News* for information about future events because it would be awful if you missed out on something fun that the Prime Timers are doing.

Dick said: "I have been asked to lead our senior ministry but in order for it to be successful, I am going to need some help in planning and running individual activities. I'm hoping many of you will volunteer to take responsibility for a month's event that you think would be enjoyable. I will always be available to help implement you ideas, so don't be afraid to give them to me. I'll take them by phone, email, snail mail, after church encounters -- I'm just eager to hear from you!"



Courtney and Betty
prepping for lunch



Prime Time leader Dick Rose



Over 50 Prime Timers enjoyed lunch at our first meeting.



Looking Ahead

Spiritual Health Food

- Oct 2** World Communion Sunday
8:15 and 11:00 services
- Oct 7-8** Youth Fall Kick-Off
- Oct 15** Prime Timers Berkshire Scenic Railroad Outing
- Oct. 16-23** Missionary Conference
- Oct. 30** Reformation Sunday Festival Service
6:00 pm, Sanctuary
- Nov. 4-6** Men's Retreat at Camp Pinnacle



Steeple Views Co-Editors
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Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. ~Philippians 4:8 KJV

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